

that had arrived in Chinta from Suchow my new friend saw that my name had been written in a way that sounded ridiculous to a Chinaman's ears and this had induced him to write out my visiting cards with his own hand. »Ma» is written in many ways and has many entirely different meanings. The one used in my surname means »horse» and I had adopted it when I was called Ma-Da-Khan in Kashgar. In my passport from the Russian ambassador in Peiping »ma» is written with a sign that means jade, which the Chinese, who love valuables and riches, allow to pass, though it does not sound so Chinese in a name as »ma» — horse. Finally there is another »ma» which the Chinese use as a term of abuse, and this sign had been used for my name when the identification certificate was drawn up in Suchow. The indignation of the refined and effeminate Tseng can be imagined, on seeing this document by chance. He shuddered at the thought that, after being received by the Viceroy in Lanchow, I might figure in the local Chinese newspapers under this horrible name. — He was quite different to-day from what he had been on his two former visits. We talked politics and that woke him up. He is a strong supporter of European reforms in China and vehemently attacked the old system without the slightest respect for princes or other great people in the Empire. He was convinced that in two or three years practically nothing would remain of the old system. Of the mandarins in the province of Sinkiang, for instance, not one would be left. Those who were not executed would be exiled and dismissed. It would have been hard to recognise the elegant Tseng, bowing at every other word, in the impassioned young man in the semi-darkness of my room. His cheeks glowed, his eyes shone and with an elegant gesture he indicated each one that would, in his opinion, be executed. — He described the Dzian Dziun Tchang as a sly intriguer, who was, furthermore, old, had a badly chosen entourage, into which only flatterers could make their way, and was unable to perform what he promised the authorities in Peiping. His aim was to become Viceroy in Sinkiang with a Futai in Sinkiang and another in Sining which was to be included in his viceregal realm, but he would fall and be replaced by someone of real ability. The Japanese, he said, would never play a leading part in China. They were being used now as teachers, instructors and in other subordinate positions that had formerly often been occupied by Europeans, merely because they were cheaper. China should be run by the Chinese, but Chinese with a western education, that was his firm conviction. I was pleasantly surprised to find a man in remote little Chinta who was so well acquainted with conditions and discussed them so openly in a European manner. He was a wholly unexpected phenomenon to me, a son of that new China whose doings were being followed with wrapt attention by the powers of the Old World, particularly Russia. A bottomless abyss separates the type he represents from the educated Chinese whom I had met so far during my travels. We parted like old friends and arranged to meet in Peiping towards the end of the summer.

Chinta is connected by arbah roads with Sikhunsy about 70 li to the W, Ehrdiavan about 80 li to the N, Thutung about 30 li to the E and Momu about 200 li to the NE. The river Ch'i-ho flows through the NE and E of the district.