

Travelling from Hanzhong to Shiquan *via* Xixiang

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Introduction

The roads linking places in the Han Basin, like those in the Wei Valley and the Sichuan Basin, formed a more complex and variable network than those through the mountains as there were far more “possible” pathways to take than those within mountains and valleys. At different times there were different routes that were popular and people made varying choices of route depending on their situation and the general situation at the time. It therefore follows that the most-used are useful to include as “Shu Roads” but only the most important are needed.

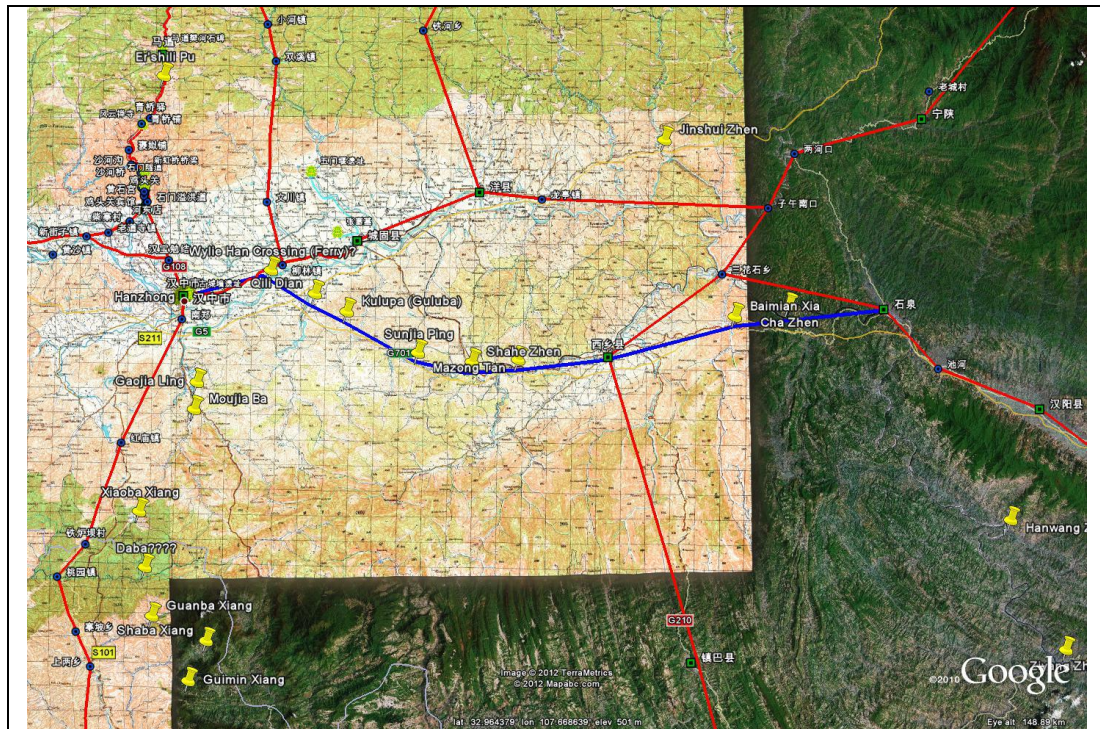
A road that featured in the description in Alexander Wylie’s travels in 1868 and also the travels made by Eric Teichman in 1917 was one which people apparently regularly used to travel between Hanzhong and Shiquan in the 19th century if not ancient times. The road went through the District city of Xixiang and from Shiquan to Xixiang the route was well defined and corresponds quite closely to the present day route G316. From Xixiang to Hanzhong, Teichman notes that there were three routes from which people could select to travel; one was via Shahe Zhen and Guluba and from there to Hanzhong. The others went to Hanzhong via Yangxian and Chenggu respectively.

The road travelled by Wylie was once well known and apparently well-used; he wrote:

“We had hoped to hire a boat there to take us down to Laou-ho-kow (Laohekou, 老河口 downstream of the present day Danjiangkou Dam), but none of the boatmen were willing to start till after the 1st of the Chinese month, which would be four days; and it depended on the state of the river whether they would move then, for they said there was a gorge 30 miles long, which they dared not risk unless the water fell several feet. Ascertaining, further, that the road by land to the eastern end of the gorge was much shorter, and that boats were to be got there, we decided on continuing our journey by chairs as far as the town of Cha-chin (present day Cha Zhen, 茶镇 near Shiquan, 石泉县).”

The truth is that at this time the route was well used but later it fell out of favour for some reason or other. In 1888, Italian missionaries built a fortified mission at Guluba. Guluba was on the road that Wylie and Teichman travelled but Wylie does not mention it. It was obviously very small at the earlier time, although it had a church and Christian community which may have been of interest to Wylie if he had known about it. Among the later reports about Guluba is one that says about the situation in 1899: “Guluba is located along the old road that connects Chenggu and Xixiang, which has now become of secondary importance”. This is consistent with what Teichman found and also with Wylie’s earlier impression of it as a major road.

In the general Shu Roads Google Earth presentation, the area involved is as illustrated in the following screen shot:



The screen shot shows the Russian Topo maps as background and the proposed linking road as a thick blue line. The yellow “pushpins” are suggested additions to the Shu Roads presentation that were visited during the field work and, where possible, established by GPS.

The routes Wylie and Teichman took between Hanzhong and Shiquan were in opposite directions. Wylie and his colleagues were taking the route to avoid a 30 km length of rapids between Yangxian and Shiquan that was swollen with water at the time. Teichman wanted to take a different route from usual and also to visit the Catholic mission at Guluba along the way. The two journeys will be briefly summarised and then the results of the field work will be combined into the account to reach some conclusions about the old road and its path. Along the way, the settlement at Guluba will be discussed.

Route described by Wylie (1868)

Wylie describes how they left Hanzhong and travelled about 8 miles to take a ferry across the Han River. It is not clear if there were persistent and specific places for ferries or whether they varied over time. Based on the distances he provides, it is possible that this place was not far from Liulin Zhen (柳林镇).

To recall, the list of Wylie’s names for the rest of this section are:

					From south gate of hanzhong
Name in Wylie Paper	Qing PY	Qing CH	Present PY	Present CH	Comment
Tseih-le-teen	Qili Dian	七裡店	Qilidian Cun	七里店村	Just across the Nan Sha River He going south east to Shahe Zhen (Guluba would have been passed)
Sha-ho-kan	Shahe Kan	沙河坎	Shahe Zhen	沙河镇	Main junction visited by Wylie and Teichman. Not clear which is the present official designation for Shahe - “zhen” or “kan” (坎).
Koo-chuh-pa	Kuzhu Ba	苦竹壩(坝)	Kuzhu Ba	苦竹坝	7 miles over the hills from Shahe Zhen to here. At junction of stream.
Ma-tsung-tan	Mazong Tan	馬蹤灘	Mazong Tan	马踪滩	On the “Muh-ma” (Muma, 牧马) river (from Micang Shan) Took boat from here to Xixiang. Teichman came the other way.
Se-heang	Xixiang Xian	西鄉縣	Xixiang Xian	西乡县	District city (busy, thriving place). Locals say it thrives most when times are bad as it is a good place to shelter.
Tung-too-kow	Dongdu Kou	東渡口	Dongdu	东渡	Dongdu a place now in Xixiang across the Muma River where the modern G316 crosses on the main Xixiang Bridge
Yang river			Jingyang He	泾洋河	Comes from south near border with Sichuan to Xixiang where it combines with the Muma and then moves on to join the Han (at modern Sanhuashi, 三花石乡)
Pih-meen-hea	Baimian Xia	白勉峽	Baimian Xia	白勉峡	15 miles from the Yang River crossing at the top of a valley against steeper where there were few villages.
Cha-ke-chin Cha-chin	Cha[ge?] Zhen	茶[舸?]鎮	Cha Zhen	茶镇	The obvious place is present day Cha Zhen or “Cha-chin”. Now on the dam. River is Cha He. There is also a place nearby called “Lao Chazhen” (老茶镇). Wylie took a boat from here to Shiquan. He had hoped to get a boat to go to Hankou.
Shih-tseuen	Shiquan Xian	石泉縣	Shiquan Xian	石泉县	Back to Han River and an easily recognised place!! Here they could negotiate a boat to go to Hankou.

They crossed the Nansha He (南沙河) and after another 8 miles arrived at Qili Dian (七里店) which is still in place today. Wylie then describes how they travelled to the place today called Shahe Zhen (沙河镇) which is on modern maps. The village of Guluba was between Qili Dian and Shahe Zhen but when Wylie passed by it would not have been very large or important looking. It had a 300 year old Christian Church but Wylie did not see it. After Shahe Zhen they went through a place he called “Koo-chuh-pa” which is the modern village of Kuzhu Ba (苦竹坝). Following this they arrived at the modern places of Mazong Tan (马踪滩) and Xixiang (西乡县) which can all be easily found on a modern map. Wylie says they left Xixiang by the north gate and forded (by foot) the Muma River opposite “Tung-too-kow” (Dongdu Kou) which is by the present day main bridge across the Muma. They then crossed the Yang River (泾洋河) by Ferry. Baimian Xia (白勉峡) and Cha Zhen (茶镇) also can also be identified with modern places. From Cha Zhen they travelled by local boat to finally arrive at Shiquan (石泉县) where they were able to get larger boats to take them down the Han to the foreign concession settlement at Hankou.

The location of the roads they travelled is harder to establish than the places they went through. However, it seems that the modern highway (G7011) is close to the old road. In Wylie’s day the road was most likely only a foot track and not for wagons and ponies but it was the local road and was previously important. From Shiquan to Shahe Zhen there seems to be a route on the Russian maps that corresponds with the modern day G316 route. From Shahe Zhen, route G316 goes on to Chenggu so perhaps after that point it is close to Teichman’s “Chengu” route. We will see what Teichman has to add about his “Guluba” route.

Route described by Teichman (1917)

We will start Teichman at Shiquan (石泉县). He notes that this is where the Ziwu Road ends and from where the travellers of various roads disperse into the Han Valley. From here he went to Cha Zhen (茶镇) and he notes that the path is dangerous for pack animals. Teichman was travelling with pack horses and ponies rather than only with chairs carried by porters – like Wylie. He notes that the trails here were on ledges on the cliff – like the Yangtze. After that they had a long journey to Xixiang (西乡). He notes that Xixiang is on the fertile plain of the Muma River (牧马河) and that it was (at the time he was passing) one of the wealthiest areas in Southern Shaanxi. He then mentions that there are three main roads from Xixiang to Hanzhong; one via Yangxian, one via Chenggu and one via Guluba. He chose the latter. Going in the opposite direction from Wylie, he reached Mazong Tan (马踪滩) and Shahe Zhen (沙河镇), which he calls “Shahe Kan” (坎) and noted it was a “Mahomedan” community with two Mosques.

The path taken by Teichman to Guluba starting from Shahe Zhen went up the river valley to Sunjia Ping (孙家坪). This place can be found on modern maps as well as on the Russian Topo Mosaic map. But on modern maps it is called Sunping Zhen (孙坪镇). A map at 1:900,000 scale published in 2006 shows a secondary road through this place that goes on to Yanjing Xiang (盐井乡) which is very close to Guluba. The

same map shows the road then going through Qili Dian (七里店) which links it back to Wylie's route but it seems that now everyone uses G7011. After visiting Guluba (古路坝), Teichman moves on to cross the Han by ferry (possibly at a similar place to Wylie) and travelled on to Hanzhong. He mentions going through a very busy centre of trade called Shibali Pu (十八里铺) but this does not seem to be on maps I have seen.

It seems the routes followed by Wylie and Teichman were the same and followed a well used route between Xixiang and Hanzhong. But, as noted by the Italian missionary FR. Lorenzo Balconi (PIME, 2012) concerning Guluba in 1929: "*Guluba is located along an old road that connects Chenggu and Xixiang, which has now become of secondary importance. This, together with its geography, renders the site as an ideal oasis of tranquillity and peace.*" Obviously, at some stage after Wylie came through, the road fell into disuse except for local travel. There are few traces now of an old road on modern maps except for the implied "route" connecting the places visited by Wylie and Teichman.

The Italian Catholic Mission at Gulba

The mission at Guluba (古路坝) visited by Teichman was founded in 1888 and Guluba itself would, at the time of Wylie's visit have been at most a small village. The Catholic missions had been in this region since the 17th century. However, it was only when China opened in the late 19th Century that the centre visited by Teichman came into being. Records of the Italian Brothers about this time can be summarised as follows:

"In 1887, Propaganda Fide created the Vicariate Apostolic of Hanzhong entrusting it to the Seminary for Foreign Missions in Rome. Pere Francis Giulianelli went to Shaanxi with the first missionaries and was acting Director of the new mission until the arrival of the first Apostolic Vicar, Monseigneur Gregory Antonucci, in 1888. The main residence was constructed by Monseigneur Antonucci at Guluba, not far from the city of Hanzhong, with a seminary and various schools."

It was this settlement of Guluba that Teichman visited. He writes: "*[Kulupa] is a walled stronghold of the Catholics on the top of a hill and is the centre of Catholic missionary work in Southern Shensi, though the Bishop resides in Hanchung. ... At Kulupa, an entire hill top is covered by substantial buildings and the whole surrounded by a good wall. When trouble comes, the gates are shut, the community fetches out its arms, and the brigands, or whoever they may be, pass on to easier prey.*"

But Guluba was attacked in 1930 by a significant force and its wall was breached. There were no casualties as the attackers were after weapons and ammunition of which none could be found. But the mission generally folded up in 1934 leaving its buildings intact and unoccupied. That may have been the end of the story for Guluba. However, when the Japanese invaded China, the Government decided to send the three main Peking Universities to Xi'an for safety. Then in 1938, after Japanese successes in Shanxi they were moved further to Hanzhong. They were known as the

North West Amalgamated Universities (西北联合大学). A College of Engineering was set up at Guluba in the former Catholic Mission buildings. The Guluba site was visited during field work in June 2012 and a new Document about the history of Catholic Missionaries on the Shu Roads and in Hanzhong (including Guluba) has been added to the web site and can be accessed with other material that has arisen from the field work [HERE](#).

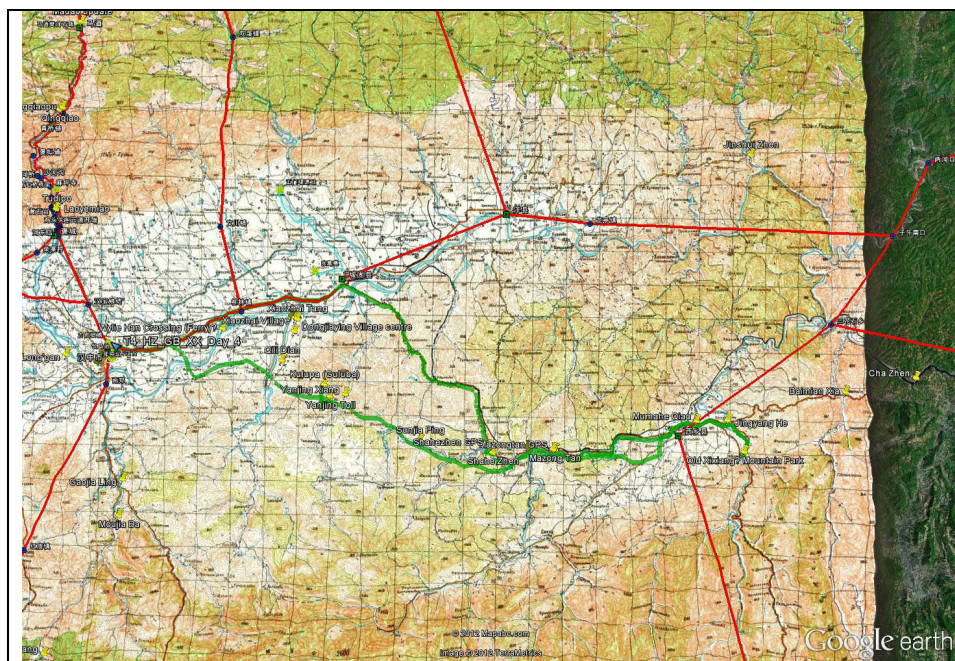
Field visit to Xixiang from Hanzhong June 2012

This section is based on field notes and serves as the primary record from that component of the visit. The results of GPS tracking and waypoints will be incorporated into the Google Earth Shu Roads presentation shortly.

Brief introduction

On the 5th of June 2012, a group of people visited Guluba, Xixiang and other places to help define the routes of a number of Han Valley linking routes for the Shu Road map. Feng Suiping and He Jian, after the field visit between Chengdu and Hanzhong were busy with some meetings so David Jupp, Xu Yang (许阳), Peng Minjia (彭敏佳) and driver Wang undertook the visit and made records.

The route taken and some of the places established or visited along the route can be put into context using Google Earth:



The yellow push-pins represent new places to add to the Shu Road presentation and have mostly been established by GPS. The dark green line is the track of the field visit. The background is the Russian Map for the area and on the right hand side shows how an older road goes south after Xixiang and Wuzi Mountain. This is roughly where the

Lizhi Road is supposed to have gone – so the Russian Maps may provide a reasonable approximation. All three of the routes mentioned by Teichman can be represented quite well from the GPS tracks or the background Russian maps. In addition, the route of the track that Wylie and Teichman took west of Xixiang that passed through Baimian Xia and Cha Zhen on the way to Shiquan Xian is clear in the Russian map as clear extensions of the GPS track recorded on the day.

There is a modern freeway from Hanzhong area past Xixiang called G7011 or the Shitian Expressway. It travels roughly along the road Wylie took to Sunjia Ping but then veers away from the old road and by-passes Xixiang and Shiquan. The National Road G316 (or the Hanhuang Road) is closer to the roads travelled by Wylie and Teichman between Shahe Zhen and Shiquan. But north Shahe Zhen it goes on to Chenggu so it is probably the modern equivalent of the second of the routes from Xixiang to Hanzhong mentioned by Teichman. The day started using the G7011 to get near to Guluba and local roads were used to get from the expressway to Guluba. After the Guluba visit the freeway was taken to Xixiang for lunch. After lunch, we went to Wuzi Mountain area crossing the Muma and Jingyang Rivers. We then used the National highway G316 to visit the other places between Xixiang and Shahe Zhen and then returned to Hanzhong via Chenggu. As a more detailed account of the visit, the field notes follow. These have been edited into the “story” of the day using selected photographs.

Visit to Guluba Site

In drizzling rain, the route taken across the Han River followed the modern freeway until the Yanjing Ba (盐井坝) exit.



Yanjing Exit from Freeway

We had passed Qilidian (七里店村) without stopping but its location was clear on maps and in Google Earth. After turning off, Driver Wang made an initial wrong turn and went to Yanjing Ba where we found a beautiful valley of fertile green rice fields with people working in the fields to harvest the rice:

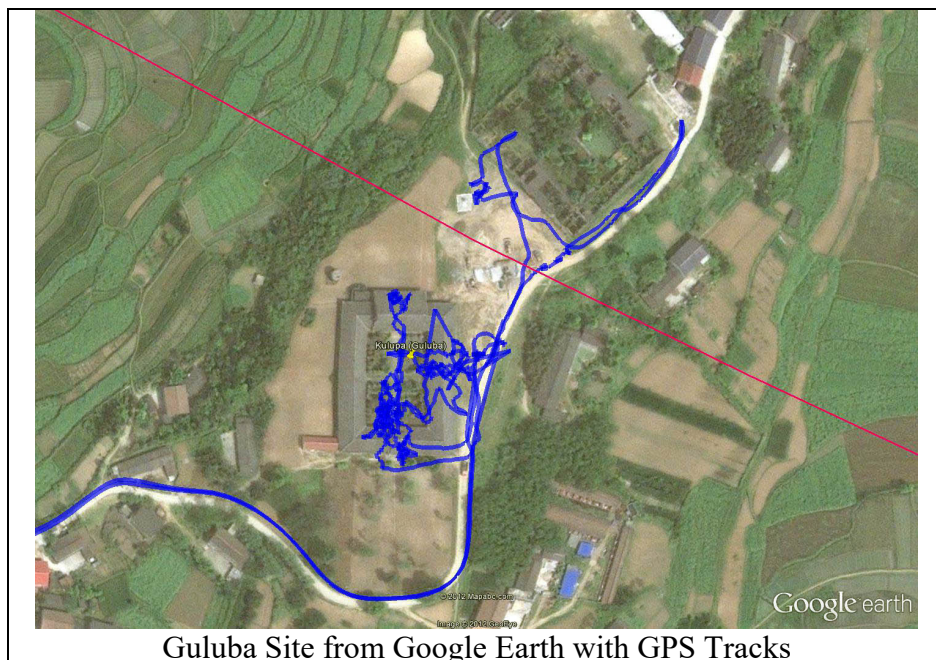


Guluba was in the opposite direction so we went back along the former local roads to find Guluba village. The road was narrow but paved. The road to Guluba went through the streets of Guluba Village until we came to the raised area we had come to find. To get an idea of the site it is useful to look at it in Google Earth:



There are two remaining areas of former building. The rectangular Siheyuan (四合院) in the middle was the male missionaries' quarters and the built area at the top of the picture comprises the ruins of the former orphanage run by the Canossian Sisters. Next to the Siheyuan (a faint outline is visible) to the south is an area where previously there had been a second male missionaries dormitory as well as the dormitories for students when the United Universities were present. To the north of the main Siheyuan is an area where the Cathedral had been. Both the second men's quarters and the cathedral have been demolished and the materials re-used. We heard that the wood in the men's quarters had been of very good quality. In this image there is work going on in the clearing between the main quarters and the previous orphanage. There is no sign of this work now. But there is a small white square which we will see is a memorial to the united universities.

Our movements around the site, taking photographs and exploring are indicated in the GPS tracks recorded on the day:



Guluba Site from Google Earth with GPS Tracks

The car was parked near the Siheyuan. The first thing that was striking were the slogans on the main wall of the building. These seemed to have some historical value. A group of photographs have been put together in a collage without re-projecting the individual photographs – but it allows the panorama of slogans to be demonstrated:



Slogans on the side wall of the main remaining building at Guluba.

On one side of the building is the road which is typical of the local roads off the freeway. They are probably the previous roads with paving. On the wall (the distortion is severe as the wall is straight!) we have the main slogan of:

提高警惕，保卫祖国。要准备打仗。

This translates as: “Increase vigilance, protect the Motherland. We must prepare for war.”

This slogan is quite old but is still relatively modern being in simplified characters, read from left to right and being written over older slogans. I think it may be from the early 1970’s when China was preparing for war with Russia. At that time such slogans appeared all over China and large underground cities were built in some places – such as Beijing and Hangzhou. There are other notices, such as an exhortation to honour teachers and education and another extolling the benefits of Family Planning. For example, one reads “控制人口增长，促进社会进步。” or “Control the increasing population, promote social progress”. The Vatican may feel uncomfortable about this being on the wall of their former mission!

But the main building is not in good repair and needs work to make it fully safe. It is clear that some of the cornices are falling off from the central area of the building where the Chapel turned out to be located:



However, this building is basically sound enough to be in use today. On the other hand, across the clear area is the former orphanage which is a ruin and dangerous to enter. In the early years of the PRC, the former orphanage was used as the local primary school but now a very modern primary school stands next door.



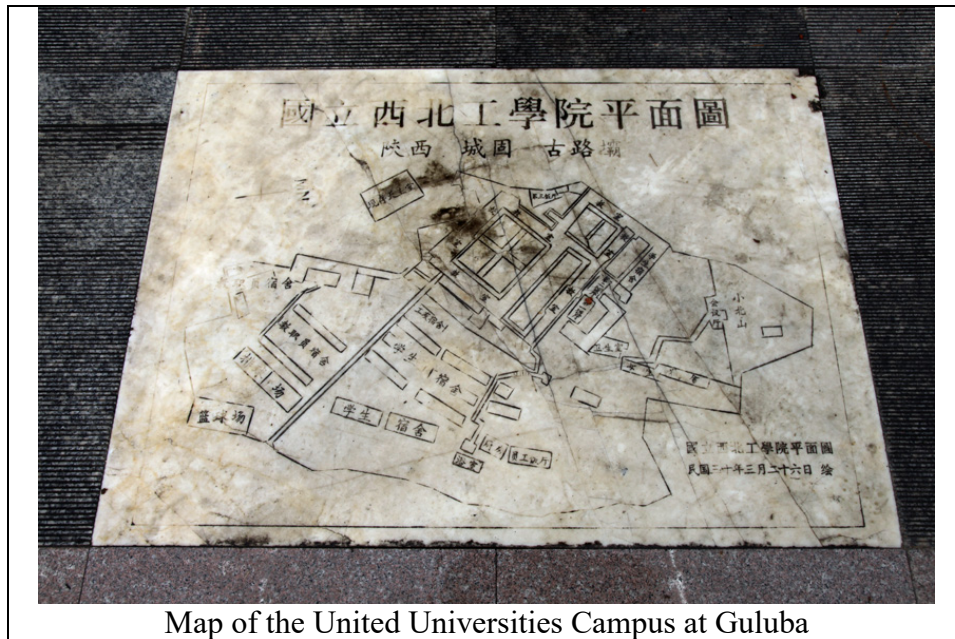
Ruins of the former orphanage at Guluba

In the open area between the remaining intact building and the former orphanage there is a memorial to the United Universities occupation of the site. It is in the form of a memorial stone and a plaque with a map of the arrangements during its years as a University College.



Memorial to the United Universities at Guluba

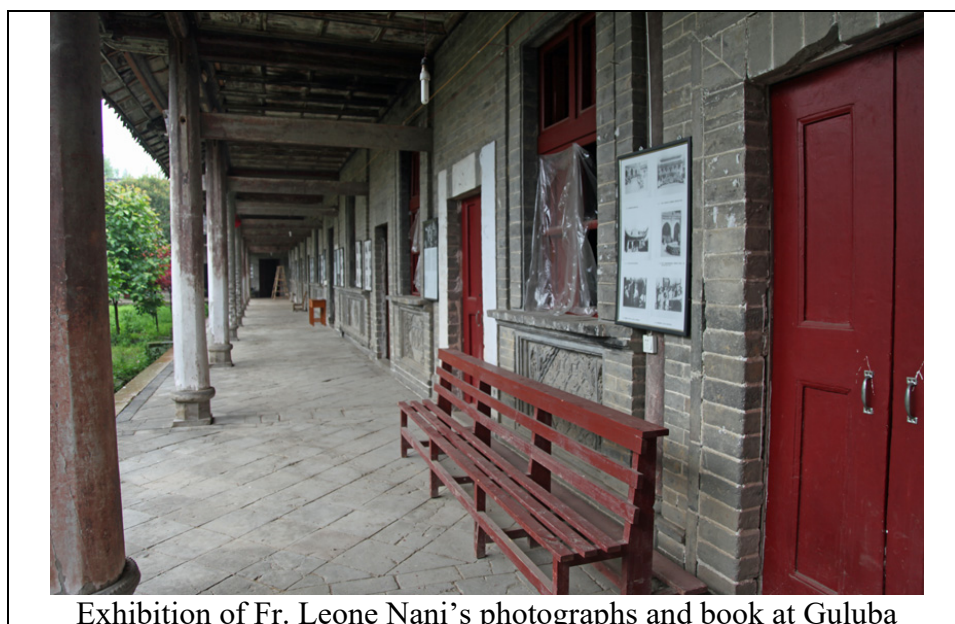
The map seems to be based on one from the period but it is a modern plaque being written from left to right despite using traditional characters. The title reads: “國立西北工學院平面圖” or “Plan diagram for the National Northwest Engineering College”. The location given is “陝西，城固，古路霸”. The traditional character used for “Ba” is 霸 rather than the simpler but still traditional form “坝”. It is not clear which form was used by local Chinese 100 years ago.



Map of the United Universities Campus at Guluba

The Siheyuan is occupied by a group who seem to be local Catholics. A Chinese priest was present who explained how the other Siheyuan and Cathedral had been removed and that the Orphanage was no longer useable. He said that the site was being used as a Church with a chapel and other rooms having been renovated and made useable.

There was an exhibition of old photographs around the verandahs of the building. They were advertising the book by Leone Nani, a priest who came to Guluba in 1904 with a camera and other photographic equipment. His book is a source of wonderful images of China at that time. He returned to Italy in 1914 but his photographs have only recently been published in a book.



Exhibition of Fr. Leone Nani's photographs and book at Guluba

The entrance to the building has been renovated and decorated and its title is “天主堂” or “Catholic Church”.



Decorated entrance to the present day Church at Guluba

At the other end of the building, the Chapel is clean, bright and re-built with great care. The Chinese Father said that services were held regularly in the Chapel. There was another man present (who had come in the black car at the front) but it was unclear if he was a catholic or just a visitor. He knew about the history of the site but deferred to the Father to explain.

The visit to Guluba has led to a study of the history of Catholic priests in the Hanzhong region as they used and described the Shu Roads. A document on this topic is now available on the web site. If you are interested you can find it [HERE](#). The document includes a detailed history of the Guluba site. Based on this document it is clear that the local Catholics are back and using the former mission as their Church 300 years after the first Church was built in Guluba. If the work had been done before the field visit we may have got to find out more about Xiaozhai and the Tomb of Fr. Etienne Faber, but these must wait until another visit.



The renovated Chapel at Guluba

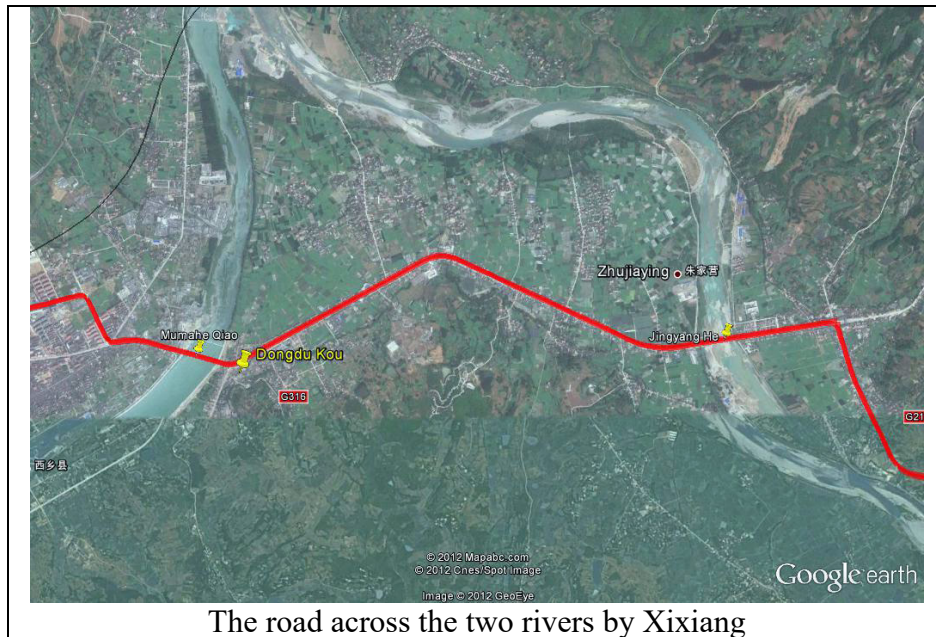
When we had finished at Guluba, we rejoined the expressway and went on to Xixiang where we met a local museum official and had lunch. The day was still rather dreary and wet but the restaurant was pleasant. At first the local person was a bit disappointed that most of the guests were non-drinkers but I managed to help save the face of the Museum a little. We found out quite a lot about the history of Xixiang with much of it having references to the Three Kingdoms period and the Daoist tradition. It was confirmed that there are well established Muslim (回族) communities in the area and it was planned to visit a famous Qing period mosque that had impressed Teichman in Shahe later in the day.

Xixiang and Shahe Kan

When Wylie travelled to Xixiang he came through Mazong Tan (where there was possibly a large sand bar or rocky rapids) where they took a boat down stream to Xixiang. There must have been river trade at that time and Teichman noted that Mazong Tan was the limit of navigation upstream for the Muma River. As with the days that Wylie travelled, it was raining when we were there. But it is still a busy district city and the centre of a fertile farming area. He continues: *“Entering by the east gate, we left by the north, and scarcely a mile beyond our men forded the river, opposite the village of Tung-too-kow. Passing another village; we soon crossed the Yang in a ferry-boat.”* They would have entered from the east after coming by boat and the path that followed was sorted out on the day and can be illustrated using the GPS Track and Google Earth.

The following Google Earth screen save shows the track (in red) followed as we went around (from the north) to the first bridge over the Muma River. The Muma is now wide and full of water. Over the river is the former village (now a town area) of Dongdu which was listed by Wylie. The provincial road and the Russian map road continue as the track does to cross the “Yang” river (Wylie used a ferry boat) which is

today called the Qingyang river. The road continues on to Shiquan, but we turned south to go the Wuzi Mountain.



Google Earth fortunately has a high resolution image here. At the bottom of the image is the background poor quality imagery that (unfortunately) covers a lot of China. It is clearly very badly registered as well as poor visually. It does no justice to the SPOT imagery that was used to create it. The new (2012) high resolution (Geoeye) image at the top of the image has excellent registration with the GPS track.

But between our observations and Wylie's record there was a discrepancy. Wylie writes that his bearers walked across the Muma River. At the place where they did this there is now quite a lot of water in the river. At the time Wylie was travelling there had been a lot of rain and he only went by land to this place because of the level of water in the Han and the danger this implied for the rapids between Hanzhong and Shiquan. So how do these square up? It is clear from Google Earth that the major Shiquan dam has backed up the water a long way and possibly to Xixiang. It is also clear from the imagery that there are two (at least) small dams (more like barriers) on the Muma at Xixiang. So obviously these have changed the hydrology to one where it is no longer possible to ford the river by foot.

We then drove on to Wuzi Mountain (午子山). At Wuzi mountain we found a well establish park with climbs high up onto the mountain to a number of temples and scenic areas. Wuzi Mountain has been famous since ancient times. Daoists Zhang Sanfeng and Zhang Lu were apparently present here and the Empress of Liu Bei (the Shuhan Emperor of the three Kingdoms) apparently used to come to here to pray for her son. Today it is still a place of rest and recreation. But on the day we were there it was overcast and wet and so we did not climb to the temples at the top. Not even Wylie had the time or inclination to do it so we were no worse than he. We did, however, discuss the history of the area, including the useful information that Xixiang had always been a cross roads. Teichman notes that the Ziwu Road finishes at Shiquan but obviously people then travelled through Xixiang and used one of the three routes from there to Hanzhong. It is possible the choice depended on water

levels. To the south, past Wuzi Mountain was the road south as far as present day Chengdu. It is clear on the Russian maps. In the Tang period it was known as the “Lizi” (Lychee) Road (荔子道) along which Lychees from the south were brought for the (in)famous Yang Guifei. But it was also a trade route in use for many years.



At the entrance to the Wuzi history park and scenic area (1)



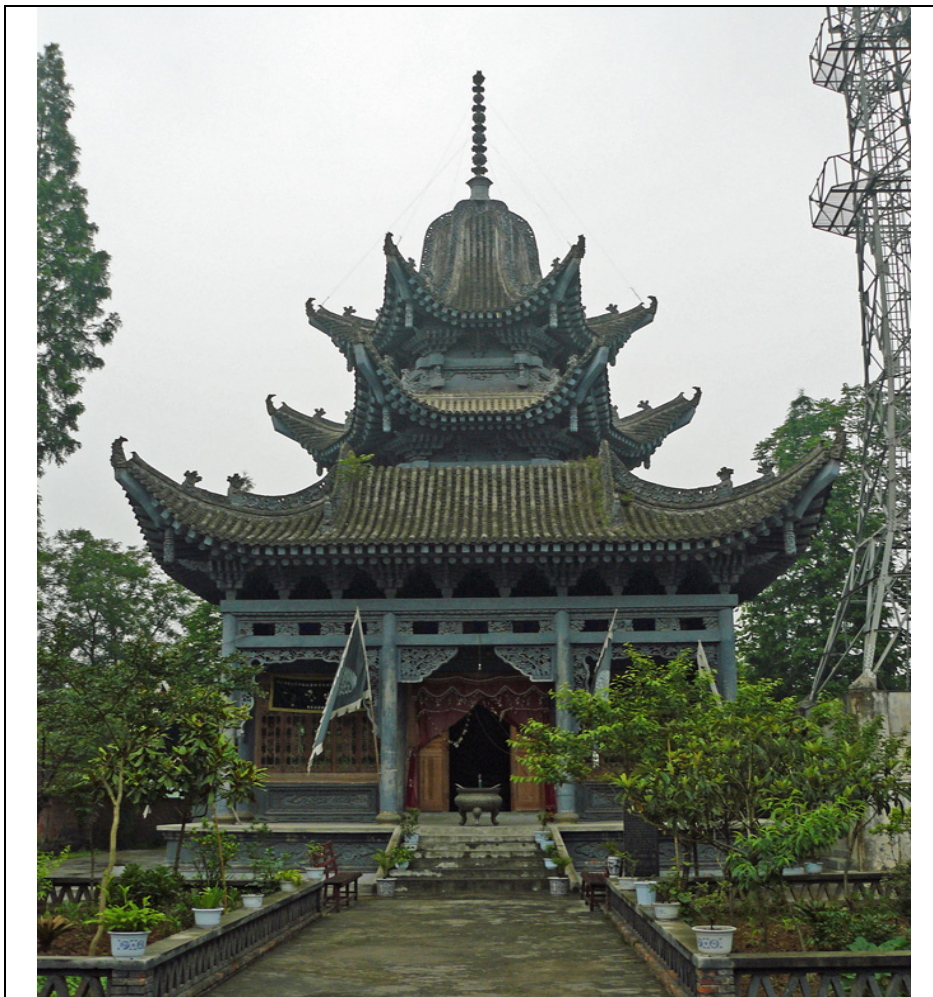
At the entrance to the Wuzi history park and scenic area (2)

We now had enough material to work out the roads in this area for the Google Earth presentation. These included the Lizi Road and the best options for the road that Wylie took through Baimian Xia, Cha Zhen and on to Shiquan. The large modern

dam has changed the track between Cha Zhen and Shiquan but we could now get a reasonable track for the presentation. We then went back past Xixiang and used the old road to get coordinates and check Mazong Tan, Kuzhu Ba and Shahe Kan.

Teichman (1921) reports travelling this route as follows:

“The path runs up the Muma Ho for some 15 li, where the hills close in on the river and bring the valley to an end, and then runs through the hills and along the river to the village of Matsung T’an, 50 li from Hsihsiang and, owing to a small rapid, the head of navigation for small boats on the Muma Ho, up to this point a placid stream. A little further on the trail leaves the main stream, which here flows down from the south, and turns up a small sandy tributary to the south-west, then turns west through low wooded hills intersected by rice fields, and then runs north-west up a small valley to reach the village of Shaho K’an, 25 li from Matsung T’an. This village lies, as its name implies, in a pleasant region of low sandy hills covered with small woods and intersected by rice fields much resembling Szechuan. For some reason or other it is largely a Mahomedan community with two mosques. In the woods one will often see heaps of old timber, carefully stacked, for the growth of a vegetable fungus called mu erh (wood ears), which is a much esteemed delicacy and forms quite an important article of commerce in the Han valley.”



The Cailing Temple in Shahe Kan on the high hill

We had been very keen to see if this description was true today. In fact, in Shahe Zhen there is a famous Qing period Mosque that is operational and we were fortunate enough to visit it and be shown around.

The Xixiang County Shahe Kan “Cai Ling” (西乡县沙河坎蔡岭寺) Mosque is on the highest hill (which it shares with a communications tower) in Shahe overlooking the city. Its architecture is very striking and it is carefully maintained and preserved as a Mosque. There are not 5 calls to prayer every day and it is only periodically visited by a travelling Iman from Gansu who holds services. However, there are a number of young Gansu Muslims who maintain the site and are probably “student” clergy. We were invited to drink tea by a young man who was very happy to have a foreigner and Chinese officials to tea – and possibly even more delighted to entertain two young ladies and explain his Temple.



The Cailing Temple architecture

The architecture and decoration on the Mosque is really very intricate and beautiful. It has been carefully restored and repaired to keep its historical form and style. The young Gansu caretakers keep the grounds clean and tidy and the Mosque in best condition and preparation for when the Iman may arrive and hold service. The banners presented by visiting groups (common in all Chinese Temples) showed that it was a place that many Muslim groups visited and must therefore be a centre of some significance.



Boundless Beneficence

The exhortation over the main door of the Mosque was in traditional characters and reading right to left. In modern form it is 功德无量 (Gōngdéwúliàng) or “Boundless Beneficence”.

The way back to Hanzhong

From Shahe Zhen we took another of Teichman’s three routes. This one was along the G316 Highway (which is identical to the road shown in the Russian maps) to Chenggu County. We had dinner in Chenggu and went back along the main linking road which we had travelled many times in previous years to Hanzhong. The day had sorted out many waypoints and tracks with the main linking roads between Hanzhong and Shiquan as well as ideas for linking to the Ziwu and Lizi roads fully accomplished. A good day’s work despite the rain.

Conclusions

The original field work plan was to relate the road between Chengdu and Hanzhong to the descriptions of Wylie and Teichman and then investigate the linking road to Shiquan described by Wylie from Hanzhong. The journey from Chengdu is reported separately and we have outlined our success here in mapping the important linking roads through Guluba, Shahe, Xixiang and Cha Zhen to Shiquan in the Han Valley. The township of Guluba has a special history with aspects from the missionary past and wartime education. We therefore made it a key stop and have recorded its location and situation. In the future it will be interesting to locate the old church at Xiashai. But that is for the next visit.

In developing the Shu Road presentation there were decisions needed as to how to represent and present the old roads. In many cases, the ancient road does not exist and

finding all of the relics is a long term and incomplete task. Even if the main locations of relics is known, people wishing to experience the old roads must be able to reach the places involved by car near to the ancient roads and to experience the environment of the roads if not move along them by foot. In China today there are a number of levels of road from national to local and fast to slow in character. The provinces and major cities are linked by massive expressways (tollways) and super-fast trains. These travel routes have been located totally independently of the considerations that led the ancient road builders to make roads where they did. But the fact is that it is these links that will bring tourists and others from the major cities to somewhere near the old areas.

Below these super-fast roads and railways are to be found the former “National” highways that have become more provincial and busy with local traffic since the major freeways replaced them for cross-country travel. Even cross-country trucks use the major freeways. The provincial highways are still main roads and will have to be used to take people from the super-highways to the local areas. Further down the scale are the roads used by the villages and local people – but still paved albeit with crops drying, tractors, bicycles and local people using them to move around, leading to a much slower pace of life and driving. The relics of the former ancient roads are beyond these – but they still exist and a number of areas have been developed into parks where people can walk and experience what it was like to travel the hard Shu roads between the towns, some of which have now been developed as “Gu Zhen” (古镇) where sufficient relic material had been preserved.

The strategy taken for the Shu Roads presentation is to make as much use of the former National Highways (now provincial highways) as possible to represent the “Shu Roads” where they follow relatively near to the former and older roads and ancient relics. They are the way to get to the relics so they are the most practical representation of the “Shu Roads”. The Russian maps are being used to establish the “even older” routes of the former National (now provincial) Highways (the first paved motor roads) as these often followed the old routes even more closely. The other advantage is that GPS tracks obtained by car travel with GPS aerial can be used for accurate tracking. Relics and relic roads will be treated as such – “relics” and indicated with different coloured tracks and the “Pagoda” icon and the main roads of the presentation will be the provincial highways.

The field work established how we will move now to set out the linking roads between the main older roads like the Ziwu, Wuku and Lizi Roads with those in the west – the Jinniu, Chencang and Lianyun Roads as well as the central Tangluo and Micang Roads. It was a successful day.

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September 2012.

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