

Dinner in Tsuo gung pao's temple at Lanchow. In front the Viceroy Shen, on the left Splingerdt, van Dijk, the Njetai, the works manager, the sub-prefect, Coutellier and Goldmann; on the right the author, Geerst, the representative of the Minister of Public Worship and Instruction, the commander of the garrison, Scalier and Thasbart.



part of the young Chinese diplomat to acquaint himself with conditions in the countries, in which he served. I must admit, however, that his opinions on political and economic matters were sound. When the railway between Hing-anfu and Lanchow was mentioned, he said with a laugh that it would not be finished for another 20 years, adding that this jest might perhaps have a serious foundation. There was much that he would like to do, but the funds at his disposal were too restricted. — He said that nobody in China had expected the Russo-Japanese war to end in the defeat of Russia. The first victories of the Japanese were explained rather as a clever surprise on their part. If there was to be war between Japan and the United States, the latter should strike now, while Japan was weak in men and money. It was impossible to foretell how the future would shape itself in the Far East. No fieldglasses enable one to see so far, he said laughingly.

Shen appeared to be blest with a good appetite and was especially fond of wine. He sat at table for five solid hours and kept swaying slightly and incessantly on his chair from right to left. A theatrical company in bright costumes amused the less talkative guests by their loud-voiced performance to the accompaniment of whining music. The free space in the room was occupied by a couple of hundred uninvited guests, who stared at the company seated at table with greater interest than at the players. However, the very interesting dinner and the draughty doors and windows gave me such a bout of neuralgia that I had to give up any idea of leaving on the following day.

I was given very conflicting information as to the population of the town: 107, 104, 70 and 30 thousand tja. My informants assured me that the two first figures were taken from the books in the yamen of the head of the district. The last figure I obtained from the Taotai who assured me that 10 persons should be reckoned to the tja, which would mean a population of 300,000. All these statements seem to be exaggerated in view of the small

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