

more miserable than usual. The total population is said to amount to 470 tja, excluding the owners of the 340 shops. All these shops are very small. The fortress wall is of the usual height and appearance and is built in a regular square with gates on the E, W, N and S. The E gate has a double protective wall, somewhat similar to that at Kanchow. The wall dominates the surrounding plain, which is almost bare. There is only a small ruined suburb in the E. The town, which is the seat of a Hsietai, is connected by a very little used mountain road with Da tun on the Kanchow-Sining road and by another with Ning Yuan, N of the mountains to the N. This latter is also said to be used very little. — Snow falls between the 9th and 4th months, but does not remain on the ground. Rain between the 5th and 8th months. Northerly burans are common in spring and autumn.

The weather was dull, cloudy and cold and the road, if anything, still drearier. E of the town the ground rises very slightly. An insignificant spur of the mountains projects on the N, just behind the suburb, but then the N mountains take a course that diverges very much from that of the road. At first the rather stony ground was cultivated and there were a few isolated houses not far from the road, but the tilled patches grow rarer and disappeared altogether after 30—40 li. Gradually fewer and fewer houses were visible and finally for a distance of several dozen li they vanished and were replaced by whole villages of ruins from the time of the Dungan revolt. At intervals of about 10 li we passed the villages of Shih-li-pu, Ehr-shih-li-pu, San-shih-li-pu, and Sy-shih-li-pu. A house in the third of them was the only one inhabited, all the rest being heaps of gravel and ruined walls. There were many deserted houses, too, between the villages.

The road was strewn with stones the whole way, but in some places, especially in the neighbourhood of the ruined villages, it became one mass of gravel and stones. Occasionally we crossed belts of gravel that looked like dry river beds. Near Shih-li-pu we reached the highest point, situated on a slight eminence that projected in a NE direction from the mountains in the S. After this the road descended slightly and 60 li from the town we came to the village of Papa with a few inhabited houses. Immediately to the E of it we crossed the flat, dry and stony branches of the river Sha ho, of which there were quite ten at short intervals. During heavy rain it is said to be impossible to cross for a couple of days at a time. Between the branches of the river the ground is also very stony. 10 li from the village of Papa we passed the ruins of a fairly large village, Sha ho pu (or tcheng = town, as the local people seem to call it). The desolate waste of gravel, intersected by stony river beds, all in a direction of 250° — 260° , continues E of the village. Tilled land only begins again a short distance to the W of the village of Fyn lo pu. The mountains in the N had almost disappeared. In the far distance we could see the outlines of lower hills, but those in the S were only a few li from the road. We saw two fairly large gorges, in front of the easterly one of which there was a small hill, the northern point of which extended to the E of Fyn lo pu. To the E of the village the ground seemed to rise again towards a ridge-like eminence, running north, like the one we had recently passed.

Fyn lo pu consists of about 30 tja, including its small impanj. The main street is formed of a dozen small shops and some sarais. A detachment of 25 men under the command of