

The town contains 220 houses and there are 3 sarais inside the town wall and 2 outside it. There are 46 shops, 3 of which are rather large, 1 with a yearly turnover of 20,000 and 2 of 10,000 lan each. Russian cloth is brought in small quantities from the west by Sarts and is sold to the local Chinese merchants. Wool is bought up in Changma, where there are said to be considerable flocks of sheep, but above all from Mongols, and is sent via Khua Kheiza to Chinta and thence to Bautu and Kweihwa ting, but the annual quantity probably does not exceed 10—15,000 djin. The stock of cattle is inconsiderable. 1—2 oxen and 1 horse can be calculated per household. The flocks of sheep are quite small, excepting at Changma. In Khua Kheiza there are 400—500 camels. A caravan route for camels runs thence to Uliasutai and another over Chinta to Bautu. The latter is said to be used for carrying wool from Ansi and Tun-huang. Another road (grass and plenty of water) connects Suchow with Tun-huang over Tchangma.

About 2,240 tan of grain are supposed to be paid in taxes for the tilled area in the district. The living conditions of the people are said to leave much to be desired. The houses are small and poor. The fields are hidden under the snow. Millet, wheat, tchumiza, peas, tchinkho, barley, oil plants and a little opium are grown. The yield is 8—9 fold. Grain does not appear to be sold to other places, at all events not in any quantity worth mentioning, nor does other local produce. Mineral wealth is said to exist in the mountains near Tchitinghu in the form of naphtha, coal and gold. The naphtha is collected in small quantities with scoops from four shallow depressions in the ground. Coal is mined or collected on the surface in very small quantities. Gold, which is supposed to exist, is not exploited at all. A rumour has spread recently that a German has obtained a concession for working the naphtha resources. The population is entirely Chinese. There are no Dungans here, nor in Pulungchi or San-tao-Kow. — Snow falls between the 10th and 1st Chinese months; it reaches a depth of 1/2 arshin, but melts several times as a rule. Rain is rare, but falls in the 5th and 6th Chinese months. Severe easterly burans are common during winter and spring.

The deep snow forced me to give the tired arbah horses a day's rest in the hope that some other arbah might during the day break the trail on which, according to the mandarin's statement, 3 carts had recently taken 24 hours to make their way through the deep snow. However, my hopes were frustrated, for the road proved to be snowed up and the surface was frozen hard. The next stage was said to be 110 li, which seemed a pretty stiff proposition, in view of the state of the arbahs and the snowdrifts. *November 27th. Chih-chin-hsia village.*

I called my men at 3 a.m. and at 5 o'clock we started. The road led out of the other, southern gate of the town and after proceeding ENE and E for a short time, it took an ESE course which it maintained during the whole journey. The weather was clear and calm. The first rays of the sun were just appearing above the mountains as we rode out under the low arch of the gateway. The mountains in the S and the surface of the snow-laden plain were dazzling in their whiteness. S of the town the country was unpopulated and apparently uncultivated, with long undulations and slight mounds. Beyond, at a distance of 15—20