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TRADE-ROUTES IN MANCHURIA.

By Rev. JOHN ROSS of Niuchwang.

THE Chinese are essentially an agricultural people. Next to their passion for agriculture comes their craving for trade. There is among them as eager a desire to rapidly acquire wealth as there is on any stock exchange in Britain, and there is the same readiness in speculation to gamble for chances. The more restless and ambitious young men, who consider the duties connected with agriculture unattractively dull and unpromisingly slow as a source of wealth, betake themselves to commerce in one of its many forms.

China is in every direction intersected with roads and paths whereon there is an endless stream of commerce moving in all directions, leaving unvisited no hamlet, however small, which it touches with its wealth-acquiring finger. The extensive country called Manchuria is in all respects as much China as is Shanghai or Hankau. Barely a tithe of its people are pure Manchus, whose more easy life is so obscured as to be scarcely noticeable in the energy and industry of the antlike Chinese.

Every tiniest hamlet is vitally connected by the great routes of traffic to the financial centres of Manchuria, as every particle of the body is connected, through the great arteries, with the central motive powers—the heart and lungs. The veins and veinlets of traffic it is impossible and even undesirable to delineate; but it may be interesting to note the main arteries both by land and by water.

The port of Niuchwang, or Yingtsu as the Chinese call it, is the chief inlet for imports and outlet for exports into and out of Manchuria. From this a main road goes south-east through Kaichau, Hiungyao, Fuchau, Kinchau, skirting the coast to Port Arthur. There is a small port at and for each of the towns mentioned, where large numbers of immigrants land from Shantung. Indeed, the speech of that portion of Manchuria is entirely the dialect of Shantung. The traffic over this road has hitherto been inconsiderable, for the country is mountainous, and though every valley is cultivated, the amount of produce available for export is not large. Port Arthur has always been regarded as a place of considerable strategical importance. It was defended by the last Chinese dynasty against the Manchus years after Manchuria had been acquired by the latter. Therefore in recent years it was strongly fortified by French and German military engineers, who made it virtually impregnable from the sea. Indeed, the French navy, when scouring the Chinese coast, did not deem it prudent to attempt its reduction. Neither Chinese nor any other Power had conceived the possibility of Japan preparing an army, at the very time when the fortifications were being erected, which, approaching it in the rear, would attack and take it from the land side. This route will hereafter be infinitely more important, as it is the route of the Russian railway.

Another road east from Niuchwang goes through Tashikiao—the “Great Stone Bridge”—which is now a very important station on the

railway. Passing a little to the north of Kaichau it goes through the picturesque town of Siuyen and across the beautiful Yang river to Fenghwangcheng and Wiju in Korea. Since the opening of Korea by the Japanese to intercourse with the western world this road has lost most of its importance. Formerly, at a village called the "Korean Gate," south-east of Fenghwangcheng, there used to be a great fair to which Korean merchants resorted in great numbers with gold-dust, the hides of their great ox, and with their extremely tough paper which was used by the Chinese for "glazing" their windows. The Chinese merchants went there with sugar, silks, and other products of their land, and with the best produce of the Manchester mills to barter with the Koreans.

About twenty miles east of the port this road enters the mountain chains which begin there and terminate only on the western shore of the Pacific. At all seasons this is an interesting road. In the winter there is a good deal of deer-shooting, the scrub on the hill-sides being traversed by beaters who drive the deer to the path. It is specially pretty in the opening summer and at the falling of the leaf. For scores of miles along the road and to great distances north and south of it, the hills are dedicated to forests of young oak trees, on the leaves of which the silk-worm of the provinces feeds. The trees are kept young, as the leaf of the third year is large and succulent. Thereafter the trees are cut down to make room for younger growth. The careful sericulturist sees that there is a continuous supply of young trees for his precious worms. The cocoon produces a coarse silk which is woven into pongee and usually worn in its natural khaki-colour.

Though by a good deal of zigzagging the road is made to run mainly in the valleys, mountain ranges have sometimes to be crossed. These crossings or passes are so steep that the large wagon traffic, so characteristic of Manchuria, is virtually unknown, all the traffic being borne on the small travelling cart. There is now no market at the Korean Gate, and the glory of that road as a commercial one is departed. There is still a fair amount of local traffic.

Siuyen stands half way between Niuchwang and Fenghwangcheng, about sixty miles from each extremity. It is also distant sixty miles by a good road to the port of Takushan, at the mouth of the Yang river. A road from Takushan through Antunghien or Shaho, at the mouth of the Yalu, goes to Fenghwangcheng, a distance also of sixty miles; midway between Tashikiao and Siuyen a road strikes north to Haicheng through a crowded country.

A road from Fenghwangcheng to the north leads through a remarkably beautiful mountainous country to Laocheng or Hingking, the original seat of the Manchus. It follows and crosses the charming river Ngai, an affluent of the Yalu, into which it falls directly east of Fenghwangcheng. The road passes through important villages and market towns so populous as to surprise one in the depths of these closely packed mountain ranges. There are lovely nooks here and there, and every valley is cultivated and filled up with a busy population. Perhaps the most beautiful part of the route is the region of Saimachi or Saimaji, directly east of Liaoyang and situated near the river Taitsu, which passes Liao-

yang. This town was the active seat of an iron-producing industry a quarter of a century ago. The iron ore was rich, of excellent quality, and coal and coke were abundant. The iron was smelted by the rough but efficient methods of the Chinese. But though, on account of its superior quality, the iron sold for more in the open market than did European iron, the cost of production by the Chinese crude process was so great that the industry has been choked out of existence. More will be heard of this region—for the iron and coal are spread over a great area—when the country is opened to those who can work the abounding coal and iron with adequate capital and scientific means.

From Fenghwangcheng another historical route runs north-west to Liaoyang. On this road is the famous pass where the Koreans, when being driven out of Manchuria by the Chinese twelve centuries ago, defied the whole might of China for several years. The Japanese failed to push their way across the famous pass in their recent war against China.

Returning to Niuchwang we touch the great north-east trunk road which runs parallel with the course of the Liao river—the river like the mountain chains of the country running from north-east to south-west. Mentioning the course of the mountains reminds me that the few slight shocks of earthquake I have experienced in Manchuria came all from the north-west, at right angles to the trend of the mountains.

Fifteen miles east-north-east of Niuchwang is the village of Kaukan or "High View," where the road divides, one route continuing in the same direction to Haicheng, the other going north-east to Niuchwang proper. The two reunite a little to the south of Shaho, a prosperous market town, ten miles south of Liaoyang. The road by Niuchwang is shorter by a few miles, and is the main road in winter, when water, bog, and earth are solidified as iron by the keen and persistent frost. Foot travellers and riders may almost always find a path. But the summer road for carts is *via* Haicheng, where another road from Kaichau meets this one.

The road from Haicheng passes by therapeutic sulphur hot springs with a great reputation. It then goes to Anshanchan, or Saddle mountain, the most northerly point of the Japanese invasion, which was also anciently a famous Korean city. At this place a branch road runs east to the magnificent serrated ridges of the Chien Shan or "Thousand Peaks," among whose numerous sinuosities and valleys scores of Buddhist and Taoist monasteries find picturesque situations among their well-wooded surroundings.

The direct road from Anshanchan goes on to Shaho, Liaoyang, and Mukden. It passes through the flourishing city of Tieling, and, a couple of miles south of Kaiyuen, bifurcates. One branch goes north-east, and at Weiyuenpu passes through the border of Liaotung province into that of Girin. It skirts the west side of the great Imperial Forest, which has been lately opened up to cultivation. Over a beautiful, hilly country it goes through Yitungchau to Girin. No heavy wagons can go over this route; but light wagons and the common travelling cart prefer it, as it is shorter by a great deal than the other.

This other road passes from the point of division through Kaiyuen, and seven miles farther north goes through the frontier at Machientai Gate. Seven miles farther on is the large and flourishing *fu* city of Changtu. Beyond that gate and on to Kwanchengtsu the country is particularly rich and thickly populated. There are not a few large market towns, and the villages are so common that one is barely passed before another presents itself.

At Kwanchengtsu there is another bifurcation, one road leading east eighty miles to Girin. This is the heavy wagon road as it is virtually level. Another road goes north-east, crosses the Sungari, enters the prosperous town of Shwangchengpu, whither also comes the road from Girin. The shorter and direct road is available when the frosts of November bridge the Sungari. This road goes from Shwang north-east and north *viâ* Ashiho and many another city and town, across the Sungari on its eastern course, through Tsitsihar to the southern bank of the Amur, where Chinese jurisdiction comes to an end.

This entire route from Niuchwang to the Amur is in an extensive plain, the way being virtually level. The Chinese call the distance 3000 li or 1000 miles. A travelling cart occupies a month in traversing this route. This plain is remarkable not for its length only; it is in much of its extent exceedingly broad. It is formed throughout of the rich Chinese soil called *löss*, which is particularly fertile. The whole plain south of the Sungari is splendidly cultivated by a swarming, industrious, and prosperous peasantry.

In the province of Liaotung, sorghum or "tall millet" is the principal product and the chief sustenance of man and beast. Kwanchengtsu is the centre of a great area devoted to wheat. In that region wheat is probably cheaper than in any other part of the world. Barley is grown all over for distillation into whisky, of which more, I suppose, is distilled in Manchuria than in Great Britain. It is universally drunk, but no drunkenness is visible. Beans of many varieties are grown for export. They form the staple of trade. A yellow variety is specially rich in oil, which is expressed in great quantities by huge circular granite wheels rolling in a granite groove. It is used in cooking, for light, and for lubrication. The bean cake, made of the residue after the oil is expressed, is splendid feeding for horses, and sent by the scores of steamer loads to Canton and the south, to be used as manure for the fine cane sugar grown there.

The rich soil of the great province of Tsitsihar, or Heilungkiang as the Chinese call it, still lies asleep, waiting the waking touch of the Chinese plough and spade. It will form a wheat area of great extent and fertility. It, with the whole rich southern half of Siberia, can supply enormous quantities of wheat, and give employment to millions of people. The Russian railway will bring both to within easy access of northern China, where exists a great market for good and cheap flour, and a great surplusage of population.

Retracing our steps to that point south of Kaiyuen where the trunk road bifurcates, we find it to be the point of junction for another road, which is of comparatively recent origin, but on which, during winter,

there is a great and growing wagon traffic. It runs up the splendid valley of the Ching river which flows by Kaiyuen. The valley is one of the finest in Manchuria, wide, rich, and densely peopled with many a large village and market town. This road skirts the southern edge of the Hunting Forest, running east and north-east. There is a small pass at the head of the Ching river, over which, at a large town, the road enters the magnificent valley of Hailungcheng. Through this valley and city it stretches northwards, and, a short distance out from Girin, joins the road through Yitungchau.

The goods carried by this route are of the same character as by the road east from Mukden. The eastern valleys get less heat than the plains, so that the tall millet, which ripens late and runs risk of destruction from early hoar-frost, is replaced by Indian corn or maize, both white and yellow.

To the far east of Kaiyuen, at the city of Hailungcheng, there is a road leading south through well-forested mountains. After entering the hills the road bifurcates, one going to Tunghwa, the other to Sinpinpu, east of and close to Hingking, the ancient capital of the Manchus and the seat of their origin. Tunghwa is a hundred miles farther east.

The railway necessarily runs generally in the direction of this main road—a great main road, running eastwards from Mukden, *via* Hingking, Tunghwa, etc., to the bank of the Yalu on the Korean border, and then by bridle-path along the river, or in a steep hill-side, on to the Long White Mountains. For 250 miles east of Mukden this road is available for the heaviest traffic. But the very heavy traffic is always carried in winter when the rivers are frozen solid. There are numerous mountain passes over which heavy wagons cannot go in summer. Small travelling carts can always go, however.

Along this road are borne thousands of tons of hemp, of which excellent rope is made, and many hundreds of tons of tobacco which finds its way extensively along the seaboard of China. There is a valuable traffic also in indigo, which is, by the aid of lime, extracted in pits from a polygonaceous plant which delights in marshy soil. A great deal of opium grown in the eastern valleys also finds its way to market by this route.

From Liaoyang, along the south bank of the Taitsu, through an endless succession of villages in a country of luxuriant growth, a road goes to Saimaji, already referred to. Along the north bank of the river there is an extensive area where coal, soft and anthracite, is found together with rich iron ore. The Russians have sunk some pits scientifically in that region, east of the town and coal depôt, called Yentai. It is to be hoped these pits will do justice to the deposits there, and yield an abundant and cheap supply of fuel for the country, which has foolishly neglected its hidden treasures.

All the main roads above referred to lie to the east of the Liao river, and converge, for commercial purposes, ultimately at the port of Niuchwang.

Starting from Yingtsu, as the Chinese call the port which stands about twenty miles by river from the bar formed by the junction of the

noble river with the sea, there is a road crossing the Liao and traversing the nitre-laden soil along the sea, till at Shisanchan it falls into the great road from Peking to Mukden. At Shisanchan we come upon a highly cultivated and rich soil crowded with a busy and prosperous population. The road goes through the large and flourishing city of Kinchau, formerly written *Kingchow*, and other cities and large towns till it enters the triple city of Shanhaikwan, where the Great Wall ends. Northwards from Shisanchan the road, passing to the east of Kwangning and Yichau, goes to Sinmintun, a busy city of *fu* rank. Then it goes east, crossing the Liao, and ends at Mukden.

At Sinmintun a road goes northwards, passing out of the province of Liaotung by the Gateway of Fakumen, where a direct road from Mukden joins it. Crossing the Siramuren this road goes ever north till it unites with the trunk road from Kaiyuen to Kwanchengtsu. At Fakumen the crush of wagon traffic is so great in winter that there are policemen at the street crossings to guide the traffic as in the London streets.

At the junction of the Nonni with the Sungari, the accumulation of water looks like a lake. In the late autumn when the frosts set in, great numbers of fishermen drag in countless myriads of fish to the bank. They throw them on the frozen earth, and they become speedily solid masses of ice. In this condition they are put on to wagons, each wagon carrying from one to two tons. The wagons take them away south, mostly passing through Fakumen and going to Mukden, or into the province of Chihli as far as Peking, which is probably twenty days' journey from the fishing-ground. In Manchuria the fish may remain a mass of ice till the end of February or the beginning of March. There are great sturgeon, huge carp, and many another fresh-water fish. The finest is perhaps the beautiful "white" fish, more fat and more delicate than salmon, which, by the way, is not to be found in the waters of the Sungari, though it is plentiful in the Amur.

Besides the ferries across the Siramuren and the Liao in connection with the main roads, there are innumerable ferries for local convenience.

At the crossing from Fakumen on the Siramuren, a large port has arisen to considerable importance within recent years. It is fast becoming the most important *dépôt* for the grain of the wide agricultural region spreading out in all directions from it. During the winter, when the earth is frozen into a stonelike solid mass, wagons in endless succession unload their precious burden of grain in the great store-houses at Tungkiangtsu, as this port is called. As soon as the great winds of March, impregnated with the warm breath of the south, kiss the ice away, junks innumerable run down river to the port of Yingtsu, bearing their cargoes of grain, and especially of beans, to be taken away in foreign steamers.

Tieling, which is but a short distance from the river, is a similar *dépôt* for winter-stored grain, and has an extensive traffic with Niuchwang. It is to be one of the chief stations on the Russian railway. Another *dépôt* on the river bank sends away the spare grain of Sinmintun. All the grain in the neighbourhood of the river is sent down in the flat-bottomed junks from any point convenient.

Mukden has great storehouses for grain in the city, which is shipped in the open season on similar but smaller boats. This used to be by far the most important centre for the storage of grain and for its financing. But both Tungkiang and Tieling store more grain now than does Mukden. The Mukden boats go down the Hwan river to a point west of Liaoyang, where the Taitsu falls into it. From Liaoyang there is a considerable traffic by the Taitsu.

For several years a good deal of grain has gone down the Yalu to the port at its mouth called Antunghien. This port is connected with the older one at Takushan.

Besides grain, there is borne on the rivers the enormous timber-trade of Manchuria. At one time Chinese travellers in Manchuria wrote of forests so extensive that they took thirty days to get through, and so dense that during all that period they could not see the sun. The utmost of which this density is true of primeval forest now is three days. Then all the valleys were crowded, and the mountain-sides covered with the foliage of pines, oaks, planes, walnuts, birch, and other trees. The rapid and great increase of the population has deforested thousands of square miles. The banks of all the great rivers and their affluents have for years been bared for a quarter of a century. But thousands of wood-cutters still lead a hard and not unromantic life in the forests, miles away from rivers, and the traveller can hear the echo of their axe-blows ringing off the mountain-sides on a journey of many days in succession. South, west, and north of the Changpaishan, the woodman is annually creeping nearer and nearer to the great central mountain of Manchuria.

Miles upon miles of rafts float down the Yalu and its great affluent, the Hwankiang, which flows by Tunghwa. Scores of great blocks of wood are lashed together to form one raft. A small tent of birch bark and straw matting erected on the raft affords shelter for the men, and in it they have their kitchen as well as their bed. They float down by rapids and on long stretches of the river, as smooth and as apparently motionless as a pond, passing scenery of all kinds, the grand, the beautiful, or the tame. They often take a couple of months getting down to Antunghien, where there is a custom-house, at which the small tax is exacted which the Chinese government receives from the wood. From this port, or from Takushan, the great piles and beams find their way to Chifu to supply part of northern Shantung; to Tientsin to supply that great city and neighbourhood; and to Yingsu to supply the south of Manchuria with wood of many kinds and for all purposes.

The Taitsu bears down timber for Liaoyang and the Hwan from Sinpinpu, and Yungling for Mukden. The snow on the mountains in winter is utilised to sleigh the heavy timber to the nearest river which contains water enough to bear it away after the thaw of March clears the rivers of ice. On the Sungari great quantities of splendid wood goes north to and far beyond Girin.

The timber is of various kinds. The chief favourite for ordinary use is the pine "soft" and "hard," of which there are not a few varieties. Walnut, plane, and oak are common. Elm and maple are not

so general, and are used where toughness and durability are required, as in the axles of carts. The Chinese claim nine kinds of elm, and four or five kinds of oak. The wood which shows the most beautiful grain, and which is used for the finest cabinet-work, is called the "spiny walnut." The wood is certainly very beautiful. It is found growing on the rocky and precipitous sides of hills, and is often difficult of access. It costs three or four times the price of pine.

CAPTAIN DEASY AND THE ROOF OF THE WORLD.¹

A REVIEW.

CAPTAIN DEASY'S admirable account of his two expeditions on the Roof of the World may be divided into three parts, not serially according to the order in time, but regionally according to the main fields of his surveys. In the first of these he is occupied with Western Tibet (in the first six chapters); in the second with Sarikol and Raskam (in chapters vii., viii., ix., xiii., xiv., xv., and xvii.); in the third with the borderlands of Chinese Turkistan and Tibet (in chapters x., xi., xii., xviii., and xix.). To these may be added, by way of completing a preliminary survey, his account in the last two chapters (xx. and xxi.) of Chinese Turkistan.

Having long entertained the desire to travel in unknown lands, he availed himself of an opportunity in the spring of 1896 and resolved to proceed to Tibet, attracted thereto by a recently published map of that country on which a vast extent of territory was marked "unexplored." He set out from Srinagar on April 27, along with Mr. Arnold Pike, who accompanied him throughout this expedition, from Leh on May 25, and from Tankse on June 1. The pass by which he had decided to penetrate into Tibet was the Lanak La. From Fobrang, "a tiny village of about half a dozen houses, at an altitude of about 14,800 feet, probably the highest cultivated place in the world," there was a choice of two routes, one by the An La, which was not mapped, the other by the Marsemik La. He set out from Fobrang, after a final halt of some days, on June 9, and proceeding by the Marsemik La, he crossed the Lanak La (18,000 feet), on June 18, thereby passing from British to Chinese territory.

Beyond the pass (or La) it was practically unknown country but for one or two itineraries. Making it his aim to proceed past the Mangtza Cho to the north side of the Horpa Cho—the opposite side, that is, to the itinerary of Captain Bower—he succeeded there in locating and ascertaining the altitude of a double-peaked mountain, which was the highest peak in the course of his expedition; it is directly north of Horpa Cho (and Wellby lake), and on the south of the Aksai Chin;

¹ *In Tibet and Chinese Turkistan. Being the Record of Three Years' Exploration.* By Captain H. H. P. DEASY, late 16th Queen's Lancers, Gold Medallist of the Royal Geographical Society. With Appendices, Maps, and Illustrations. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1901. Pp. xvi + 420. Price 21s.