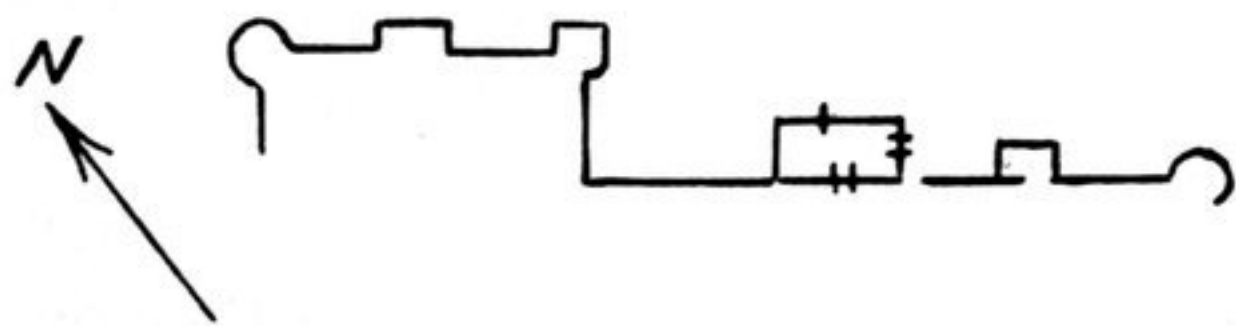


from Chukowyi the road divides on to both banks of the river. We took the one that crossed to the left bank and was supposed to be more level. A little further on the right-hand road also led across the river and joined ours. The course of the river and of our road was now SE, occasionally SSE. 8 li beyond lies the village of Nushengyi of 20 houses on the right bank and a post commanded by a pazung, and 5 li further on the village of Tungu van on the left bank. Both are insignificant. Here the valley of the river grows much wider and the mountains, especially those on the left, are lower.

50 li from Chukowyi we crossed a tributary river coming from the NNE. A small impanj stood at the top of its left bank, dominating the bed of the river, but dominated in turn by the slightly higher right bank of the same tributary. On the other side of the impanj there was a small village, Huanghunlopu, of 10—15 houses that looked more than usually small and poor. On the opposite bank of the river a clump of trees was visible. The river valley was now quite  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , possibly 2 miles wide and was cultivated as far as one could see. 5 li beyond we passed another small village, Tatuwan, from which a beautiful avenue led us on our way. About one li further on we reached a ravine that wound for  $2-2\frac{1}{2}$  miles through a slight rise of löss. Here the road was about the width of two arbahs and the steep sides were 2—4 fathoms high.

At one place the road became broader and the sides were lower. The wall of the fortress at Ping fan could be seen at a distance of about 3—4 miles, barring the road between the hills on the left and the river on the right. The sides of the ravine again obscured the view and we only emerged from them, when we had practically reached some houses and a miao group preceding the fortress. The latter extends in the same direction as the valley of the river, i.e.,  $150^{\circ}-330^{\circ}$ , with the long side along the river. Its size is about  $600+1200^{\times}$ , and it is surrounded by a wall of baked bricks, 5 fathoms in height, with a crenellated parapet without loopholes. There are 4 gates protected by four-cornered, not very extensive bastions. Of the walls facing NW and SE only the latter has two small bastions, besides small circular ones at the corners. Along the long wall facing SW and the river there are small four-cornered bastions on either side of the gateway and half-way to the corners. None of them have turrets or clay buildings. The wall facing the mountains represents a curious broken line, approximately like this:



The mountains that form a chain of easily accessible hills, dominate the fortress entirely, being not more than  $3-400^{\times}$  distant. Opposite the fortress, up on their slope, there is a fairly large temple with its companion buildings. A bazaar street runs along the wall, between it and the river. The rest of the ground is dominated by the fortress and is practically bare.

Ping fan is the capital of the district of the same name and the residence of its mandarin and a Hsietai subordinated to the Djentai of Lianchow. There are 8 lungguans in the district with the following tchy and areas: