

NORTH AND SOUTH

me to Tsinanfu, the capital of Shantung, and on southward to Pukow, the railway terminus at the Yangtze River.

We passed Tsinanfu late in the evening and awoke next morning in a region of small hills on the border of the provinces of Shantung, Kiangsu and Anhui. We had come into a new landscape with a breath of spring over the greening fields. The Huai River was free of ice and full of sailing junks, groves of bamboo appeared here and there at the foot of the mountains, and soon yet another evidence of the new climate and agriculture was added: the rice fields with the water buffaloes. During the continuation of the journey from Nanking to Shanghai we saw fruit trees full of swelling buds, ready to burst into full bloom. Tillage was in full swing in the well-tended garden-like fields, where they were just harvesting the early greens. All this delta country is covered with a network of canals, and there is plenty of water for irrigating even the smallest plot.

During winter and spring, from December to May, I have roamed through parts of the provinces of Kiangsu, Anhui and Hupei, which surround the lowest bend of the Yangtze.

What first strikes any one accustomed to the exceedingly dry climate of autumn, winter and spring in northern China is the constant rainfall in the Yangtze valley. In the month of March in southern Anhui it drizzled so constantly that in the end I got used to working in a Scotch mist.

THE DRAGON AND THE FOREIGN DEVILS

The country there is mountainous, and when one roams about the sides of the valleys in the dripping wet, one understands for the first time the peculiar landscape types of the Chinese painters. The mountain peaks in Chinese paintings, which are often of a sugar-loaf shape, are of course fantastically exaggerated; but in these parts one actually sees very surprising mountain forms, and especially when the haze floats through a valley and is pursued by rainbows, one feels oneself caught into a shifting and contorted dream-world, which is just the mood in which the meditative and romantic art of the Chinese landscapists is conceived.

It is worthy of note that the landscape of northern China, which is sparse in trees and constantly bathed in sunlight, has given rise to almost no landscape art, except for some official palace, hunting and battle pieces. It is the hilly country of the Yangtze valley, Chekiang and southern China in general which, with its rice fields in the valley bottoms, bamboo thickets on the slopes, and mists enfolding the mountain tops, has been the great inspiration. It is of interest to note how under the Sung dynasty, when Chinese landscape was at its best, northern China was in the hands of the barbarians, while the center of Chinese culture was shifted down to the Yangtze region.

The bamboo is a motive especially loved by the Chinese artists. This love I have understood fully ever since the day when I looked down from a mountain eminence into a valley of the Yangtze region

NORTH AND SOUTH

and saw there a bamboo grove which kept appearing and vanishing under the racing veils of mist. As the light graceful plants swayed before the blasts of the wind, they reminded me of the slender forms of girls which the Chinese painters so love to put into their landscape along with the water buffaloes and the fantastic old sages.

In April and the beginning of May, 1920, I was working in Hupei on the southern side of the Yangtze below Hankow. Here there was a yet more tropical landscape with palms on the slope of the limestone mountains and with an early-summer glory of blossom, amid which in particular whole slopes covered with azaleas in various tints stand out in my recollection. Here in the bamboo thickets of the mountain we caught for Professor Lönnberg's collection a couple of porcupines and pangolin (*Manis*), which was so considerate as to suckle its little offspring in captivity.

When I had finished my work of charting an iron ore field, we began our return trip in a little junk down a river which debouched into the Yangtze. Our voyage went through a low alluvial tract, which in large part formed a natural grass meadow. At the beginning of May they were harvesting the grass with peculiar sickles set on a long handle. While we glided in the still evening along the low banks, we saw the mowers in the midst of their work. The fresh green of the meadow, the scent of the new-mown hay, and the smoke from the mowers' cooking

THE DRAGON AND THE FOREIGN DEVILS

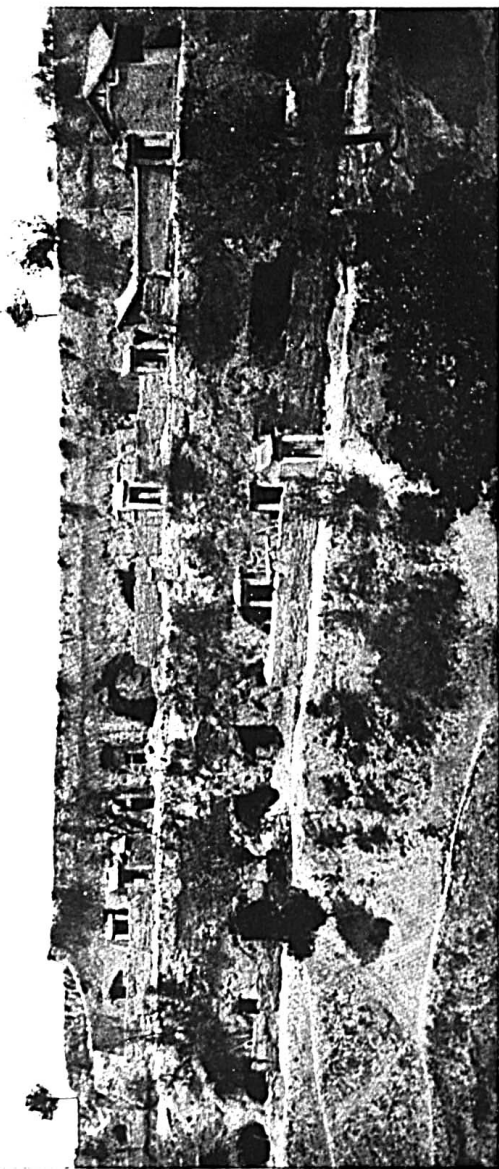
fires, which floated softly away in the moisture-laden breeze, wakened in me childish memories of our marsh meadows at home in Närke. But the entire landscape was utterly different from the strangely dry spring of northern China.

If we shift over to western China and make an imaginary journey in a northerly direction, we shall find the contrast between the north and south still more strongly emphasized, since in these regions the mighty mountain chain of the Tsin Ling Shan forms a barrier between the dry north and the rainy south.

The provinces of Kansu and Shensi represent the northern landscape in its extreme form, which consists of a plateau cut through by valleys of recent erosion where the prevailing type of soil is loam, a fine yellow dust. This dust in beds of fifty to a hundred meters in thickness covers the rocky foundation, which is visible only in the valleys and in separate eminences.

The climate is absolutely dry for the greater part of the year. From September to June the rainfall is slight, so insignificant indeed that one may properly say northern China is for nine months in the condition of a desert with dust storms as a frequent meteorological occurrence.

The country is now almost entirely treeless, but certain protected forests, such as for example Tung Ling east-northeast from Peking, seem to indicate that there was earlier a connected mantle of forests which were cut down by the natives, most of them probably in historic times.



TYPICAL STRUCTURES IN THE LOAMY REGION OF NORTH CHINA WHERE THE DWELLINGS ARE
GROTTOES CUT OUT OF THE LOAM BANKS

NORTH AND SOUTH

The agriculture is based upon irrigation in the river valleys but is carried on as "dry farming" up on the plateaus.

The best grain of northern China is wheat, which can be cultivated even on the sandy plateaus. Besides this the soya bean and other kinds of bean are raised.

In the extreme north, on the boundary of Mongolia, are found a number of grains requiring less warmth: *kaoliang*, maize, millet of various sorts, barley and oats.

Toward the south we find cotton and mulberry trees for the silk industry.

Groundnuts and sweet potatoes have a wide distribution. So too the opium poppy, which can be raised as high as two thousand meters above the sea.

Grapes are cultivated in the mountains between Peking and Kalgan, as in many other places. Chinese pears, apricots and peaches, persimmons, and in Kansu splendid melons, — such are some of the excellent fruits of northern China.

The Tsin Ling Shan Mountains form the boundary between Kansu, Shensi and Honan on the north, and Szechuan and Hupch on the south. At the northern base of these mountains one already encounters a new southerly climate, that of the bamboo, and on the south side of the range one enters a wholly transfigured world, a wooded, mountainous country with abundant rainfall distributed throughout most of the year.

Rice in the plains and tea on the slopes are the leading crops of this region. Sugar cane occurs in the

THE DRAGON AND THE FOREIGN DEVILS

extreme south along with many other sub-tropical growths.

Communication in the north is principally by land. Even the largest river, the Hwang-ho, can only be navigated by rafts and flat-bottomed boats for short stretches. The country roads, which in the main are only wheel-worn paths, were the only arteries of travel up to the time of the railroads. Beasts of transport — camels, oxen, horses, asses and mules — swarm upon the roads.

House animals are rare in the south, and the water buffalo is the principal beast of toil. All sorts of merchandise are carried from the rivers and canals to the houses by hand. But all the longer traffic is by boat, and the net of rivers overspreads the country so completely that one can, for instance, travel the entire way from the south coast of China to the Yangtze valley through Fukien and Kiangsi by boat, except for a very short stretch across a mountain range.

The strong contrast between the arid north and the water-fed south shows itself also in difference between the northern and southern peoples. In the veins of the tall, lethargic folk of the north runs a certain amount of Mongolian blood from the many invasions of the nomads from the Gobi Desert. The small, alert, subtle south Chinese has also a foreign admixture, but this is of another sort from that of the north. It comes from the aboriginal, pre-Chinese race, which still survives in isolated groups in some of the least accessible parts of southern China. These numerous peoples, who appear under a multitude of names,

NORTH AND SOUTH

— such as Miao-tze, Shan, Lolos, etc., belong to the group of Mon Kmer, Shan-Burmans and Tibeto-Burmans.

The contrast between these southerners and northerners, which in old times was one of a rider and battle-chariot people as opposed to one of dragon-boats (note the dragon-boat feasts which are still celebrated), has been and seems likely to remain a leading motive in Chinese history.

The one real peril for Chinese unity is the much-reiterated plan of a division into a north and a south Chinese empire. However, railroads would gradually unite the two great halves more firmly together. Furthermore, every time a foreign power seizes on any part of China's vast territory, a wave of resentment passes from Canton to Kalgan, from Chengtu to Shanghai. All, whether in north or south, are folk of the Middle Kingdom, sons of Han.