

On the other side of Hung-cheng-tzu the country was just as densely populated and the land as well cultivated. There were clumps of trees here and there. Further south the valley appeared to be tightly squeezed by the mountains on either side. We did not touch that spot, however, for, when we had passed the village of Sydjamuo, 3 li off, the road took a sharp turn to the east and took us into a jumble of mound-shaped barren hills. Winding along the foot of these hills, it led us from one mound to another. As a rule it ran along a valley for a time and then crept up the slope of a mound to take us to another. A ravine-like deep crevasse ran along the middle of almost every valley, with perpendicular sides and often with considerable ramifications. The road was good, though the ascents and descents were often long and tiring with heavily laden arbahs. — Another road leads along the Chuang lang ho, crossing the Hwang ho at Sincheng. It is avoided by arbahs, as it is very stony and the Hwang ho has to be crossed by a bridge of ice.

After proceeding for 5 li to the ENE the road again turns south. 10 li beyond we passed the village of Kuaninsy of 15 tja. The valley we had been traversing became rather wider here and there were some tilled fields. 5 li further on lay the village of Chang dia chuang of 30 tja. On the summit of an adjacent hill we could see the outlines of a building that looked like a deserted fort. A little further on we passed another group of houses of the same village. 5 li beyond we reached the village of Khanshui ho of 60 tja with a small bazaar. It lay on a small river of the same name that could be seen winding its way NE—SW far down at the bottom of a crevasse. The water was said to be salt. The direction of our road was now ESE. The tilled fields, few and disconnected, now ceased. 10 li further on and at the same distance from each other lay the villages of Tindia pu of 7 tja and Khadia tsuiza of 30. We now went for a time along a valley about $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mile wide, between small hills. On the left there was a deep crevice running parallel to our road and 5 li from the village we crossed the crevice by an elegant bridge with two gates. The space between the bridge and the bottom of the crevice was filled with tightly packed earth. 5 li beyond we passed the farm of Lango, and the road turned NE. The ground, which had been yellowish, now assumed a red tinge. The surface of some of the mounds was a dark green colour, so that in the dull evening light, combined with the red earth, the dreary landscape took on a warm colouring. We passed another farm, lost in the endless sea of mounds that met the eye wherever one looked.

At a giddy height, on the summit of a hill that rose up like a column among the mountains, we caught sight of a small temple with the traditional sacrificial urn before the door. In the far distance another one could be seen standing out against the grey sky in an equally inaccessible position. Another 5 li and we passed the village of Luotche of 50 tja in two groups lying a few li from each other. Here there was tilled land again and an occasional tree. The village of Ydiava was another 5 li further, also with about 50 tja. Here wheat, millet and tchumiza were grown. The average crop was 6—7 fold. Snow in the 1st or 2nd month, sometimes none at all. Rain very irregular between the 4th and 9th months. Easterly burans in spring. The curious thing about all these villages is that they are dependent on rainwater, snow and ice which is collected in big holes. It had proved useless to dig wells. When the water supply is insufficient, water is fetched from places at a distance

January 28th.
Ydiava village.