

We drove under some quite pretty *p'ai-lous* and out through the south gate, which was double, with a separate gateway outside. Thirty-eight years before, coming from Tibet and Hsi-ning, I had entered the town through the west gate. But otherwise the road was new to me.

ALONG SUNK ROADS

We soon lost ourselves in a sunk road, 8 m deep, filled with whirling clouds of dust. Camp No. 165 was pitched close to the village of Teh-chen-p'u, at an altitude of 1,900 m.

On January 27th we went straight into a sunk road 5 m deep. We met several carts drawn by nervous mules. They either reared or simply turned right round. The dust that was thrown up was enough to choke one.

At the village of Kao-ching-tze the road ran between a row of houses and the ice-bound river, to which a bank some few meters high fell sheer. Charming avenues of big trees adorned the banks.

Another sunk road, with a plank across it. The dust lay thick, and was flung up by wheels, hooves and feet. Everything was grey upon grey. One could not pick up a single object in the car without a grey cloud of dust rising. In this tortuous labyrinth of houses, walls, terraces and trees, and in the dust-laden atmosphere, bearings had to be taken every 20 meters, and we crept forward at a snail's pace. Strange that people could live on a road over and around which thick clouds of dust hovered perpetually! They got dust into their lungs for whole days on end; it was only at night that they got a few hours' release.

On the night of January 27th the temperature fell to -20.8° C. We went on between yellow loess hills, past the temple of Kuan-yin-ssu. The Great Wall cropped up again to the right of our road — we must have crossed it unwittingly in a section where it was interrupted. The P'ing-fan-ho was also to our right. The road here must be very dangerous for cars after heavy rainfall; one would slip over the edge as if it were greased, and plunge into the depths. The road between Liangchow and Lanchow was beyond comparison the most difficult and dangerous we had experienced on the whole motor expedition. The country was mainly loess soil, though solid rock cropped out here and there. In the evening the sky darkened, and some snow fell. We had encamped on a small flat patch of ground between little cones. Eighteen dead had settled here before us — it was a burial ground.

The next day there was plenty of traffic. The fields were cultivated everywhere, and flocks of sheep were grazing here and there. From a ridge we had an extensive view of the savage contours of the country to the S. S. E.

A piece of perpendicular loess wall had fallen during the night and blocked