

short branch wall had been built from the latter to the side of the steep spur which flanks the debouchure on the right. And when I followed the gorge upward for about a mile I found it closed at its narrowest point, about 180 yards across, by a battlemented wall of similar construction and manifestly of the same age as the main wall of Chia-yü-kuan (Fig. 226). The dark rock faces, apparently schist, rise on either side very precipitously to heights of 300 or 400 feet, and the rugged nature of the hill range effectively protected this 'Klausé' from being turned. With the gorge closed in front and the main wall behind, the dwellers of Huang-tsao-ying might, indeed, feel safe from raiders. But it seemed very strange when, only some hundred yards higher up in the gorge, I discovered remains of a second wall, with its parapet facing east, just opposite to the side on which it would be needed for the defence of the village. This second wall was massively built of stamped clay over rough stones bearing a significant layer of rushes; with its parapet it still reached a height of about eleven feet.

If the gorge had been situated somewhere on the Afghan border, the fact of two fortified positions facing each other at such close range would have had nothing surprising; for where neighbours always see each other in the light of enemies, actual or prospective, the maintenance of defences in near *vis-à-vis* is a matter of common prudence. But here on the North-West Frontier of China, where not internal feuds but common defence against an ever-restless foe outside the Wall was the settlers' constant preoccupation, the close proximity of such inverse lines of defence was bound to have a different significance. It did not need prolonged thought to reveal it. The clay rampart facing eastwards was beyond all doubt older, as proved by its far-advanced decay in spite of massive construction. What it was meant to protect was not the gorge, which farther up offers no room for cultivation of any value, but the safety of the great route which passes south of the Hao-shan-k'ou ridge.

In this rugged hill chain nature had, as already noted, provided an impassable barrier to attack from the north.