

order of the Bogdykhan. The iron bridge that had been ordered from Germany for Lanchow is also supposed to have been stopped by orders from Peiping at the end station on the railway, 12 days' journey E of Sian. The reason is said to be that the Taotai was not willing to make sufficient sacrifices to enlist the interest of the mandarins in Peiping.

The only official of Suchow I saw was the Djentai. My calls at 10 a.m. were obviously too early for the Taotai and Tsouguan, for I was not received. My quarters in the sarai were so cramped that I did not trouble to receive any of the mandarins, when they returned my call. The Djentai, a stout man of 63 with a big beard ending in two narrow wisps hanging down to his stomach, was for a long time at the Chinese embassies in St. Petersburg and Paris. I got him to tell me about the court balls. A roguish look came into his small eyes, as he tried to explain how the dance proceeded, slightly wagging his plump body and waving either hand rhythmically in illustration. He told me that all the troops in his district were to be converted into ludziun troops. Little importance could be attached to this information, however, for his statement that exercises were already being carried out on the same lines as in the ludziun, is not in accordance with the facts. His admiration for the Japanese did not seem to be wholehearted. He thought they had been lucky. Though he acknowledged their great merits, he did not consider them strong enough to start another war; on the contrary they had been greatly exhausted by the last campaign. He had never admired the Russian army. Too many different elements served in it without any real cohesion. Morally the officers were not equal to their tasks, he said, and his »puhao» was pronounced with anything but an appreciative smile.

Suchow is connected by an arbah road over Liang-shu-kou with Chinta, a distance of about 90 li. Another arbah road goes over Ning shui, about 100 li. Arbah roads lead to the mountains in the S, to the Wen shu go gorge in the SW and 2 roads to Tinfusy in the SSE. Besides the main route another road is said to go further south, nearer the mountains, to Kanchow. On this stretch a line of villages and tilled fields is said to lie at the foot of the mountains, more or less close to them.

Packing our most indispensable luggage on to a so-called hsia tchö'r, we started off *December 9th.* again this morning. The rest of the luggage leaves to-morrow and will await my arrival *Ning shui* from Chinta two stations from here, as I want to pay a short visit there in order to study *village.* traffic conditions. The driver of the arbah did not put in an appearance until 8.30 this morning instead of at dawn as I had ordered. In the heat of the moment I gave a thrashing to the wrong driver, an injustice that I tried to make good by giving the man 1 lan. The example frightened the culprit, however, and he did his utmost to make himself useful, probably hoping for similar generosity. There were, no doubt, many of the spectators who would have liked to earn a lan in the same simple way.

We had to take the road via Ning shui, because the driver of the arbah did not know the direct road. The road leads through the E gate of Tun-huang and just outside the town passes 3—4 large monuments of clay on the left, under which human bones, found in the plain, are collected. Further on there were 3 small temples connected by a wooden