

Hungarians in China

The Count Béla Széchenyi and Lajos Lóczy Expedition in 1877-1880

2015

Prologue

The first Hungarian who arrived in China was called Gergely. He was a monk. In 1341 he arrived in Beijing and met with the Chinese Emperor. In 1346 he left China and went back to Europe. For a long time in the 15th and 16th centuries nobody could arrive from the western world to the east because the Ottoman Empire cut off the path from Europe. Another known Hungarian traveller, who arrived in China, was a member of the Society of Jesus, his name was János Gruber. In 1658 he arrived in Makao then went to the mainland China, and tried to spread Christianity for several years. After that he went back to Hungary and gave a lecture about interior Asia in the Nagyszombati university, which is the predecessor of ELTE.¹

From the 18th century the travelers from all over the world began to become interested in China. There is evidence that among the European travelers who went to China at this time there were some Hungarians. They went not only to create missions but also to find commercial opportunities in China. They discovered this mysterious land with different fields such as culture, art, ideology, geography etc. Some Hungarian scholars regarded China as the birthplace of the ancient Hungarians, so they always had a lot of enthusiasm to discover this country. For example, Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (1784–1842), who was originally going to East Asia in search of the ancient land of Hungarians, set off to go to Asia in 1820 and spent his lifetime studying the Tibetan language and Buddhist philosophy; became author of the first Tibetan-English dictionary and grammar book. But unluckily for him the proof of the hypothesis of Hungarians coming from China was not found during his travel to China.²

During the period of the Dualism (from 1867 to 1919) more and more Hungarian scholars turned towards China, because the official relationship between Hungary and China was established at this time. On the 7th September 1901, the Monarchy joined with the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Japan, Germany, Italy and Belgium in establishing self-contained concessions in Tien Jin in order to gain bigger political and

¹ <http://www.konfuciuszintezet.hu/index.php?menu=muveltseg&almenu=7&cikkszam=49>

² Dr. Duka Tivadar, *Kőrösi Csoma Sándor dolgozatai*, Magyar Tudomány Akadémia, Budapest 1885

commercial benefit from China. ³Because China lost the second Opium war, to Britain and France, they were forced to sign the “Treaty of Tien Jin” signed in 1860, where foreigners could do commercial trade without limitation in Tien Jin; thus Tien Jin was formally opened to the outside world from that time. In the self-contained concessions each country built its own prisons, schools, barracks and hospitals, and these nations left many architectural reminders of their rule, notably churches and thousands of villas. Today those villas provide an exotic flavour to Tienjin, as a famous tourist spot, and attract thousands of Chinese visitors. One century ago these Concessions, with their European style constructions, deeply hurt the pride of the Chinese people. In the second half of the 19th century, with the loss of two opium wars, the first to Britain, as stated the second to Britain and France, China's last feudal dynasty, the Qing dynasty weakened considerably. Because the colonial powers sold goods in the Concessions tax free, a lot of trade a lot of silver dollars flowed into the West countries, at the same time Europeans began to build their colonies in China. These Treaties later became known as “unequal treaty” in China in the 20th century. At the Beginning of the 20th century, China has become a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country. At that time the Chinese society of the day felt greatly violated by these events, including the emperor, the aristocracy, scholars, and even the pride of Chinese citizens. Therefore, at the time Chinese were suspicious of Europeans.

Despite these adverse factors, there were some Hungarian travelers and scholars played a significant role in the research of the geographical, geological, ethnological, zoological and botanical knowledge of China. A major achievement in this vein was the East Asian expedition of Count B éla Sz échenyi (1837-1908), the son of the founder of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Istv án Sz échenyi. The three scholarly members of the expedition were Austrian cartographer lieutenant Guszt áv Kreitner (1847-1893), the linguist G ábor B álint (1844-1913) (who, however, was forced to turn back by his illness), and the geologist and geographer Lajos L óczy (1849-1920). L óczy played the

³ 何蓉 《奥匈帝国》 三秦出版社 2001
He Rong, *the Austro-Hungarian Empire*, Sanqin Press 2001

main (fieldwork) role,⁴ and the most important scholarly results of the expedition concerning the geomorphology and paleontology Western China are linked to his name.⁵ He edited the scientific results of the expedition in the three volumes entitled Scholarly results of the Eastern Asian travel of Count Béla Széchenyi.

In this study, first I will explain how Lajos Lóczy became a member of the Béla Széchenyi East Asian expedition, and how he prepared for the expedition. Then I will show, how Chinese society looked at that time, according to the description of Lóczy Lajos. I am going to reveal how the important Chinese military generals Li Hongzhang⁶ and Zuo Zongtang⁷ thought about his expeditions, what kinds of help they offered to, and what kinds of difficulty the expedition group met. I will show the interesting details and the outcome of the important meeting between Széchenyi Béla and Li Hongzhang. The outcome of which not only reflected the opinions of the Chinese generals concerning international affairs, the conditions Chinese people under the Western powers; but also revealed a political conflict between the two famous Chinese officials Li Hongzhang and Zuo Zongtang, and the hidden rules of the official circle during the late period of Qing Dynasty. Finally I will summarize the important geographic results carried out by his research.

Before the expedition Count Széchenyi spent three years preparing for it. He browsed through books and materials about museum studies and obtainable travelogues concerning the internal regions of Asia.⁸ The reason for this expedition was not only for finding out the location of the original ancient Hungarian (Magyar race) inhabitants,

⁴ Lóczy Lajos, Gróf Széchenyi Béla emlékezete, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Budapest 1923 p13

⁵ Dr. Kubassek János, Jeles Világjárók nyomdokain, Dénes Natur Műhely Kiadó, 1998, p.171

⁶ Li Hongzhang, (15 February 1823 – 7 November 1901) was a politician, general and diplomat of the late Qing Empire. He quelled several major rebellions and served in important positions of the Imperial Court, including the premier viceroyalty of Zhili, which was one of eight regional viceroys in China proper during the Qing dynasty of China. Chinese historians often rank the Viceroy of Zhili as the most honorable and powerful, and the Viceroy of Liangjiang as the richest of the eight. He also was responsible for affairs in Zongli Yamen (Chinese: 总理衙门), which was the government body in charge of foreign affairs in imperial China during the late Qing dynasty. It was established by Prince Gong (Prince Kong) in 1861, following the Convention of Peking. It was abolished in 1901 and replaced with a Foreign Office of ministry rank.

⁷ Zuo Zongtang (November 10, 1812 – September 5, 1885) was a Chinese statesman and military leader in the late Qing Dynasty. He was born in Xiangyin County, north of Changsha in Hunan province. He served in China's northwestern regions, quelling the Dungan revolt and various other disturbances. In 1884, upon the outbreak of the Sino-French War, Zuo received his fourth and last commission as commander-in-chief and Imperial Commissioner of the Army and Inspector General overseeing coastal defense in Fujian. He died shortly after a truce was signed between the two nations, in Fuzhou in 1885.

⁸ Lajos Lóczy, gróf Széchenyi Béla emlékezete, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Budapest 1923 p191

but was also for carrying out world renowned great scientific knowledge. So it was important for him to meet some companions, who had the ability to take charge of the professional tasks. Finally three talent scholars were selected into his research group, they were linguist Gábor Bálint, cartographer Gusztáv Kreiner, and geologist Lajos Lóczy. After graduating from ETH Zurich (Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich) Lóczy became one of the most talented young geologist in Hungary. Then József Krenner, who worked in the mineralogy section of the Hungarian National Museum invited Lóczy to work with him there, by this chance young Lóczy entered into the Hungarian academic world. When he worked in the Hungarian National Museum, the director of the museum Ferenc Pulszky appreciated Lóczy, who at the time just was a young man. But even so Pulszky was sure that Lóczy's professional skills and moral quality would help Count Széchenyi to implement his goals of the expedition. So Pulszky recommended Lóczy to the Count, and finally the hunch of Pulszky came true. ⁹Most tasks of the four-member research team were carried out by the young Lóczy. He invested a lot of time and paid much attention to the cartographic work, the mineralogical work, and the zoological & botanical collection. Eventually he worked as a leader of the expedition team in the field of professional scientific research; and ultimately, Lóczy Lajos became a key figure of the research group and he promoted the academic achievements, for example writing books, after the three years expedition ended.

⁹ Dr. Kubassek János, *Jeles Világjárók nyomdokain*, Dénes Natur Műhely Kiadó, 1998, p.172

The route of the expedition

The expedition started from Trieste (a city and seaport in northeastern Italy) in December, 1877. The expense of the expedition totally came from the pocket of the Count Béla Széchenyi.¹⁰ At the beginning of 1878 they arrived in India and spent almost 6 month traveling there, then the team reached Java Island (one of China's southern island). From Java they arrived in the Chinese Guang Dong province, which is located on the South China Sea coast.

After arriving in China, Lóczy Lajos went into the underdeveloped southern Chinese provinces, such as Jiang Xi, Hu Nan, Hu Bei, and collected geological datum there. Count Szechenyi, however, left China and went to Japan. After traveling in Japan, the Count went back to China and arrived in Beijing, where he asked for the visa for the trip in the western provinces of China. Then he travelled to Tien Jin, and visited Li Hongzhang. After the meeting with Li Hongzhang the Count took a ship to go to Shang Hai, and there he met with Lóczy Lajos. On 8th December 1878 this Hungarian expedition team started its scientific research work inside China. At that time there were only three members in the team, because Gábor Bálint had to go back to Hungary because of serious illness. From Shang Hai first they visited Su Zhou and Hang Zhou, then in the end of January 1879, they reached Xi An, and on the 20th of February, they arrived in Lan Zhou. Then they went on to Dun Huang, which was the most western point attained by them. After that they stopped in Xi Ning, and did a short visit to Qing Hai lake. After the lake they went down to the southern parts of China. They then they crossed the Qin Ling Mountains and reached Cheng Du the capital city of Si Chuan; then they went to Kang Ding, on the 11th of October the journey was continued from Kang Ding to Batang. From Batang their route took them to Da Li, after traveling there they left China and went in to Bhamo.¹¹

On the 8th October, 1878, Count Béla Széchenyi wrote a letter to Prince Gong

¹⁰ Lóczy Lajos, Gróf Széchenyi Béla kelet-ázsiai útjának tudományos eredménye 1877 – 1880 (gr. Széchenyi Bélával, I – III., Bp., 1890 – 97) Bevezetés XXXI

¹¹ Gróf Széchenyi Béla expedíciójáról Kínában és a Tibet-Kínai Határon in Népszerű Természettudományi Előadások Gyűjteménye

(11th January 1833 to 29th May 1898), and asked for a visa to visit the western regions of China. Prince Gong was a prince and statesman of the Qing dynasty. He served as a regent during the reign of Tong Zhi emperor. In 1861 the Zongli Yamen, a government body in charge of foreign affairs, was established. Prince Gong was named as the leader of Zongli Yamen. In the late period of his life, he put all his energy into repairing the relationship between the Qing government and other great powers of that era. ¹²He also modernised China in the late 19th century. In the letter, the Count clearly explained the reason why his expedition visited China. His reasons were: first, Hungarians regarded China as the birthplace of the ancient Hungarians, so they wanted to go to China personally and try to find evidence of the speculation. The second reason, which was also the most important reason of the Hungarian research group going to China; was that they were attracted by the long history of China. They were interested in Chinese culture so they wanted to do research in such a mysterious country. In the letter the Count also said they wouldn't ask the Qing government for material support for their research, and promised no matter what kind of disaster they met, the Chinese government wouldn't be charged for it. Here is the rest of the letter wrote in Hungarian "...Fajra néve magyar vagyok. Nemzetem a turáni néptörzseknek egyik ága, melynek a mongol nép is egy hatalmas tagját Czelom, melyet követek, se nem politikai, se nem térítői, se nem kereskedelmi természetű; egyedül tudományos, történelmi és kegyeletteljes. Miután lelkem sóvárog, felkeresni azontákat, ahol a szittya magyarok őshazáját gyanítom, látni a vidékeket, hol őseink honoltak, fellelni, ha lehető, sírjaik helyét, és leróva irántuk való kegyeletemet, azokon új hazám, Magyarország javáért és fennmaradásáért könyörögni, melyet Európa szívében a 9ig században alkotának. Nemzetem mindig a legnagyobb érdekekkel viseltetett Khina történelme, de jelesen azon része iránt, midőn mongol uralkodói voltak... Nem kérek én anyagi támogatást avagy segélyt és a legcsekélyebb felelősség sem fogja nyomni Khina kormányát, bármi jót vagy rosszat mérjen rám a jövő". ¹³After reading this letter Prince Gong met with

¹² Richard S. Horowitz, *Modern Asia Studies*, Cambridge Press, 2006, p549

¹³ "... I am a Hungarian. Some scholars suspected, that the ancestors of Hungarian were a branch of Mongolians. I go to China, not for missionary or trades, but I interested in Chinese culture and history. I want to do scientific research here. After my wife slept away, I concentrated on looking for the birthplace of the ancient Hungarian. ask

the Count Széchenyi in Zongli Yamen. They had very happy meeting, and the Prince gave the visa to Széchenyi, and he promised, that he will ask Chinese chancellors to help Széchenyi to finish his travel in China. Prince Gong was friendly and sincerely to Széchenyi.

During the time staying in Beijing, Széchenyi visited the ruin of Yuan Ming Yuan, or the Old Summer Palace, which was built in the 18th and early 19th century as the place where the emperors of the Qing dynasty resided and handled government affairs. The Old Summer Palace was known for its extensive collection of garden and building architecture and other works of art.¹⁴ But when the count arrived in Beijing the once grand gardens had been damaged into pieces by the British and French troops in 18th October 1860. Standing in front of the ruins, the Count felt so sorry about what Chinese suffered and was critical of what fellow Europeans had done to China. He said "I áva e pusztítást szégyenpir borítáel arczomat, és resteltem európai voltomat a kínai előtt, kinek mi beszédünk culturáá".¹⁵ He also said at the time most Europeans regarded China as a perfect colony, so they started wars with China into war in order to gain colonies and benefits from China resources. Széchenyi's opinions about the relationship between China and European countries, are available first hand to Hungarian scholars, because they were written by Széchenyi himself in Hungarian. His opinions influenced the later Hungarian scholars, who also researched this period of history.¹⁶

the Qing government for material support for their research, and promised no matter what kind of disaster they met, the Chinese government wouldn't be charged for it "

¹⁴Lillian Mr. Li *The Yuanmingyuan as Imperial Paradise(1700-1860)* p16

¹⁵ "Seeing the devastation I feel a deep sense of shame and I am ashamed of the people, who did the horrible thing here."

¹⁶ Józsa Sándor, *Kína és az Osztrák — Magyar Monarchia* p13

Széchenyi's Reception by Li Hongzhang

After visiting Beijing and the meeting with Prince Gong, Széchenyi Béla left Beijing and went to Tian Jin, where he met with Li Hongzhang. Li Hongzhang at that time worked in Tian Jin, and dealt with affairs of foreign countries. He was one of the most important mandarin in the Qing's court. The King, Tong Zhi, and the Empress, Dowager Cixi ¹⁷respected Li and relied on him very much. Before Széchenyi left Hungary he knew the famous reputation of Li Hongzhang, so he thought it is very important for him to receive his support. So after he arrived in Tian Jin he visited Li Hongzhang twice in total. In the first meeting Li Hongzhang asked many questions about Széchenyi and his research group. In the 1 hour 30 minutes, Széchenyi talked about his family, Hungarian politics, economy and Hungary's relationships with Turkey and Russia. Li Hongzhang was interested in the last topic very much, he asked why Hungary doesn't join with Turkey. At that time some places of northwest Chinese were frequently disturbed by Russian, so Li said, maybe China should join with the Monarch and defend themselves against Russia. Széchenyi appraised Li highly because of his good knowledge and judgement of Chinese internal affairs and problems. Li realized the weaknesses of Qing dynasty and the negative side of the Chinese people's character very well. What's more, he knew if China wanted to change her fate and avoid more wars with European countries, she had to modernize herself by studying European technology, and by thus China could become stronger. But at that time only a few people could understand Li, because he advocated Chinese studying European knowledge and signed many treaties with foreigners most Chinese thought Li was betrayer of China. Széchenyi, however appreciated Li's insight and believed that his thinking, exceeded his countrymen, and was at least one hundred years before its time. The Count explained his reason of visiting China, the same reasons that he told to Prince Gong, and Li also welcomed to him.¹⁸

¹⁷ 百家讲坛之慈禧与李鸿章 (Cixi and Li Hongzhang)

<http://www.ybdu.com/xiaoshuo/3/3615/420462.html>

¹⁸ Lóczy Lajos, Gróf Széchenyi Béla kelet-ázsiai útjának tudományos eredménye 1877 – 1880 (gr. Széchenyi Bélával, I – III., Bp., 1890 – 97)Bevezetés XXVII

By the second meeting Széchenyi asked Li Hongzhang for a Mandarin and Mongolian interpreter. The interpreter could speak both languages, because Széchenyi wanted to visit Mongolia and some northwest provinces in China, where many people just could speak Mongolian. After deep consideration, Li agreed to send his official interpreter to Széchenyi in exchange for the reports of the research of what they saw in these provinces, and how Zuo Zongtang, the leader of these regions controlled his territories. Actually, before Széchenyi went to China, he had known from some books, that Li and Zuo had opposing political views. Both of them had high reputations at that time, and even now Chinese still see them as the most two important mandarins in the late time of Qing Dynasty. Li was good at dealing with the relationship between China and foreign countries by diplomatic means, and he was closer with Europeans and put huge energy into promoting Chinese to study from European. Zuo Zongtang, agreed with Li, that Chinese should study from Europe, however he believed the way to deal with the affairs between Chinese and foreigners should be by troops, instead of signing the policies that he believed to unfair. Zuo Zongtang was good at leading in a battle but realized few things concerning the policy of diplomacy; and in his opinion Qing Dynasty still had ability to defeat western powers by their "new" weapons.¹⁹

Li could receive little information about Zuo, because of the political conflict between them. Another hidden rule of the Qing court, at that time was that no official could dare to report the bad news to a higher official. If they did, they could lose their position in the official circle. Thus Li could not hear any real information about the territories, which were under the control of Zuo. When Li asked Széchenyi to write letter to him, the Count immediately understood what he was expected to do for Li. So he promised Li, that he will write down all the details about what they saw, and what they experienced in his trip.

After Széchenyi's two visits, to be polite, Li Hongzhang invited the Count voluntarily to the residence of Hering Gustav, a British who served in the Chinese custom. He helped Britain to deal with most affairs with Chinese in China during 22

¹⁹ The Chinese weapons at that time were much more backward than European's. Even so in many Chinese mandarin's opinion these weapons are still very modern and new.

years. People even called him the "British foreign minister of China", because he did many things, which should have been done by a foreign minister. The three national intelligent person talked about many international politic things and Hering gave Li some advice, which were good to China.

After this meeting, Sz échenyi left Tian Jin, and arrived in Shang Hai by ship, here he met together with L óczy Lajos and began to travel together in China.



(Here is map of China. The purple provinces, are where the expedition travelled to)

On the routes of China

According to the Treaty of Nanjing²⁰, in 1840, Shanghai and another 4 cities²¹ opened for foreign trade, where foreign merchants were allowed to trade with anyone they wished. Shanghai was located in the Yangtze River Delta in East China, and is near of Jiangsu, which also was a rich and modern city in China at the end of Qing Dynasty. When the research team stayed there they always traveled by steamboat. During the period of the trip Széchenyi was shocked by this 2500 -year -old city, in which you can see traditional Chinese gardens, temples and a well-developed canal system. The southern city of Suzhou is so crisscrossed with the canals that it has been dubbed "Venice of the East".²² People used the water from the canal to wash clothes, and cook meals. To most Europeans at that time, it seems very dirty that people used river's water as drinking water. That is because of the industrial revolution many rivers and lakes in Europe were polluted by chemicals, so it was dangerous to use the water in daily life. But in China the industrial revolution based in Europe had little impact, for example, just in Shanghai, the count and his colleagues could find the steamboat, in the other parts of China they just could take carriages or by foot. At that time, industrialization was a new word to this big old eastern country, and just at the end of 19th century the king of Qing dynasty and some foresight mandarins such as Li Hongzhang, Zhang Zhidong, and Zuo Zongtang were aware of the importance of developing industry. They believed that both the military and the civil industry should be developed. So arsenals, textile mills, cigarette factories were built at that time in China. In Gan Su province Lóczy visited an arsenal, where he found 230 new cannons. And in Lan Zhou, he visited a cigarette factory, where he found a good smelling, but weak cigarettes. When they took a sailing boat lit by lanterns on the Han River (a river tributary of the Yangtze River with a length of 1532 kilometers), they found, some

²⁰ The Treaty of Nanjing was signed on the 29 August 1842 to mark the end of the First Opium War (1839–42) between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Qing dynasty of China. It was the first of the unequal treaties against the Chinese, as Britain had no obligations in return.

²¹ Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo

²² There is a description of Lóczy about Suzhou: Szu zhou fu bizonyára a legfontosabb város a nagy csatorna mentén. Fala, mely a belvárost övezi, 3 geogr. merőföld területű. Valódi Velenze.

Chinese were repairing the road on the parts of the River, in order to build a railway on a good quality road. At that time the railway was a new thing to Chinese people. The first railway of China was established in 1876 (from Shanghai to Wu Song with a length of 14.5km). The first railway of Hungary, however, was finished 30 years before (built in 1846 from Pest to Vác). According to the record of Lóczy,²³ we can understand the real situation of Chinese industry development at that time.

After the trip in the Hang River, Lóczy went down to Qin Mountains²⁴ by carriage, they spent ten days on the trip. On the 22nd January they arrived at a town on the foot of the mountain, when they arrived there people were celebrating the Spring Festival²⁵ (Chinese New Year). So the Hungarians personally experienced the atmosphere of the Chinese traditional holiday. There are some sentences wrote by Lóczy, which showed clearly what they saw and experienced there. Originally written in Hungarian, here I have translated this sentence into English." During the period of this important festival, all Chinese people who lived in China have a break. One month before the festival Chinese start to prepare for it. They clean their rooms, most family just do it once every year. (And they paste couplets²⁶ on doors). People wear new clothes. Both shops and restaurants are closed, because people don't eat out on that day. They send best wishes to each other. You can hear the sound of firecracker day and night. Lanterns are hung out of rooms. At night there are big revelries, and conjurors. The revelry lasts for 3 days, and 10 days in Xi An". Xi An is the capital of Shaan Xi province, and is one of the Four Great Ancient capitals²⁷ of China, having held the position under fourteen dynasties, and under several of the fourteen are the most important dynasty in Chinese history, such as Zhou, Qin, Han, Tang. In Xian, Lóczy saw clean streets and paving everywhere, He also saw the city wall of Xian, which was one of the oldest and best preserved Chinese city wall with 13.7 kilometers in circumference, 12 meters in height, and 15–

²³ Lóczy Lajos *gróf Széchenyi Béla expedíciójáról Kínában és a Tibet —Khinai Határon*
K.M. Természettudományi Társulat. 1880 p359

²⁴ Qin Mountain are a major east-west mountain range in Southern Shaan Xi(陝西) Province. The mountains provide a natural between the North and South of the country.

²⁵ Chinese New Year is the most important traditional Chinese holiday, which celebrated at the turn of the Chinese calendar.

²⁶ The couplets pasted for the Spring Festival always convey happiness, luck, and good wish for next year.

²⁷ Beijing, Nanjing, Luoyang, Chang'an (Xian)

18 meters in thickness at the base. Nowadays the city wall still stands around Xian with a good protected condition. Lóczy wrote,²⁸ that carriages and wagons could be seen everywhere in this city. Rich people, and famous stars wore silk and satin clothes, but according to the opinion of Lóczy the way they looked was less modern than Hungarian people.²⁹ When Lóczy walked on the street, he always raised concern with the locals and the Chinese followed him because of his European appearance. They talked about Lóczy, laughed at him, even cursed him. At that time Chinese people were unfriendly to Europeans because of the wars and treaties between China and western countries. The worry of foreigners' aggression not only existed in the court and the circle of scholars, but also spread into the life of normal people, especially to the people who lived on the coast of Southern China, where more Europeans lived and worked. According to the record of Lóczy, he didn't even dare to walk alone on the street there, because it was a dangerous thing. The children there followed him, screamed at him, pulled his hair, indeed tried to slap him!³⁰ So one big problem of the research team traveling in China was Chinese people's prejudice of them. With the trip continuing to the Western regions of China, when he arrived in Gan Su, this kind of threatening thing happened rarely. This is because there people were simple and knew little things about political things.

However, their research still didn't go smooth there even without the aggression of local people. More serious challenges waited them. After visiting Xian the Hungarian expedition went down to Gansu Province in Northwest China. During the trip they crossed the Loess Plateau, where few people lived because of bad environment. On the way they saw the roads from Xian Gansu were in good condition, and there were sentry posts on the road every 2.5 kilometers.³¹ Twelve days later, on the 21st March 1879,

²⁸ A városnak több szép utcája és elég jó kövezete van...Fényes selyemöltözeteket lehetett az utcán látni. Feltűnők az itt és északi Kínában használt bérkocsik. Kétkerekű rugó nélküli fedett taligák ezek: fájuk gondosan van faragva, sárgarézszőgek és kapcsok ékítik, színes posztó vagy gyapot-bársony képezi a burkot és belseje gyakran jó mókus —prémmeel van bélelve. Fölcziczomázott pompás mula vonja a szekeret. Az ember a kocsiban fekvé helyezkedik el. A milyen csinos az ilyen jármű a szemnek, éppen olyan kellemetlen a testnek: döcögő és nekünk csaknem élvezhetetlen. Szing-an-fu-ban éppen jó időben jelentünk meg a nép véleménye szerint: új év táján, midőn a mutatványok ideje járta. Bizony a legjobb színész, a legügyesebb paprikajancsi sem örvendett olyan népszerűségnek mint mi. This description Comes from (Lóczy Lajos) *Természettudományi előadások gyűjteményei*

²⁹ Lóczy Lajos, *Természettudományi előadások gyűjteményei*, A K.M. Természettudományi társulat, Budapest 1880 p361

³⁰ Lóczy Lajos, *Természettudományi előadások gyűjteményei*, A K.M. Természettudományi társulat, Budapest 1880 p362

³¹ Here is a map (map 1.), which was made by Lajos Lóczy. On the map we can see the routes of the expedition.

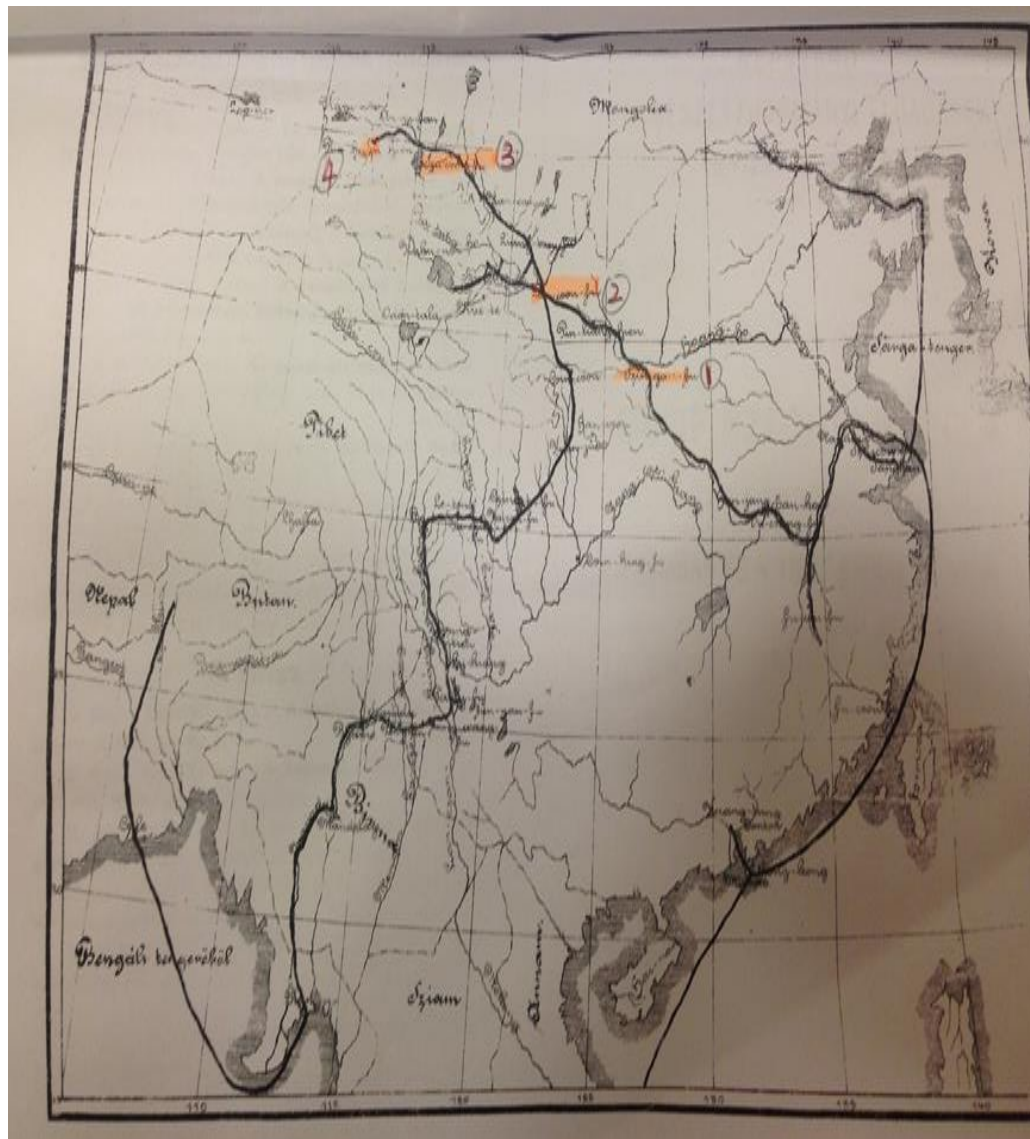
they arrived in Suzhou(肃州), where the Chinese mandarin Zuo Zongtang had set up the military camp. The research team intended to cross Gansu and keep travelling to other north-western Chinese provinces, such as Qinghai province and Mongolia, but soon bad news was delivered to them. It was that Zuo Zongtang forbade them proceeding with their research in those provinces. Even though the research team had delivered the visa they received from Zongli Yamen to Zuo (with which they should have been allowed to visit in all of China with no limits), but this famous general didn't change his decision. In order to obtaining the permission for trip continue, B ́a Sz ́chenyi visited Zuo in his camp, and explained his purpose of research in those regions.

Zuo Zongtang welcomed the Hungarians on the day after they arrived in Suzhou. Zuo wore a dark blue official suit decorated with elegant embroidery, and a yellow silk waistcoat out of the suits. In the Qing dynasty, yellow was a royal colour, usually just the Emperor's family could use it. If an official made a huge contribution to the country, he might rewarded with a yellow waistcoat.

After short greeting talks, Sz ́chenyi showed his respect and praise to this proud Chinese general. Then Zuo asked some questions from Sz ́chenyi: Where is Hungary? Is Hungary near Russia? (Where is Hungary located in comparison to Lop Nur). Are Hungarians descendants of Genghis Khan? Are you a Tsar? These questions now sound ridiculous, especially coming from such an important mandarin's mouth; but it reflects well, that this famous official was ignorant of world geography, European history and international affairs. Sz ́chenyi answered all questions and explained, that he is not Tzar, but is born into a Hungarian court family. That in 1697 his ancestor, II Gy ́rgy was bestowed the title of court by Leopold II, and that he received the title according to the hereditary rule. Zuo Zongtang thought about what Sz ́chenyi told him for a moment and then told to the court, that in China just a few noble families were bestowed titles by the hereditary rule, and that they usually got the titles because of making a contribution to the country; and if a family could keep a noble title more than six

And here is 4 cities, which are marked by red number. 1 Xian; 2 Lanzhou; 3Suzhou; 4Dunhuang

generations, it was a huge honour to the family.



(map 1.)

The bargaining with the cunning mandarin

During the meeting Széchenyi asked Zuo Zongtang again to let his research team go out of Gansu province and visit Lop Nur, but Zuo refused his request without thinking. He gave the reason that there were barbarians, and no matter who went there, even a strong soldier, would be killed by the barbarians; and that if the Hungarians were attacked by the barbarians, the Chinese Emperor would punish Zuo. Széchenyi, however, promised to Zuo, no matter what kinds of bad thing happen to them, that Zuo would not be in trouble; but Zuo still didn't allow them to go there. He showed his map to the court, and explained, there was no road from Gansu to Lop Nur, so they couldn't arrive there anyway; and when The Count took his map out, on which there is marked a road from Gansu to Lop Nur, Zuo turned angry immediately. He complained, that they should not take their own maps to China, and the road drawn on their map had been destroyed many years ago. If the Hungarians insisted on the trip to Lop Nur, he couldn't stop them, because they are foreigners, but their interpreter, Mr. Xin and other Chinese servants were not allowed go there. Széchenyi was confused by Zuo's obstruction very much. He suspected, that this general was angry with him, maybe because he applied for his visa in Zongli Yanmen rather than applying for it in Zuo, and that maybe provoked the general; Or that Zuo didn't want anybody to reach the north-western parts of China, and that he didn't allow anyone to know the social real conditions there, and that maybe it was totally different from what he reported to Zongli Yamen.

Zuo Zongtang refused the Széchenyi's requirement of continuing his travel with his servants and interpreter in the Western China. The court, however, wrote a letter to Zuo, in order to receive a permission from the Chinese general, that allows them to travel in the western regions with him. In the letter the court first explained, that he thought he could reach the western regions of China with the visa received in Beijing. Besides that, when he traveled in Beijing, nobody told him, that if he would like to go out of Gansu province and visit the western regions, he was supposed to ask for another permission from Zuo. The court said, if he had knew this, he would have asked for it

before he set out for Gansu. In a word, he didn't mean to offend this important Chinese mandarin. In the letter, the Hungarian court restated, they are neither British, nor Russian. They wanted to go to China personally, because they were attracted by the long history of China and were interested in Chinese culture so they wanted to do research in such a mysterious country. They were not interested in commercial trades or religion things like other foreigners. They just wanted to take a look at this beautiful country, which was suspected as the ancient land of Hungarians. Then Sz échenyi wrote, that from 13. Century there was no conflict between Hungary and China, and considering of the challenge of Russia's expansion³², the two countries might work together to solve the problem for the future. The court showed his respect and admiration to Zuo, but he also expressed his discontent to the Chinese general. Because Sz échenyi thought, that Zuo made an obstruction and difficult to them on purpose. Finally the Hungarian promised to Zuo, no matter what kinds of disaster happened to them in the dangerous western regions, they wouldn't make him in trouble. And the court hoped, that Zuo allowed his servants and interpreter to go to the westerns regions with him.

Three days later, Sz échenyi received a letter from Zuo. In the letter Zuo restated, there was no road from Anxi³³ to Turpan Prefecture³⁴. If the court wanted to arrive in Lop Nur, he had to get cross of Turpan Prefecture, but there was no courier stations on the way. It was an uninhabited place, and that nobody could survive there. Zuo also stated in the letter, that he was friendly to every foreigners and never lie to this Hungarian court. He could let Sz échenyi go to Lop Nur, but his interpreter must wait him back from Lop Nur in Gansu.

Sz échenyi read Zuo's letter, and wrote another letter in reply to this Chinese general again. He explained, he didn't intend to go to Turpan Prefecture from Anxi. He just wanted to go to Lop Nur from Suzhou directly. And then he would like to visit Dun

³² In 1858, China and Russia signed the Treaty of Aigun, according to it Russia received over 600,000 square kilometers from China. In 1860, China signed the Treaty of Beijing with the western countries, by which Russia received Outer Manchuria. This area comprises the present-day Russian areas of Primorsky Krai, southern Khabarovsk Krai, the Jewish Autonomous Oblast and Amur Oblast.

³³ Anxi Fu is a town, which is located in Gansu province.

³⁴ Turpan is located in the east of Xinjiang, People's Republic of China

Huang³⁵. After reading this letter, finally Zuo Zongtang allowed the Hungarians and their servants and interpreter to continue their trip in Lop Nur and Dun Huang.

Zuo Zongtang met with Sz échenyi and the members of his research team again in his residence, before they set out for Lop Nur. During the meeting Sz échenyi asked Zuo to help him to send two letters. One should have been sent to Li Hongzhang, and another one to Hungary. Zuo asked Sz échenyi to read out the letter, which was supposed to be sent to Li. As for the other one, the Chinese general was not interested in it, so the Count did not have to read it out. Sz échenyi was shocked with this unbelievable requirement and refused it without hesitation. He said, he would rather the two letters than read them out, as Sz échenyi did not want that this cunning Chinese mandarin got any information about his relationship with Li from the letter. Finally the letter was sent to Li in another way.

³⁵ Dun Huang is a county-level city in northwestern Gansu province, Western China.

The first Westerners in Dunhuang

Days later the Hungarians left Suzhou and went to Dunhuang. It is a county-level city in Gansu province. It was a major stop on the ancient Silk Road and is best known for the nearby the Mogao Caves, also known as the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas. There are 735 caves in the Mogao caves. The first caves were dug out in 366 AD as places of Buddhist meditation and worship. Since that time, Chinese emperors from every dynasty paid huge amount of money to expand the size of it. At the end of 19th Century there were murals covering an area of 45,000 m²; 50,000 sculptures, paintings on silk and paper, printed images, textiles and manuscripts in the caves. ³⁶These precious works of art and books refer to the history of Buddhism, the literature of Confucianism and Taoism, Chinese history, geography, poems and the knowledge of Central Asia etc.

In the late time of Qing dynasty, the government didn't have much money to protect the caves. In 1907 a joint British/Indian group led by Hungarian archaeologist Aurel Stein discovered the caves. Stein negotiated with Wang Taoist, who appointed himself guardian of the caves around the turn of the century, to allow him to bring a significant number of manuscripts as well as the finest paintings and textiles back to Britain for just 200 silver dollar. Stein brought the Mogao Caves to public notice. After that, more and more Europeans arrived at the Mogao Caves and bought the works of art and did research there. Most Chinese think Aurel Stein is the first foreigner, who discovered the Caves. However, Széchenyi and his team passed through Dunhuang and noted the murals and artifacts 28 years before Stein's visit. They are the first Europeans to visit there in late April 1879. Actually, it was no other than Lajos Lóczy, who directed the young Aurel Stein's attention to the Caves. Stein read all Lóczy's publications concerning Dunhuang, and he was really impressed by the descriptions. In 1902 Lóczy described the details of Dunhuang to Stein personally,³⁷ such as, the Caves' locations,

³⁶ Whitfield, Roderick, Susan Whitfield, and Neville Agnew. "Cave Temples of Dunhuang: Art and History on the Silk Road" (2000). The British Library. ISBN 0-7123-4697-X

³⁷ Lilla Russell-Smith, *Hungarian Explorers in Dunhuang*, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Third Series, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Nov., 2000), pp. 341-362 Published by: Cambridge University Press

the Cave's number and the murals and sculptures in the Caves. Spurred by Lóczy and allured by the beauty of the Mogao Caves' pictures (which were showed by Lóczy also), this young Hungarian started his expedition in Dunhuang in 1907.

Dunhuang was the westernmost town that the Count Széchenyi's expedition reached within China. That was because of the negotiation between the Hungarians and Zuo Zongtang. They found the Mogao Caves, and Lóczy noted it as the following description

"Near Tun-huang-hszien [Dunhuang xian] the Csing-fu-sz [Qianfosi] caves are famous. About 24km from the town in a southern or south-easterly direction stand bare granite mountains, and at their northern foot are horizontal layers of gravel conglomerate covered by wind-blown sand with a valley cutting into them. On the vertical western wall, at a length of 2 km on three levels, are hundreds of cave openings in dense succession. Among them two giant Buddha figures are cut out from the rock, one 20, the other at least 35—40 metres high. The narrow entrances of the caves lead into spacious rectangular chambers that remind one of Elefanta [Elephanta] in Bombay and the caves of the island of Salzette [Salsette]. The walls are covered with paintings mostly showing scenes from the Buddha's life. The figures of women are painted with taste, and around the heads of the figures are haloes like those of Christian saints. There are clay statues in the bigger caves and in front of them altars with vessels of fresh water and fragrant incense burners and next to them a big copper plate and a drum to make the pilgrims' prayers sound louder . . .

In front of the caves there are several Chinese temples; These are being elaborately restored by the wealthy Chinese, who also have had the clay statues of the caves repaired. Moreover instead of the fine old frescoes they are having new ones painted which appeal to them. At the time of our visit only two Buddhist monks were guarding the caves and performing the prescribed rituals in front of the undamaged Buddha figures. I also saw two sleeping Buddhas in the caves, over whose slumbers the most varied types of figures rejoiced and gave thanks

Sand blown by the west wind has covered the inside of most caves, in the past however they must have been covered even more deeply judging by the old sand layer

lines. There are at least 1000 caves here and the number of figures in them must be over 10,000. Everything points to the possibility that the idols and caves of Csing-fu-sz were made according to the plans of Indian Buddhist priests or missionaries, at any rate the old figures bear no relationship to the Chinese Buddhist traditions found in the provinces of Central China. According to the priests, the caves were built during the Han dynasty, hence at the time when Buddhism was first brought to China. This agrees with the information from Chinese history that Sacsou [Shazhou] was an important place from the Han dynasty onwards. The present day colony was founded by Kien-lung [Qianlong (1736-1796)] on the right bank of the river Tan-ho [Danghe], over which a bridge leads to the ruins of Sacsou. On the fringes of the Gobi desert out of all the towns of Kansuh those in the surroundings of Tun-huang-hszien are the most flourishing and most populous. In the past the area was even more important, when the above mentioned [northern and southern] routes terminated here and the silk trade followed this route towards Khotan to Persia and towards Khamil [Hami], the town of the Uighurs..."³⁸

³⁸The English description comes from Lilla Russell-Smith, Hungarian Explorers in Dunhuang, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Third Series, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Nov., 2000), pp. 341-362. Published by: Cambridge University Press. The original Hungarian description:

" Nevezetesen Tun-huang-hszien közelében a Csing-fu-szikla üregek. A várostól DDK-i irányban 24 kilométernyire gránitból való kopár hegység emelkedik, melynek északi lábánál kavics-konglomerátból való vízintezési telep vannak; ezekre az előbbi futómokhalmok halmozódtak föl, s egy árok nyomul be közéjük. Függőleges nyugati falában két kilométernyi hosszúságban, három emeletben, sűrűn egymás mellett nyílnak az üregek, melyek között kétféle Budha alak van a szikla belsejében: egyik 20, a másik legalább 35-40 méternyi magas. A szűk bejáratú üregek belsejében tágas, épszögletű kamrák és a bombayi Elefanta és Salzette sziget üregeire emlékeztetnek; a falakat freskók födik, melyek tárgyak jobbára Budha életéből vett epizódok képezik; a nőalakok éléssel vannak előállítva, s az alakok fejét fénykoszorú keríti miként a kereszténység szentjeit; a nagyobb üregekben agyagszobrok emelkednek; előttük oltár friss vízzel telt edényekkel és illatos füstölőkkel van telítve; nagy résznél és dob van mellettük az imádkozó zarándokok fohászaik hangosabb átélére.

Az üregek előtt több khinai templom is van; a khini vagyonos emberek nagyban restaurálják ezeket, valamint az üregek agyagszobrait is, sőt a régi jó freskók tetejére is nekik jobban tetsző festményeket mázoltatnak. Látogatásunkkor csak két budhista szerzetes őrizte az üregeket és végezte az előírt szertartásokat az épségben lévő Budha alakok előtt; két alvó Budhát is láttam az üregben, melyeknek szunnyadása fölött a legkülönbözőbb típusú alakok őrvendtek és hálázkodtak.

A futóhomok, mely nyugat felől előre, az üregek nagy részét eltemette; egykor azonban még jobban el voltak öntve az üregek, miként a régi vonalak bizonyították az egykori homoknak magasságát. Legalább 1000 üreg van itt és a bennük lévő alakok száma 10,000 fölé emelkedik. Minden arra mutat, hogy a Csing-fu-sz-i üregek és bányák az indiai budhaizmus papjai vagy misszionáriusai terve szerint készültek, a régi alakok legalább semmiben sem emlékeztetnek a khinai budhista kultúra, a mint az a belső khinai tartományokban föltalálható. A papok állítása szerint az üregek a Han-dinasztia idejétől kezdve fontos hely volt. A jelenlegi gyarmatot Kien-Lung (1736-1796) alapította a Tan-ho jobb partján, mennyi Kan-suh-i város között Tun-huang-hszien környéke a legvirágzóbb és legnépzsűrűbb; valaha azonban még jelentékenyebb volt, midőn a főnt elősorolt útnak itt vala csomója és a selyemkereskedés erre vonult át khotan felé Persiába és Khamil felé ujgurok városába."

This description comes from Lőczy Lajos, *Khinai Birodalom Természeti Viszonyainak országainak leírása* p495—496,

Because of the Hungarians lacked of foods they couldn't research in the Caves for a long time. After visiting the Caves they went back to Suzhou. On the way back they met with many friendly local people. They were nice to foreigners. That is because, people there seldom saw foreigners and knew nothing about the wars between China and European countries. They were simple, but conservative. For example, according to the descriptions of Lóczy, the first time a husband saw his wife was at their wedding. And the custom of Foot binding as a thousand years ago³⁹.

Without the supporting of Qing court,⁴⁰ the Count Széchenyi's expedition couldn't do a long time research in Tibet. After they visited in Dunhuang, they went down to Sichuan province, there they visited Kanding and Batang, which a county in Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.⁴¹ Most residents were Tibetan, they were unfriendly to the foreigners. For example when the expedition visited in a Lama temple, there was somebody who tried to throw stone to them. Luckily they wasn't hurt by it.

26th April 1880, after the 27 month research in China the Hungarian set out for home.

³⁹Foot Binding is the custom of applying painfully tight binding to the feet of young girls to prevent further growth.

⁴⁰ LÓCZY LAJOS (1849–1920) *GEOLÓGUS, FÖLDRAJZTUDÓS: UTAZÁS GRÓF SZÉCHENYI BÉLÁVAL A KUKU-NORHOZ ÉS KELET-TIBETBE (1880)*,

⁴¹Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Tibetan: དགའ་མངོས་པོ་དབུས་རྒྱུ་ཁུལ་; Chinese: 甘孜藏族自治州) — is an autonomous prefecture occupying the western arm of Sichuan province, People's Republic of China. It is sometimes spelled as "Kardze" and Garzin by non-government sources. The prefecture's area is 151,078 square kilometres (58,332 sq mi). The population is approximately 880,000, with Tibetans accounting for 77.8% of the total population. The capital city of Garzê is Kangding (Dardo)



(In the map the yellow line is the route of the Count Béla Széchenyi; The blue line is the route of Lóczy Lajos; The green line is the route of the Béla Széchenyi and Lóczy Gusztáv)

The achievements of the count Széchenyi's expedition

The count Széchenyi Béla's expedition was the first European research team, which arrived in North Western regions of China, where they did scientific research across the country. During their trip in China, Count Széchenyi met with three important Chinese mandarins — Prince Gong, Li Hongzhang and Zuo Zongtang. The Hungarian Count received the support from Prince Gong, which was an important condition for him to finish his research in China. The meetings between Béla Széchenyi and the other two Chinese mandarins show us a vivid picture of the political life in the late period of Qing dynasty, as well as the confliction between the two officials.

After the Count, geologist Lajos Lóczy played the main (fieldwork) role, and the most important scholarly results of the expedition concerning the geomorphology and paleontology Western China are linked to his name. For example he drew the 1:15000000 scale maps of Chinese mountain range and 1:1300000 scale maps of river system, located in Sichuan, Hunan, Hubei, Gansu, Shanxi provinces. He also got a good results in researching of Chinese geology. For instance, he spent much time researching the Loess Plateau, and found out a new kind of clay, which comes from Pliocene period. This new discovery is still meaningful in our modern era; and his research of the Chinese limestone' layers, set a foundation for later Chinese geologists doing research in this field.

After the expedition he spent twenty years editing the scientific results of the expedition in the three volumes entitled Scholarly results of the Eastern Asian travel of Count Béla Széchenyi.⁴² He gave lectures about their research in Europe, and became a famous geologist in Europe.⁴³ Count Széchenyi wrote letters to Lóczy, in order to show his thanks to him.⁴⁴ In 1922, the Chinese geography Committee named Lóczy as

⁴²The Lajos Lóczy's academic works about the expedition in China:

A khinai birodalom természeti viszonyainak és országainak leírása, Kiad. M. Kir. Természettudományi Társulat, Bp., 1886. 865 oldal, 200 kép)

Gróf Széchenyi Béla kelet-ázsiai útjának tudományos eredménye 1877 – 1880 (gr. Széchenyi Bélával, I – III., Bp., 1890 – 97) (Scholarly results of the Eastern Asian travel of Count Béla Széchenyi)

Gróf Széchenyi Béla kelet-ázsiai utazásának földrajzi és földtani eredményei. Bpest, 1898. (Székfoglaló Klny. az Akadémiai Értesítőből)

⁴³ Lóczy Lajos, gróf Széchenyi Béla emlékezet, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Budapest 1923, p16.

⁴⁴ Lóczy Lajos, gróf Széchenyi Béla emlékezet, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Budapest 1923, p20

a laureate member of the committee because of his outstanding contribution to the research of Chinese geography and geology.