



*View of Labrang from the opposite bank of the river.*

With their long swords and rifles these little groups of horsemen looked very martial. The horses were small, but lively and strong.

During the latter part of the journey the valley was wider, though it was often compressed by projecting spurs. About 10 miles from Sasuma the river received a tributary, the Tana ho, from the S, along which the road to Taochow was said to go.

We reached Labrang after riding about 20 miles, the valley having made an abrupt turn to the S about a mile before. The numerous gilded roofs and spires of the monastery shone and reflected the last rays of the sun as it set behind the mountains. The monastery lies at the foot of a bare mountain slope to the W of the river. Fir-woods grew on the opposite bank. A picturesque little clump of trees grew S of the monastery and a little village with a few hundred Dungan families lay in the N at a distance of a couple of hundred fathoms. A little further N a Tangut village could be seen. A crowd of a couple of hundred Tanguts and Dungans was collected in the former in expectation of my arrival.

In the morning I had sent on my card in advance, asking the senior lama of the monastery, if I might stay there, but an intriguing Dungan merchant, who explained that it was not allowed to apply to the monastery, had got hold of my card and had prepared uncomfortable quarters in a sarai, where I was besieged by quite a hundred inquisitive individuals. This merchant seemed to have some influence among the Dungans, for, no sooner did I want anything or require some information, than it was invariably Ma laoje, to whom I had to apply. However, as I had on arrival told him my opinion pretty bluntly about his making arrangements independently, it was awkward for me to use this source. Later he caused me all kinds of unpleasantness, told the lamas that I was travelling without a passport etc. As a matter of fact the document that was to have been sent from Hochow via Syn hua ting, a détour of 4 days, had not arrived, and foolishly relying on the promises