

The Old Traditional Hofei District Has Aspirations Of Future Greatness

By Ray L. Six

*"The chief city between the Yangtsze and the Hwai.
"The most important place between Kiangsu and Hupeh."*

THUS reads scrolls in the local magistrate's yamen, and portrays better than anything else, the hsien mind of its own importance.

From the earliest historical records, we learn that the Hofei district is politically and historically important. From the Ming dynasty onward it has been the center of the Luchow Fu. It is located in that section of Anhwei which lies between the Yangtsze and Hwai rivers, and to the west, north-west and north of the Chao Lake. It lies in the midst on an old peneplain, astride the natural watershed between the two rivers. In the eastern part of the hsien are found high ranges of hills, composed of the upturned ledges of Sinian limestone strata. In the west the low, red, rugged sandstone hills are partly covered with a growth of scrub oak and pine.

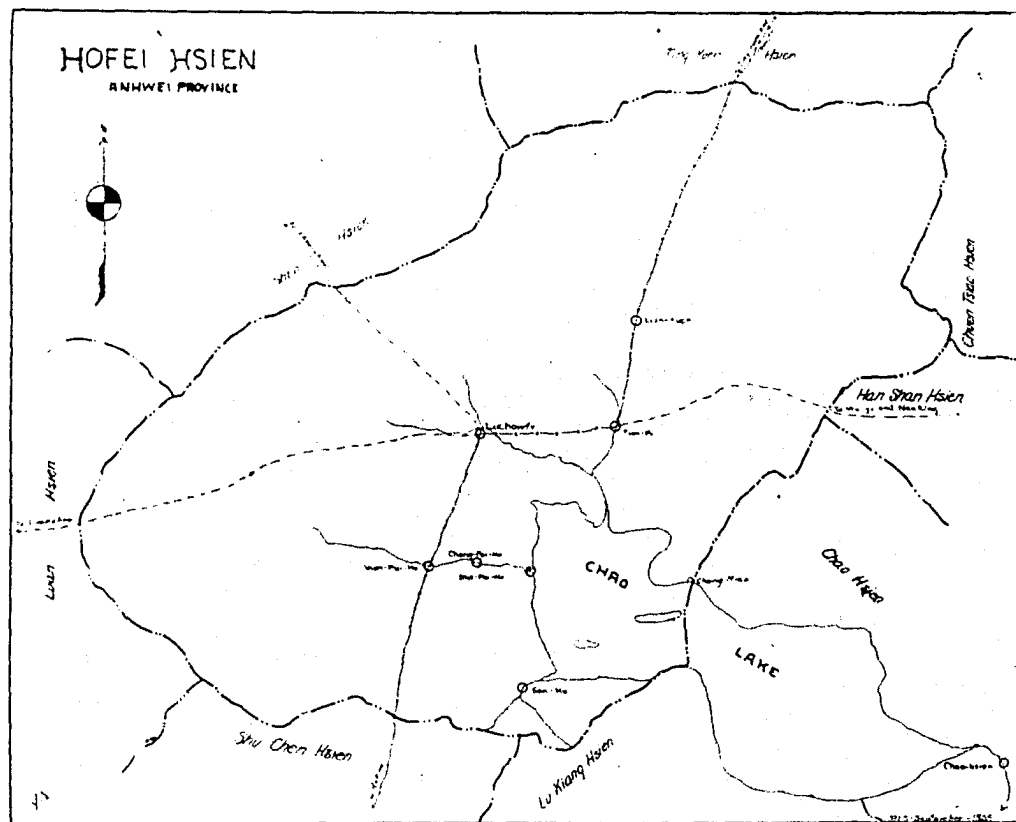
Between lies a broad plain broken only by stream depressions and isolated monadnocks, the most important of which is Ta-shu-shan (elevation about 500 feet), 17 li west of the city of Luchowfu. Approximately one-half of its 3,333 square miles lies in each river valley. The drainage to the north enters the Hwai river thru numerous intermittent streams; on the south drainage is cared for by three streams which flow into Chao Lake and from thence by the Chao river to the Yangtsze some 30 li below Wuhu. The largest and most important of these streams drains the central part of the hsien, passing around the city of Luchowfu by the moats, from whence it is navigable for 54 li to Si-keo at the north-west end of the lake. The second largest

stream forms a large part of the southern boundary of the hsien. It furnishes water transportation routes and drainage for part of four hsien before uniting with two smaller streams and enters the lake at San-ho, the great rice port at the south-west end of the lake. The area between the two rivers is cared for by a small stream flowing across the hsien, passing into the Chao lake after going thru the cities of Shan, Chong and Sha-pai-ho, the greatest feather makets in the world.

Beginning with the Three Kingdom Period (San-kwei), Hofei's political importance has grown rapidly. Just outside of the old North Gate and inside the new North Gate is a place called Shiao-

yao-ching, made famous by a battle won by General Chang-liao. Ts'ao-ts'ao used a small hillock just inside the big East Gate, upon which is now found the largest monastery in the city, for directing personally the training of his troops. At that time Luchowfu was only one-half its present size. Shiao-yao-ching is being slowly made into a private park by Mr. Kong. The magistrate Mr. Yuen and the city father have tried in vain to obtain possession of it for a public park. It reminds one of a ruined medieval fortress with its moats, drawbridge and lake.

During the Ching Dynasty Hofei became famous as the home of Li Hung-chang, pronounced by many students of Chinese diplomatic history, the greatest



statesman China has produced. Hofei prides itself upon the production of political leaders and politicians. It is said that during the regime of Yuan Shi-kai, two-thirds of all the provincial governors and hundreds of magistrates were Hofei men. A local saying is, "Yamen secretaries come from Shao-shing; barbers from Hupeh; political leaders from Hofei."

The present dictator of China, Marshal Tuan Chi-jui comes from this district. His clan ancestral hall here is a beautiful piece of Chinese architecture, costing it is said, \$300,000. Upon Marshal Tuan's emergence from retirement, there was a regular exodus of Hofei men to the Northern Capital, all seeking appointments. In reply to a remark made to

an old official now residing in another hsien, that it was a hey-day for Hofei's official classes, his breast swelled with pride when he said, "Yes, the people of China want us to come out of retirement and work for our country."

There are four leading families in the hsien; the Lis, probably the most wealthy; the Tuan's, politically the most important; the Cheo's, second in riches, and the Liu's. The heads of each of these families live for the most part in treaty ports due to local political unrest. To the Li's belong the honor of establishing the first bank in the district. In the eastern part of the hsien they own four out of every five pieces of land. Li Hung-chang's ancestral hall and tomb is just east of the city. The land holdings of the Tuan's and the Liu's are in the North-west and west part; that of the Cheos' in the south-west part of the hsien. Each family has its fortified family home, called a "uei-tz", located in the midst of its land. One has but to enter one of these to find himself in the heart of the feudal past. Systems of moats surround high walls upon which stand watch-towers, with armed soldiers on guard. Inside the draw-bridge one finds massive gates, behind which is an armory, which is a fine museum of ordinance equipment, dating from the 8th and 9th centuries to the present. Spears, bows, cross-bows, arrows, match-locks, flint-locks, musket loaders of all descriptions; canon bronze, brass and iron of ancient Portuguese, Spanish, English and Chinese make; modern breech loading field pieces, of small caliber; magazine rifles; automatic-pistols of American, German and other foreign makes. Here one finds a feudal lord with men-at-arms, serfs, vassals, retainers; conniving with other feudal lords for political power; holding court and administering justice in his own kingdom; truly a fine replica in the present of China's ancient past.

The Local Magistrate

During the immediate past magistrates have come and gone more rapidly, even than the kaleidoscopic changes of officials in Anhwei's political arena. During the two years prior to the coming of our present magistrate, Mr. Yuen in 1923, we had no less than twenty odd men in the office; for times varying from a few days to a few months. Mr. Yuen is a very energetic, wide awake man with a view as to the future possibilities of this district. He is a native of Wusih, long years of service in official life. He learned English at a Y. M. C. A. School in Shanghai. His father and grandfather each had long terms of creditable service as magistrates in this hsien. He is striving to better the family record.

After arrival and adjusting himself to the local situation, his first job was a clean-up campaign. With his assistance the prostitutes were forced out of the city. They numbered nearly 5000 in a city of 70,000. He next turned his attention to the local production of opium. Strong proclamations were posted thruout the hsien forbidding the planting of the poppy. Such a thing had happened in the past but the authors of such proclamations had not remained long enough to enforce them. Farmers planted the opium crop. Many to guard against all emergencies planted wheat and poppy in alternate rows so that if the order were actually enforced they would have the wheat to rely upon; if the order were not enforced the wheat would be destroyed as it was less remunerative than opium. Rewards were given to those reporting the growers of opium, amounting to one-half of the offenders land or a sum of money equal to the same, to be paid by offender. When the forbidden crop was up, the magistrate with soldiers proceeded to personally investigate the extent to which his order

was being obeyed. In the northern part of the hsien he met with determined resistance on the part of the country folk who for some years had been a law unto themselves. He was forced to retire to the city. He returned accompanied by 200 troops and cleaned out the forbidden crop and executed about forty of the ringleaders and displayed their heads to the other would-be offenders. That spring no opium was grown in Hofei.

This commendable enforcement of existing laws brought down upon him the severe criticism of some members of the leading families. They as consumers of opium did not desire to import it at a higher price than they could produce it. A game of political chess was then started that continues even now. As a result the magistrate's power in many phases of his duties extends no further than his yamen doors. He has many good ideas as to road building, improvement of water ways, development of telephone and electric light services, but with the present opposition he has little hope of succeeding.

In the summer of 1924 the Ta-tao-hwei of the next hsien to the west took it upon themselves to assist in armed force some of the local people who had been imposed upon by the military. They captured the city of Luanchow and took charge of the government. There was no looting or burning as was reported. Their force gained rapidly in numbers until it reached nearly 4,000 men. They invaded Hofei and defeated the magistrates troops in several battles, finally surrounding him in the Liu-chiauei-tz some 80 li to the west of the city of the Luanchow. Failing to capture the ueitz, they marched towards Luanchow to capture the city. The magistrate by forced marches arrived first and prepared to defend the city. The tu-fei depended upon a charm placed on the front of their long gowns to protect them from the bullets of the soldiers. One was killed in the two-day action against the city. A rain deterred them from entering the city on the advertised date. The next day General Ma Lien-chia arrived with a few hundred picked troops. After a few skirmishes the tu-fei disappeared. The cost of compensating the troops was great. The magistrate was forced to borrow personally \$40,000 to help pay them. Shortly after this time General Ma was forced to resign his post as tu-pan and Mr. Yuen being a friend of Ma's resigned and would have departed but for the action of the city elders. They gave two published reasons: (1) The unsettled state of affairs was very productive of banditry and if he departed, there was grave danger of the city being looted. (2) He still owed the city the \$40,000 and could not depart without paying it back. The result: he stayed in office and carried the city thru a very critical situation.

At this time General Wang ih-tang, whose home is here, engineered the situation with the result that he later became tupan of the province. During this time local men sought to sit up local autonomous government independent of Peking and everything else in China. They were frustrated, one of the leaders fled to Hankow where he has forgiven and received a job in the Hanyang Arsenal. The other was trapped at a feast in the local yamen and held a prisoner for some time. Later he too was forgiven and released upon Marshal Tuan's order.

Since the defeat of the Chihli party in Kiangsu by Chang Tso-ling's troops Fentien influence has been strong. Troops have moved in and out from Pempu, so rapidly that one can scarcely keep up with the "ing-chang" in command. Some commanders were

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excellent, others, the less said the better. Some regard the absence of the railroad, already surveyed as a blessing, as it prevents this being a battle ground between those in power in the west (Hupeh) and Chang-T'so-lin's forces on the east. Troop movements are very difficult because of poor roads.

Educationally Hofei is little better than the rest of Anhwei which ranks lowest of all the 18 provinces. The following table gives a comparative study of the province with her neighbors, a regards the number of of primary school students per 10,000 of population:

Anhwei	25.5
Honan	60.8
Hupeh	79.1
Kiangsu	85.0
Chekiang	149.5
Kiangsi	44.4
Shangtung	135.2

The number of middle schools and students in the same is shown by the following table. The figures in parenthesis indicate the number of full high schools.

Anhwei	11 (3)	270
Honan	10 (4)	275
Hupeh	51 (8)	629
Kiangsu	51 (31)	3,323
Chekiang	19 (12)	974
Kiangsi	6 (4)	366
Shangtung	40 (26)	1,489

In this province there are eleven middle schools run by the provincial government, most of which are of junior grade. The second middle school is located in Hofei. There are two other boy middle schools and one girl middle school, supported in part from private and hsien sources. Due to the commandeering of all available funds by the military none of these schools have been able to run even for half time, during the last two years.

The Government Schools

The following table gives the number of government schools, and the number of students in them for Hofei hsien the school year 1924-25:

(grade)	(sex)	(Schools)	(No. of Students)
Lower Primary	Boys	80	3,000
	Girls	8	400
Higher Primary	Boys	30	2,000
	Girls	2	200
Middle School	Boys	4	600
	Girls	1	100

The following table gives the number of mission schools (protestant) of this hsien and the number of students for the school year 1924-25.

(grade)	(sex)	(Schools)	No. of Students)
Lower Primary	Boys	0	0
	Girls	3	67
Higher Primary	Boys	1	16
	Girls	1	11
Jr. Middle School	Boys	1	10
	Girls	1	10
Sr. Middle Schools	Boys	1	23
	Girls	1	34

The girls middle schools utilize the lower and higher primary schools as feeders, for the middle school departments, otherwise they would have no students qualified to take the work given. The Coe Memorial Girls' Middle School is the only full girls middle school between the Yangtze and the Hwai rivers. The San Ruh Boy's Middle School maintains the last year of Higher primary school to bring government school students up to its standards. Formerly it had these primary schools which served as feeders, but they were closed on account of financial stringency. Now they are not essential to the life of the school.

Besides government and mission schools, numerous old classical and temple schools are to be found throught the hsien.

The Catholic Mission has two primary schools: one for boys with 30 students and one for girls with 20 students.

The estimated population according the yamen records is 1,400,000. The literacy is estimated by the Chinese to be 15% but I doubt if it passes 8%. The literacy of the protestant Christians is 85%: this is accounted for by the great number of students entering the church.

Business enterprises have been somewhat paralyzed by the unsettled state of politics. The occupation of the people of Hofei hsien has been found by survey to be as follows:

(class)	(per-cent)
Official	15%
Professional	5%
Farmer	55%
Merchant	15%
Artesan	5%
Soldier	5%

The homes of these classes has been found to be as follows:

(Construction)	(percent)
Straw and mud	70%
Brick and tile	20%
Gong Guan (Class & floors)	10%

Agriculture Ranks Highest

By far the most important class is the farmer. Usually the central and southern parts of the hsien produces two crops per year; wheat in the spring, and rice in the autumn. In the north and eastern parts one crop is produced; respectively, wheat and broad beans. Here and there one finds small patches of cotton, hemp, corn, sweet potatoes, etc. The northern part of the hsien is not very fertile and has trouble in obtaining sufficient water supply. Most of the rice farming is confined to the areas immediately adjoining the water courses and the lake. San-ho is the most important rice port on the lake. It is the outlet for parts of four hsien. Thousands of junks devoted entirely to rice trade, sail the muddy waters of Chao Lake carrying the Chinese staff of life to Wuhu and other ports on the Yangtze. A fine piece of rehabilitation awaits some energetic man in the development and improvement of farm crops in this area. Large areas in the north are ideal for dry-land farming, such as has been developed in the West. During the present year crops were greatly injured by the unusual drouth which began in August of 1924 and continued with out a break until March of 1925. Since then very little rain has fallen. The last 12 months rainfall is less than one-twelfth of the usual amount. The hsien are faced with semi-famine conditions.

During the winter months, the villagers and farmers do a good business in weaving a coarse cotton cloth consumed locally. The cotton yarn is imported from the mills of Shanghai and Wuhu. Many hides are exported. A thriving business is done in pig's intestines, exported for sausage cassings.

This hsien has the the greatest feather market in the world. This industry centers about cities of Shan, Chong, and Sha-pai-ho, all located on a small river west of the lake and some 40 li south of Luchowfu. Prior to the European War most of the feathers were exported direct to comfort and mattress firms in Germany and north Europe. Since 1914 the industry has fallen off, but recently has started on the increase. During 1924, \$350,000.00 worth were exported.

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With the establishment of the International Export Company at Hsia-kwan, Nanking, the egg and chicken industry has developed wonderfully, especially since 1919. Over a dozen local companies were formed in this connection. Eggs come from as far west as the Anhwei boarder on the backs of express carriers to Luchowfu where they are transhipped to Nanking and Wuhu by junk. A local tax of one egg per 100 has hurt the industry. During 1924 \$250,000.00 worth of egg were exported.

In spite of bandits, drouth and political unrest local firms seem to have prospered, many building new fronts and new buildings. The quality, quantity and variety of goods obtainable has increased. Many commodities in the way of notions, piece goods, groceries and hardware, which were heretofore obtainable only in Shanghai are available locally at a slight increase over Shanghai prices. Some are cheaper.

Transportation Facilities Needed

Economic development is greatly hindered by poor transportation facilities. Crops now produced are marketed with difficulty. Areas lying adjacent to the Chao Lake are served well by junk for one third of the year (during high water). Other parts of the hsien have only primitive means at their disposal. We have the ever present coolie with his long carrying pole, swinging rapidly along the dusty roads; the creaking wheel-barrows with straining pushers and pullers grinding slowly across the plain; sailing craft ply the water courses, when there is water; donkey trains, with their bright red trappings and jingling bells tramp the road toward Nanking; from the west, over the undulations of the plain, wind, long camel caravans, bringing all manner of things from the interior; all joining in the outflow of native products, carrying back the wonders of the outside world.

Some years ago one of the Luchowfu missionaries influenced the local people to dig a channel straight thru the bar connecting the lake and the river. It worked so well that the buffalo men fearing a permanent curtailment of their very remunerative system made trouble and had the ditch filled up. Last spring the local magistrate sent down several hundred men to dig out another channel thru the bar. A party worked from each side toward the middle. Near the middle where they should have joined direct a large O-shaped canal was constructed with the two channels entering it on opposite sides. The size, depth and curvature of this "O" was such that boats of more than 20 feet in length could not pass. Those larger were dragged across the diameter of the "O" by the time-honored buffalo. This arrangement was a decided step in advance. Perhaps in a few years hence if we keep the present magistrate a permanent uninterrupted channel will be constructed.

This would, if developed, make a permanent water route usable all the year by launch and junk alike from Luchowfu to Wuhu. This spring when the water was lower than usual persons traveling out of Luchowfu had to walk or go by chair for 40 li before coming to water of sufficient depth to float even the smallest boats. The merchants might offer some objection because as the water level goes down their prices go up, due they say to the high cost of getting in goods. However, most of them get in their stocks during high water season. They could be won over without any great difficulty as there are many men in the local Chamber of Commerce who

would welcome such a piece of conservancy work. Many I am sure would contribute liberally to the financial burden entailed.

Under the tutanship of General Wang Ih-tang, the development of a motor road from Anking on the Yangtse northward to Luchowfu and thence east to Tien-pu, then northward and eastward thru Liang-yuen and Ting-yuen-hsien, and on to Pem-pu on the railway. This follows the old Imperial highway established by Li Hung-chang. It was to be under military supervision. The Fentien authorities are pushing the project as it would give them two more footholds on the Yangtze, Anking and Wuhu.

To the west of Chao-hsien and to the south of the Chao Lake is a small system of low mountains, rich in antimony and bismuth ores. Numerous samples have been assayed which show a high grade of ore. Bituminous coal of poor quality is to be found in many surface pits. This area awaits the man with capital to develop it.

To an engineer the development of the present water route makes an immense appeal. The height of the water in the Chao Lake and its tributary streams is almost entirely dependant upon the water level of the Yangtze. This lake is the last of the great natural safty valves which absorb a part of the great head of water racing down the Yangtze to the sea, thus lessening the flood risk along the lower reaches of the Chinese Father of Waters. The lake is connected with the Yangtze by the Chao river which is navigable the year round. During past ages this river has been able to erode its channel at a pace slightly faster than the mountain uplift thru which it flows, for about 50 li after leaving Chao-hsien. The scenery here is picturesque. When the water rises in the Yangtze the flow is swift northwestward into the Chao Lake; when the flood waters subside the flow is outward from the Lake. This keeps the river channel constantly clean and open to traffic.

Conservancy of Water Means Prosperity

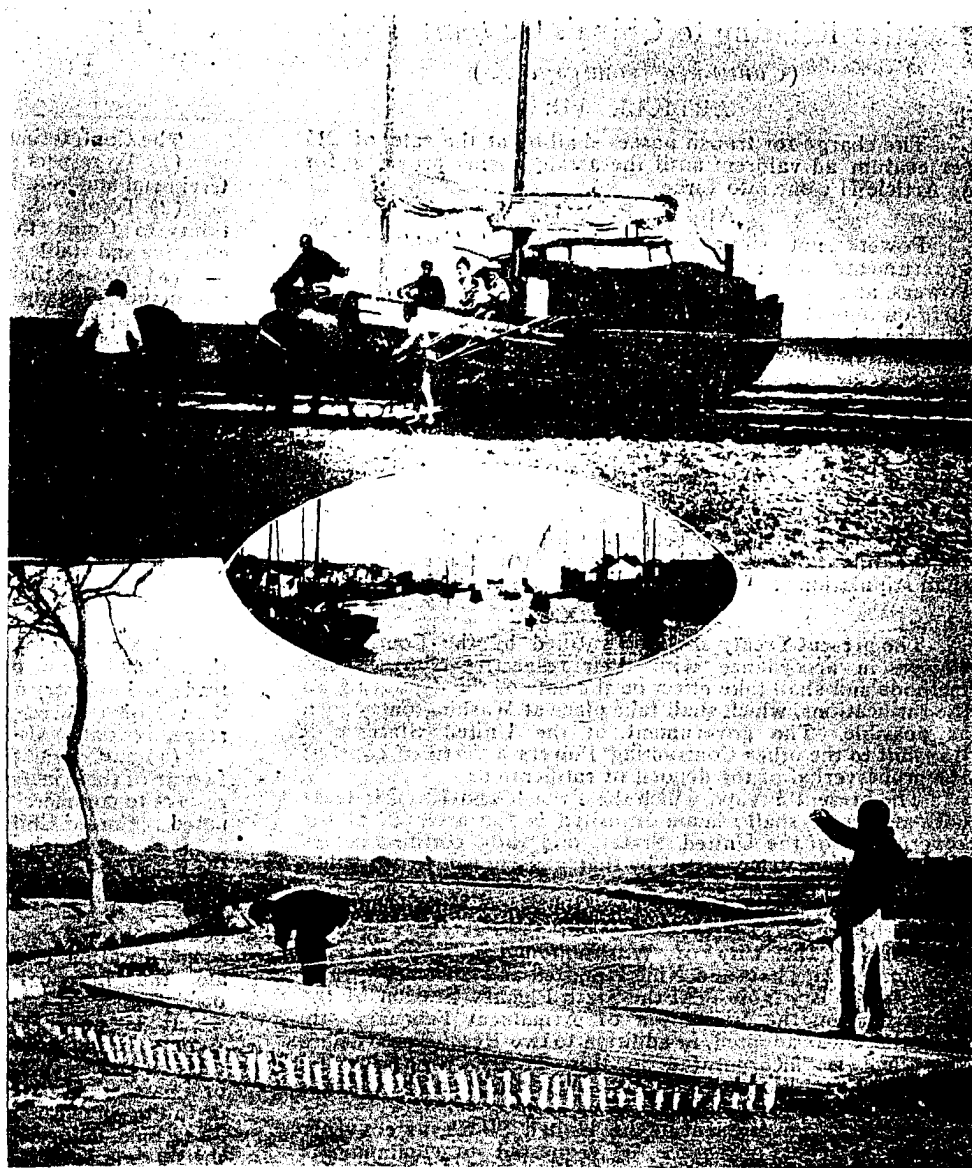
Due to the fine natural conditions at Chao-hsien a dam could be constructed with a set of locks for a comparatively small cost, which would keep sufficient water in the lake to make permanent travel thru to San-ho and Luchowfu possible. Such a project would revolutionize the commercial status of the Chao-lake area. Two crops of rice would be possible instead of one. The local rainfall would be conserved in the lake and adjoining streams, which alone would under usual conditions be sufficient to care for this extra crop. At the mouth of the Chao river and at its source are small bars which would need a channel cut thru them. South of Chao Lake are two smaller lakes which would be benefitted by this arrangement and would open up a rich rice producing area. At the north-west end of the lake at Si-keo, a channel would have to be cut thru the bar which lies around the river coming from Luchowfu. In high water boats of all descriptions pass over in safety. In low water a primitive method in vogue for over 2,000 years is used today. The boats are dragged over the bar by water buffaloes. In very low water a slick muddy run-a-way is prepared over which the boats are slid amid the grunting of buffalo and yells of the driver. This track is kept wet by taps from a small canal running parallel with its course, into which water is pumped by the familiar tread mill of China. The taps or side openings in this canal distribute water so as to keep the track moist. Large cargo boats very often get stuck and a dozen buffaloes cannot move them; then comes a wait of sometimes six months before they can be floated off.

All look hopefully forward to the consumation of the railway surveyed before, the advent of the

Great War. It runs from Wu-yi, north of Pukow, on the Tsin-pu line, westward thru Tsuen-tsiao and Han-shan hsien; then thru the heart of Hofei, touching Tien-pua thriving market town 40 li of Luchowfu thence to Luchowfu. From here it passes on west to the city of Lu-an-chow, then northwestward up the Hwai valley to Sin-yang-chow on the Peking-Hankow line. For some distance west of Wu-yi the grade and a number of bridges were constructed. Some of the manifold advantages would be: (1) The making possible of easier marketing of crops being produced and the development of an incentive for increased production; (2) Travel would be greatly facilitated. At present with the launch running it takes two days to reach Wuhu and I have known cases where it took nine. Another day is necessary to reach Nanking. By rail the trip could be made in about four hours. (3) It would provide work for many folk who find it hard to keep the wolf from the door. (4) One great advantage to foreigners at least would be the smoothing out of the local dialects by the influx of folk from the outside. At present we have a condition where the city folk have great difficulty in understanding their country cousins. The great conservatism of the place would be broken down; this, to many would be a great objection, especially the old official classes.

Another danger which all note in China's present condition, would be the military incubus which might settle on the line, and with it would come subjections toward between those in Hupen and Fengtien's far flung line on the east.

Interest in the projected railway from Wu-yi to Sin-yang-chow bids fair to be renewed within the next few years, local men are working hard for its consummation; with it will come a great development



Upper: Junk being pulled across the Si-keo Bar by water buffalo Center: Scene on Chao River. Bottom: A farmer's wife and son busy preparing the threads for the "chain" of the cotton cloth they weave.

of the resources of Central Anhwei, north of the Chao Lake. The development of the present water routes would but enhance this development of resources.

With its great heritage of the past, Hofei, when her potential resources are developed, can easily become the chief city between the Yangtze and the Hwai—the most important place between Kiangsu and Hupeh.