

I made an excursion to-day to the village of Ma-chuang-tzu, about 40 li SE of Shuang-ching-tzu. I was keen to see the Tanguts who inhabited it, though nobody could tell me, if they were »Hsi Fan zy» or »Hei Tan zy». The road ran over level, grassy ground with large deposits of salt. In 5—5 1/2 miles we reached the first of the widely scattered houses that form the village of Ma-chuang-tzu. The inhabitants proved to be Hsi or Huang Fan zy. They call themselves »Sarö Yögurs» — the yellow Yögurs. Of the inhabitants I only saw 3 women, 1 man and a couple of children. The women, whom I propitiated by the gift of some mirrors, allowed themselves to be photographed after some hesitation and were fairly talkative at first, but as soon as I got out my pen and began to take notes, they changed as though by magic and became extremely reticent. The oldest one, a woman of about 50, had a dignified appearance and a Roman nose, the other two had prominent cheekbones, small eyes, ugly, fleshy noses and altogether a coarse appearance without clearly marked features.

*December 14th.
Ma-chuang-tzu village.*

We encamped close to a small impanj-like ruin which the Chinese declare to be Kalmuk, next to a Yögur lama temple. None of the lamas were present, but that did not prevent the Chinese officer, who had escorted me from Shuang-ching-tzu, mounted on a donkey, from having my belongings carried into the cleanest of the houses that surrounded the temple. When the lamas returned, they accorded me rather a cool reception at first, but they soon grew hospitable and talkative, especially my host. There were 7 or 8 of them, each one living in a comfortable house of 2 or 3 rooms built and furnished in Chinese style. According to their own statement, they earn their livelihood by cattle-farming and chopping wood. The contributions made by the local people for the prayers they say are small. They bring up some boys to be lamas, distributing them among the quarters of the different lamas. Only the lamas are able to read and write, but they use the Tangut language for writing. I saw some papers written by the lamas at Gumbum which, however, they were unable to decipher. They explained that the Tangut lamas had two written languages, of which they only knew one. They did not know of a written Yögur language, nor could they tell me anything of their past history, princes, wars etc. It had been handed down from father to son that their people had come from the west over 1,000 years ago and that their town was called Shidsja hadse (in Chinese Tchenfu tun) far in the west. Tchenfu tun was supposed to lie 45 days' journey to the west or south-west near high mountains and a river. They had had a temple with many caves on the mountains. The mountains surrounded Tchenfu tun. Another man told me that they had removed to this place during the time of the Emperor Kangsi, because cholera raged in their country. Part of the tribe had settled in the mountains, another in the plain. Those who had settled near Suchow had become quite Chinese. The others had retained their language. The small ruin near the temple was already in existence at that time and belonged to a tribe with tails called »Kuzyrkei».

Their village contained about 40 houses. About 80 li further E lies the village of Tung-hei-tzu, also with 40—50 houses and a temple. It is inhabited by the Huang Fanzu. There are Huang Fanzu who speak the same language at a place called Yumashan, about 60 li S of Gaotai. The same people live further south at Bajakhtagh and in the country and mountains