

Catholic mission here, but it is only visited from time to time by Belgian and Dutch padres of the surrounding district. None of them visited the town during my stay, a circumstance that deprived me of the opportunity of making the acquaintance of another of the ever kindly padres of Scheut.

*July 10th.* My departure, which had been fixed for yesterday morning, had to be put off until *Kulishang* to-day, as my drivers failed to turn up. I only succeeded in finding them with the help of men sent out by the mandarin.

At first the road runs in a NE direction slightly S of the Manchurian town. Here we passed a village, Wa-iao, with 30 houses. Further west, closer to the mountains, there is a green and shady populated stretch. On the right, too, many villages were visible. The weather was splendid and sunny, though the heat did not worry us. Here and there a poppy field shone in bright colours. The fine chain of mountains on the left looked tempting in the morning light. In the distance the plain was bounded in the E and SE by the chain, or rather, chains of mountains we crossed on our way here. A grey mist seemed to rest on them, through which their outlines could only be distinguished faintly.

We soon left the Manchurian fortress behind us with its enormous corner towers, the dark gun embrasures of which dozed deceptively in long rows behind the thick verdure. After 10 li we passed a small village. The plain was now less cultivated and populated. Scattered villages could be seen a good way from the road close to the mountains on the left. On the right they were more numerous and nearer. We could see long stretches of low grass. Trees only in the villages.

Our course changed gradually to ENE and we drew away from the chain of mountains on the left. After 35 li Lantai with 50 houses, after 40 li Tchangfankuluen with 100, after 42 li Langpan-tzu with 20. Five li beyond we had a big old tower of 7 storeys on the right. After 50 li we reached Peithö'z with 30 houses, a small, old Mongolian temple with a couple of small suburgan towers falling to pieces and some blocks of stone lying in front of the stairs, apparently the remains of some kind of columns with Buddhist symbols and Tibetan or Mongolian words carved on them. From this place the road took a NE direction and led us in a wide curve to the village of Meit Ehr, 70 li distant. The village consists of 80 houses. Gaolyan, tchumiza, peas, wheat, tchaumi and potatoes are grown there. Average crop 5—6 fold. Here we made our midday halt. I was approached by an uncommonly outspoken old woman, who invited me to come and see a beautiful young woman of 20, so she said, a great rarity. — I find the women here much less ugly than in other provinces I have visited; they are tall, with a good carriage, straight noses, oval faces and beautiful eyes.

The ground in the plain was sandy, slightly stony in places and generally firm. Occasionally we came to lower places, but even to-day after several days of heavy rain the mules only sank in slightly. The plain was intersected by many roads leading from one village to another — all suitable for arbahs. We were now close to the westernmost spurs of the mountains in the E, long grassy ridges in a NE—SW direction. 6 li from the last village we reached the first hill on the left. On the right a dry river-bed went eastward.