

Chinese make out that it is considerably more than the official 90 li (140 or 150 li, which, however, is wrong).

The northern part of the town is as little inhabited as the southern. The population of about 500 families groups itself round the two streets crossing each other at right angles at the «kulo» tower, or rather, the beginnings of streets, for the one running N—W gives up quite close to the tower and only the E—W street extends almost to the town wall thanks to some empty spaces. The wall is dilapidated and partly covered by high sand dunes that reach up to the parapet of the E wall both inside and out. I took a walk with one of the officers of the garrison along the top of the wall. He took all sorts of precautions before venturing on to some parts of the crumbling old wall. *November 10th. Ansi.*

Trade is mostly local, though some merchants do business with Mongols, especially in the mountains in the S, but also as far as Uliasutai. To-day I had an opportunity of seeing a large Mongolian camel caravan arriving from the latter place. The men bring Russian cotton goods and buy up grain. There are scarcely a hundred shops, large and small together. The two largest have a turnover of 30—40,000 lan annually and deliver the wool they buy to Bautu. A Sart deals in Russian goods. — The population is exclusively Chinese; there are no Dungans.

There is a Tsouguan resident in the town, to whom the Shenguans at Tun-huang and Yumen are subordinated. The garrison, the actual number of which probably does not exceed about 150, is under the command of a Hsietai who also commands the garrisons at Hsiao-wan, Pu-lung-chi, San-tao-Kow and Tashitow and the posts along the road to Ma-lien-ching-tzu in the N and San-tao-Kow in the E.

There are no noteworthy buildings or temples. $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile S of the town stands the wall of the abandoned «new (Chinese) town», «Sincheng». It was built, according to the local people, because it was impossible in the old town to cope with the drifting sand that piled itself up against the walls. However, fire sent down from heaven destroyed it and it was then finally abandoned 60 or 70 years ago and the inhabitants returned to the old town. There are scarcely any traces in it of former buildings and the mounds of sand reach up to the battlements of the walls.

The population of the district, which is entirely Chinese, has collected in a S, SW and W direction from the town. N of it there are only a few houses and along the road to the E the fields form some independent oases at distances of several dozen miles from each other. In the S, SW and W, however, the villages form a cultivated area extending for 14—15 miles in a W and SW direction, with intervals of barren stretches. The saliferous, low-lying region is intersected by numerous ariqs with plenty of water from the Su-lo Ho. Wheat, tchumiza, tchinkho, oil plants and peas are grown. The average yield probably does not exceed 4—5 fold. The stock of cattle is small. The cattle are not of good breed and are still as thin as scarecrows even in the autumn. There are no grazing grounds to be seen.

The first Chinese population probably consisted of soldiers who were settled on the land by General Jang y Tchun with a military organisation, when he reconquered the district in the second year of the Emperor Kienglung's reign. The names of the villages nearest