

my host's two had dropped to $-1\ 1/2$ and $3\ 1/2^{\circ}$ C. and I felt thoroughly cold. — Burans from the NW are common here in the spring. Snow falls between the 9th or 10th and 2nd month, but does not lie.

January 10th. After spending a night in an excellent room and being as cold there as in a Chinese inn, despite an improvised stove made of an inverted kerosene tank, I resumed my journey, provided with two fine loaves of bread and many blessings pronounced in curious Flemish French. The weather was splendid, and we had a wonderful view from the slope of the hill northward over the plain, lying bare and brownish-yellow, surrounded by mountains with a few villages scattered over it. On reaching the spot where we turned off from the highway yesterday, we went on for about 15 li to the east, constantly ascending.

The road reaches its highest point at Chin tchia miao, the ground descending to the east. The temperature also changes. According to van Ostade there is a considerable difference in the climate W and E of Chin tchia miao, it being much milder in the latter quarter. There was no tilled ground up here. Snow falls occasionally in the 5th and 6th months, but in normal conditions between the 8th and 4th. Heavy storms prevent its lying. There are storms almost daily, mostly from the W, but also frequently from the S and E. There is rain between the 5th and 7th months, but not often. This little place has 11 tja. The population sells various things to travellers and lives by breeding cattle and refining saltpetre as at Hsia ku. You see shepherd boys looking after their flocks of some 700 sheep and about 50 horses on the grassy slopes. They protect themselves from the wind with a long, white blanket, tied round their necks with twine, which gives them a picturesque appearance. Herds of gazelles, amounting to several hundred, also graze here. They tempted me to sacrifice a day for shooting.

January 11th. Wandering backwards and forwards among grassy slopes intersected by numerous very low-lying ravines, and over the most prominent mountains, we only advanced 30 li to the east to-day. There were really very many gazelles here. I saw a herd of 28 and another of about the same number, besides several smaller ones. Here, however, these shy animals are much more cautious than in the neighbourhood of Tun-huang, nor does the ground afford such good opportunities of getting close to them. Early in the day I shot one with a pair of beautiful black antlers bent with the points towards each other, but then we wandered about for hours, climbing up and down deep, ravine-like valleys, without getting within range. Finally both Lukanin and I lost patience and began to shoot at 800—1,000 paces and even further. Of course, our bombardment produced no result. We stuck to the southern mountains all the time and it was only later that I heard that there is more game in the northern ones.

The road remained in view, more or less, all the time and was good, crossing firm, falling ground, though rather stony in some places. During our ride across the slope we passed several hollows, in which coal was being mined. There were others, where coal had been searched for in vain. 3—4 li before Shui-Chuan-tzu the mountains in the S turn sharply and adopt a S or SSW direction, leaving room for a wide valley coming from