

RECORDS OF THE JOURNEY

Nearest in the N	Peipa tchy	.....	with 640 tja
20 li to the N	Vu tsa tcheng	.....	» 700 »
To the E	Sung san tsan	.....	» 200 »
	Obo tsan Tungsantsan	.....	» 300 »
	Pindja tsan	.....	» 350 »
To the S	Nanshytchy (near town)	.....	» 750 »
70 li to the S	Hung chengtzu	.....	» 450 »
120 li » »	Ku shui	.....	» 480 »
			Total 3,870 tja

The area is said to be 31,110 Ch'ing, of which only 1/4 is irrigated, the rest being dependent on rain. One half is tilled annually, the other half lying fallow. Wheat, tchinkho, barley, some peas and a great deal of mustard are grown. The average crop is 4—5 fold. The yearly taxes amount to 5,500 tan. The population of the town, including the suburbs, is about 2,000 tja. The supply of livestock may be put at 2—3 oxen, 1—2 horses and 2—4 sheep per tja. Only 1—2 per cent keep sheep, usually 100—200 head.

On the way to the town we met a great many people returning home with their New Year's purchases, usually consisting of some paper decorations to be hung up, one or two roughly made pictures in bright colours to be pasted on to doors or walls, red paper, a small piece of cloth, some sweets etc. The town streets were crowded and the shops and booths were well stocked with all kinds of articles. It seemed as though we had got to a lively trading centre. There were innumerable people about, many of them from the surrounding country places. I met at least 10—15 fellows in irons with wonderful rascally faces. Chains and pieces of wood round their ankles made them walk with a slow, rocking gait. It was strange to see these tatterdemalions with their rattling chains sauntering among the decorated booths, joking and chatting with the shopkeepers and the crowd.

I did not see any Mongols or Tanguts from the hills, though I did see one of their products, butter in sheeps' stomachs. Ping fan lies on an arbah road from Sining to the Lianchow—Tajuan or Lanchow—Ningsiafu road. The principal trade in the town is done in wool which is purchased from the inhabitants of the district and the hill-tribes in the neighbourhood. 5—600,000 djin are exported to the east annually. The place has a reputation for its saddles and articles of harness. A special kind of vermicelli in small pieces is made here which is very popular among travellers. Hardware is also produced and sold. There are about 200 shops, but only a few deal in cloth and expensive goods. Only 4 possess working capital above 3,000 lan. Here again there is coal, which we had not seen at our last two stopping places. — Snow between the 9th and 2nd Chinese months, but it does not lie. Rain occasionally between the 3rd and 8th months, though very seldom. Northerly burans in spring.

A considerable group of buildings, forming a miao, stands up against the SE wall of *January 27th.* Ping fan and from it an avenue leads to a huge stone gateway, about 1/3 of a mile from *Hung-cheng-tzu* the wall of the fortress, crowned by a picturesque hexagonal or octagonal old tower *village.*