

Two translated excerpts concerning the official account and path of the Tangluo Road

The following records two translated extracts from respected sources of the Tangluo Road. The first is a comprehensive book on the Shu Roads published in 1986 and the second is a book published by Hanzhong Museum and its Director, Feng Suiping which provides so additional information to that in the account by Prof Li Zhiqin. The two documents are written from the classical historical viewpoint in which history is established through literary reference. They together support an English language document called [Sir Eric Teichman and the Tangluo Shu Road](#) which outlines the history and geography of the Tangluo Road with a western perspective through the accounts of the visit by Sir Eric in 1917.

Extract 1: Translation from Li Zhiqin's book

Book Reference:

Li Zhiqin, Yan Shoucheng & Hu Ji (1986). Ancient records of the Shu Roads, Xi'an, Northwest University Press.

蜀道話古，李之勤，阎守诚，胡戟 著，西安，西北大学出版社，1986
Shu dao hua gu, Li Zhiqin, Yan Shoucheng, Hu Ji zhu, Xi'an, Xibei Daxue Chubanshe, 1986

Translation:

5. The Tangluo Road

In comparison with the previously mentioned roads, the historical records of the Tangluo Road are relatively recent. Chen Shou (Western Jin Period) in his "Records of the Three Kingdoms" recorded how in the Three Kingdoms Period, Cao Shuang, from the Kingdom of Wei, used this road to attack Shu, but because the road was blocked after heavy rain, he had to withdraw. He also recorded how the Shu General Fei Yi sent his army to three mountain passes to block Shuang, how later, the Shu General Jiang Wei sent an army to exit from the Luo Valley and attack Wei, and how in addition the Wei General Zhong Hui used three routes to attack Shu, with the Tangluo Road being one of the routes they took.

The route for this road is as follows: South-west from Chang'an, via Huxian west to Zhouzhi Xian, turning south-west for 30 Li (12 km)¹ through the West Luo Valley mouth to enter the mountains. It then passes the Luo Valley Gate, through the upper reaches of the Black River tributary, the Chenjia River, to reach the Laojun Pass. It then follows the Badou River and the Damang River Valley, to reach Houzhen near the western source of the Black River. After that it crosses the Qinling main ridge to reach the source of the Han River tributary, the Xushui River, at Dudu Gate. It then

¹ To estimate distances in Km, the Chinese Li has been taken as 400m but it is usually less in the mountains as in history the "Li" was not just a metric measure but one incorporating time and difficulty.

goes to the south west over the Xinglong pass, which is even higher than the Qinling water divide. There it enters the upper reaches of the Youshui river valley to reach Huayang Zhen in Yangxian District. From Huayang Zhen you can go south-east along the Youshui River to Maoping, through Bali Pass, then changing direction to the south west go across the Guanling Pass to reach Baishi Yi, and exit by the Tang River Valley². Alternatively, you can go south west from Huayang Zhen, to cross the Niuling pass and exit by the Tang River valley, from whence after 30 Li (12 km) you reach Yangxian. From Yangxian along the north bank of the Han River you cross the Xu River to arrive successively at Hanwang Cheng, Chenggu Xian and Liulin Zhen to finally arrive at Hanzhong. Looking at the statistics, the overall length of the Tangluo Roads is about 765 Li (306 km), in which the distance through the valley roads is about 500 Li (200 km). It is the shortest route among the northern Shu Roads for a journey from Chang'an to Hanzhong, as well as being the most convenient.

The reason why the Tangluo Road was given its name is because of its initial valley roads. In the north it is the West Luo river valley, and in the south it is the Tang river valley. As previously indicated, although the sections of the route following the tributaries of the Wei and Han rivers are initial parts of the route, the greater part successively crosses 5 or 6 precipitous watershed ranges. Therefore, even if the ancient saying that “every valley has two mouths” can arguably be applied to the Baoxie Road, in the case of the Tangluo Road it does not apply. Although among northern Shu Roads the Tangluo Road is the shortest and most convenient [direct], it must cross watershed passes that far exceed those of the other roads. Consequently, the road is unusually hard and dangerous. From relevant records, we find that in the northern section near the Luo Valley Gate there is the famous Shiba Pan (18 bends) mountain leading to the Laojun Range. Between the Laojun Range pass and Dudu Pass, the road winds across several tributaries of the Black River on the southern side of Taibai Mountain, the highest peak in the Qinling, along whose winding route there are few settlements, and where wild animals appear from and disappear into the dense forests. After passing the main backbone of the Qinling at the Xinglong Range, near the boundary marker of Yang Zhou, there is the famously rugged and dangerous Bashisi Pan (84 bends) that extends for 80 Li (32 km). Not only is it said: “cut rails in the air, dangerous trestles stretch away” but also here are to be found places with names such as “Naodong” and “Hades Gate”, dotted through with patches of poisonous plants inhabited by [fierce] animals. Travellers all feared passing through these places.

In the development of the Shu Roads, the Tangluo Road was opened up for use relatively late and its period of use as an official postal road was quite short, which is probably related to the above [dangers]. We can deduce that although this route was open at the beginning of the Tang Gaozu Wude period, it was not at that time a Post Road. After it was first used as a post road, following the middle Tang period, it was used frequently. Officials travelling to make reports, envoys and special missions all used the road. In the time of Mingzong of the Later Tang it was rebuilt at one time, but after that it had little traffic and work stopped. The Northern Song “Records of the Taiping Huanyu” recorded some distances on the route and the “Chang'an Gazeteer” recorded the existence of and distances separating some postal stations in the northern

² The “Tang River Valley” reference must be to the Tang River gorge where there is now a dam and below. This is close to the end of both routes. Confusingly, the alternative route given by Zhou (2008) as via the “Tang River Valley” goes through the upper reaches of the river and avoids the gorge.

and central sections of the road. But specific material concerning the utilisation of the post road has not been seen. In the Five Dynasties (907-960) period this road became desolate and blocked. In regard to the Yuan, Ming and Qing periods, the Tangluo Road was never again used as a post road.

Today you can travel from Zhouzhi to Yangxian via a recently made bitumen Highway, but the route of this road is to the east of the ancient Tangluo Road. The new road goes south along the Black River Valley to cross the Qinling, then down along the upper reaches of the Jiaoxi River, which is a tributary of the Ziwu River, across to the Jin River, finally joining the ancient Ziwu Road to reach Yangxian. Among the valley roads of the ancient Tangluo Road, the only main roads at this time are between Yangxian and Huayang in the south and [between Zhouzhi and] the entrance to the Luo River valley in the north.

Extract 2: Translation from the book by Feng Suiping

Feng Suiping and Hanzhong Museum published an account of Hanzhong and its cultural history and relics. It describes the Tangluo Road much as did Prof. Li Zhiqin but added some material that found reference to the road from an earlier time:

Book Reference:

Feng Suiping (2003). *Histories of Famous Towns: Hanzhong -- the Riverland of the Northwest*. Sanqin Press, Xi'an.

小城春秋丛书: 西北小江南 -- 汉中, 冯岁平 著, 三秦出版社, 西安, 2003

Xiaocheng Chunqiu Congshu: Xibei xiao Jiangnan -- Hanzhong, Feng Suiping Zhu, San Qin Chubanshe, Xi'an, 2003.

Translation:

From Chapter 3

“Shu Road Routes -- the (now) untravelled roads”

Page 56:

[The Tangluo Road]

The Tangluo Road, like the Baoye Road, was a road that was opened up by following two rivers (one at each end of the road). In this case they were the Tang Shui (present day Tangshui River) and the Luo Shui. That is, from Zhouzhi (about 70 km west of Xi'an) it goes south along the Luo Valley, crosses over the main backbone of the Qinling Range to reach Huayang in Yangxian District, having gone effectively southwest, before finally reaching Hanzhong. This road was developed comparatively late, being first (officially) recorded in the time of Cao Shuang in the Three Kingdoms Shuhan period.

In recent years, on the basis of a passage in the "Shimen Ode": "Pushing through closed valleys, scaling the bright halls", scholars believe that the "closed valleys" and "bright halls" refer to this route. This would confirm that the Tangluo Road was already being used in the Eastern Han period. From the historical records it is clear

that the period of most frequent use of this road was during the middle to later Tang Period after the Anshi Rebellion (775 CE). Because of the frequent wars in the Guanzhong, its convenient geographical position, and the need for Tang Emperors to take refuge in "Fortunate Shu", the (Tangluo) road seems to have flourished over this time.

In analysing the pluses and minuses of the various routes across the Qinling, in regard to how they link Chang'an and Hanzhong, the length of the Tangluo route is least and most direct. However, along the route you need to pass over the water divides of a number of rivers, and over steep and dangerous mountains, with rapidly changing grades along the road. The road is such that (even) present day travellers find it hard to prepare themselves and are overcome by it. Furthermore, along the route there are very few people or settlements, and there are also potentially dangerous animals and poisonous plants, so that travellers still go in fear (for their safety). The period during which the Tangluo Road was an official Postal Road was very short, and over history its general level of use has been low.

Endnote [1] Chinese Version of the Prof Li Zhiqin Book for Reference

[中文]

蜀道話古，李之勤，阎守诚，胡戟 著，西安，西北大学出版社，1986

5. 傥骆道

傥骆道见于历史记载比前述各道都晚，西晋陈寿《三国志》始记三国时魏国曹爽曾由此道攻蜀，旋因阴雨路阻而退军，以及蜀将费祎出师三岭以截爽之事。其后蜀将姜维亦曾出骆谷沈岭以攻魏，而魏将钟会三路伐蜀，傥骆道又为出兵道路之一。

这条道路的走向是，由长安向西南，经户县折西至周至县，转西南三十里，从西骆谷口入山，越骆谷关，过黑河西侧支流陈家河上游，再越老君岭，沿八斗河、大蟒河河谷，溯黑河西源至厚畛子。然后越秦岭正脊至汉江支流渭水上源的都督门，再向西南越比秦岭分水梁更高的兴隆山，而进入西水上游的洋县华阳镇。由华阳镇向东南沿酉水经茅坪、八里关，折西南越贯岭梁经白石驿，出傥谷，或由华阳镇而西南，越牛岭而出傥谷，再三十里至洋县。由洋县沿汉江北岸，渡渭水，经汉王城、城固县、柳林镇而至汉中。据统计，傥骆道全长约七百六十五里，其中谷道约五百里，是蜀道北段长安汉中间诸线中里程最少，最为便捷的一条。

这条道路所以被称为傥骆道，是因为它的谷道部分，北为西骆峪水河谷，南为傥水河谷。如前所述，它的谷道部分沿着渭水和汉水的几条支流谷道前进，先后要越过五六座高耸险峻的分水岭。所以，如果说古代所谓“一谷二口”之说对褒斜道还可以勉强解释的话，对傥骆道来说就无论如何也解释不通了。

傥骆道在蜀道北段诸线中虽然里程最少，特为近便，但是，它所翻越的几座分水岭的高度远远超过其他各道，因而路途异常艰险。据有关记载，此路北段的骆谷关附近有著名的十八盘山和老君岭，老君岭至都督门间，道路蜿蜒于秦

岭主峰太白山南侧黑河各支流间，升降起伏于人烟稀少、野兽出没的原始森林中。过秦岭南脉兴隆山后，洋州真符县境又有著名的崎岖八十里的八十四盘，不仅“绝栏萦回，危栈绵亘”，而且还有被称为“硃洞”和“黄泉”的险地，分布着一些有毒的动物和植物，行人多视为畏途。在蜀道开发史上傥骆道被开辟利用的较晚而且被采用为官驿大道的时间较短，可能与此有关。据推断，此路虽然在唐初高祖武德年间被重新开通，但并未辟为驿道。作为驿道之一，唐中期以后使用最为频繁，官员赴任、述职、使臣出使，多由此路。后唐明宗时期虽曾一度修筑，未通而罢。北宋《太平寰宇记》中曾记此线里程，《长安志》中也曾记录了此线北段和中段的某些驿馆及各驿馆间的距离。但关于使用此路为驿路的具体资料迄未见到。五代时期此路即逐渐荒塞不通。至于元明清各代，傥骆道就从未再充作官驿大道了。

现在从周至到洋县已修筑了柏油公路，但其线路系由古代傥骆道以东，溯黑水河谷南越秦岭，沿子午河支流椒水河转金水上游，合古子午道至洋县。在古代的傥骆道谷道上，只有南段的华阳镇至洋县间及北段西骆峪口附近一小段修筑了简易公路。

Endnote 2: Chinese version of the extract from the book by Feng Suiping for Reference

[中文]

小城春秋丛书: 西北小江南 -- 汉中, 冯岁平 著, 三秦出版社, 西安, 2003
第三篇: 蜀道通途 -- 无所不通的道路

[傥骆道]

傥骆道，一如褒斜道，它是循傥水(今傥水河)和骆水所开辟的一条道路。即从路谷南行，越过秦岭主脊，再到洋县华阳，由此而南而西，最后到达汉中。此道开辟时间较晚，始见于三国曹爽代蜀汉之时。

近年来，有的学者根据“石门颂”“更随围谷，复通堂光”的记载，认为“围谷”“堂光”之道即提此道，从而证实傥骆道在东汉时已被使用。从历史来看，使用该道最为频繁的时期，则是安史之乱后的唐代中后期。当的关中战事频仍，得地利之便，唐皇不得不“幸蜀”避难，因此这条道路显得繁荣一时。

从穿越秦岭诸条道路的优劣分析，在沟通长安与汉中间的道路，傥骆道路程极近，颇是便捷。但其间要越过数条河流的分水岭，高峻很险，道路升降无常，常常今行旅艰难备至，望而生畏。再说沿途人烟稀少，又有一些有害的动植物，亦令行人胆战心惊。傥骆道作为通驿大道的时间极短，历史上利用率极低。