

horses. 5 li W of the village there is said to be a deserted village, Shematcheng, on the road, with springs of water, whence a small river flows to the village of Pai-yang-ho with 36 houses (3,000 sheep, 400 oxen and 200 horses), scarcely 30 li NW of Hui-hui-pao. About 30 li to the NE lies Hsiago with 20 houses (400—500 sheep, 80 oxen and 40 horses)

*November 29th.* From Hui-hui-pao the road runs over rising ground, crossing the SSW slope of the mountains in the N. On the left we had the mountains, on the right a valley. The ground consisted of gravel with very sparse vegetation in the form of creeping plants. Our faithful follower, the chain of mountains to the S, extended beyond the valley at a great distance. After 8 miles the road took us down the same slope at a slight angle towards the bottom of the valley. 11 1/2 miles from our starting point we found the ruins of a small impanj or sarai close to the road and a mile or two further on we reached Shuan-chien-tzu, a large, deserted impanj, at the bottom of the valley. Outside its wall there were 3 sarais with water obtained from 2 wells. Here there was a detachment of 5 men under the command of a tindsjy. A village called Tahunt-chien-zu with 12 houses (300 sheep, 20 oxen) is said to lie 10—15 li further S. In the E a ridge-like eminence is visible, seemingly joining the mountains in the N with the chain in the S. The road approached it. We crossed a valley covered with gravel and stones with the dry bed of a river. There is said to be water there in spring, though in no great quantity. About 1 2/3 of a mile from Shuan-chien-tzu a mild ascent begins along a barren slope of gravel with stones scattered over it. In the course of a couple of hours we climbed 5 ridge-like eminences, which seemed to form a continuous succession in a N—S direction. In one place they were interrupted by a valley running in the same direction.

On reaching the fifth ridge we caught sight, at a distance of a few miles, of the roofs of the gate pagodas of Chia-yu-kuan beyond another long gravel hill. The road turned to the left and led us into a valley, from which we ascended the last gravel ridge. Now the whole little fortress of Chia-yu-kuan could be seen, crowned by three enormous gate pagodas of three storeys. Two clay walls extended to the SW and NE from it. We had reached the wall that prevents an entrance into the interior of China from the west. Another couple of miles and we passed through the great gate of Kouli. Outside it stood a huge block of stone with the inscription »ti i sjyn guan» (the first strict gate) in big letters carved in the stone. The wall that connects the mountains in the N and S for a length of about 20 miles is a low one with towers at some distance from each other, like tuntai towers. There is nothing to indicate that, even in the imagination of the Chinese, it could serve as an actual defence of the realm. However, the part of the wall that passes in front of the western fortress wall of Chia-yu-kuan, is built of baked bricks, 7 fathoms high, with two small corner bastions and another enormous one in which the gate is built. Through a low archway, 34 paces in length, you reach a passage, 3—4 fathoms wide, between the outer wall and the fortress itself, also 7 fathoms high, and after passing through another two archways, 10 and 34 paces long, you are inside the fortress. In reality it is nothing but a large gateway, for in 1 1/2 minutes you ride through the space, densely covered with clay huts, between the inward and outward gates, of which there are also two, and the