

We therefore resolved that YEW, with TSERAT as driver, should take a couple of boys in one of the lorries and examine this route, a matter of 400 km, while we proceeded eastward. We heard from Mongols that the autumn flood waters of the Edsen-gol would not reach the Western Temple on the Mören-gol for another ten days, so that YEW should have no difficulty in getting over the last-named stream. He would have to make this crossing because our store of 300 gallons of petrol, with a quantity of other baggage, was east of the stream, at NOGON DELI's headquarters. The only risk lay in making such a long journey with only one car, for if it got out of order it would be irretrievably lost. However, as we had often done before on the expedition, we staked everything on one card. The baggage was divided into two piles; one was to go east with us, while the other was to be fetched by YEW and TSERAT on their way back from the Edsen-gol. Both parties could easily be given petrol enough. The price here was the same as at Anhsi — 3.5 dollars a gallon, or three times as much as in Shanghai.

After a 27-course-dinner given by the Eurasia representative we made a little expedition to Chiu-ch'üan, »Wine Spring«, situated outside the east gate of the town. Here a spring rises in a walled-in basin. In old days it was pure wine, says the legend. Close by is a once beautiful and well-kept temple, which, we were told, had been destroyed by MA CHUNG-YING for the army's camp-fires.¹

The town of Suchow seemed full of life. There were many people and plenty of movement in the streets, especially in the trading quarter, where there was a press of carts drawn by horses, oxen or mules. And trading-caravans, with deep-toned camel-bells, were arriving from Kuei-hua and the Edsen-gol. The Suchow oasis was believed to have 84,000 inhabitants, of which number 10,000 were within the town-walls. We were told this by the mayor himself. There were said to be scarcely a hundred Turkis living in Suchow. Mongols and Tibetans came now and then to buy and sell goods. The garrison was put at 2,000.

On December 30th we and our Chinese friends assembled in the mayor's courtyard, where YEW got into TSERAT's lorry. LI and LIU CHIA belonged to the Edsen-gol party. LIU CHIA had been engaged on the Edsen-gol for the outward trip, and was now to return to his home for good.

A SOUTHERN ROAD TO KAO-T'AI

As we left the town behind we met strings of carts bound for Suchow. They were laden with fuel underneath and hay above. We drove south-east along a road that joins a number of villages, leaving the classical Imperial Highway, which issues from the east gate of the town, on our left.

¹ In Han-time Suchow was called Chiu-ch'üan from this spring, and now this name has been revived. F. B.