

on the way to fetch his bride. His retinue included three more carts. In these he was to move his own goods and chattels and the contributions of the bride's parents to the new home. Poor as people may be, life runs its course — they marry, produce children, and die.

A steep, winding slope took us down to the bottom of the valley again. How loaded carts could ascend this gradient was beyond understanding. We were at a height of 2,200 m. Here and there springs formed sheets of ice, shining like metal in the sun. In several lovely spots that we passed there were groves of trees, and conifers grew on some of the slopes. At Nan-yüan, »South Farm«, there were two water-mills on the river-bank. Old watch-towers were a feature of the landscape all the way; and temples were to be seen here and there.

We halted at 5.30, and pitched camp No. 163 at an altitude of 2,600 m. Hard by was the village of Nan-nien. A rich man who lived there owned 200 sheep, which were driven down to the folds every evening. This man promised us two night-watchmen. They appeared at dusk, and made friends with our boys at once, talking, laughing and telling stories. Every quarter of an hour during the night we heard their shouts, intended firstly to keep away thieves and robbers, and secondly to show us that they were keeping awake.

THE WU-CH'IAO-LING PASS

We were all freezing cold on the morning of January 25th. The thermometer had reached -19.8° C. in the night, and it was blowing hard from the south-east. We set off, still climbing. The valley was swarming with rock-doves. Patches of snow and sheets of ice lay here and there. Higher and higher we went. The mountain-tops grew rounder. Young Chinese came along, their large baskets swaying rhythmically and gracefully on a bamboo pole in time with their steps. At 10.45 we reached the pass, where the altimeters showed 2,775 m (the maps give over 3,000). In any case, this was the highest altitude we had reached on the whole expedition. Right at the top of the pass, which is called Wu-ch'iao-ling, a shrine has been erected, Han-tsu-miao, »The Temple Dedicated to Han's Ancestors«. An old priest with a long pointed beard came out of the temple and looked at us. The pass marks the boundary between Ku-lang and P'ing-fan.

We had seen several more sections of the Great Wall before reaching the pass. Now, when we began to descend, we had it on our left. It was triple at this point; we were outside the middle wall, and inside the outermost. The valley was fairly open. On our left we had for the most part rounded hills on which flocks of sheep were grazing; on our right were higher mountains. Here we met eight mounted Tungans with bundles on their horses. It was impossible to tell whether they were merchants or robbers.