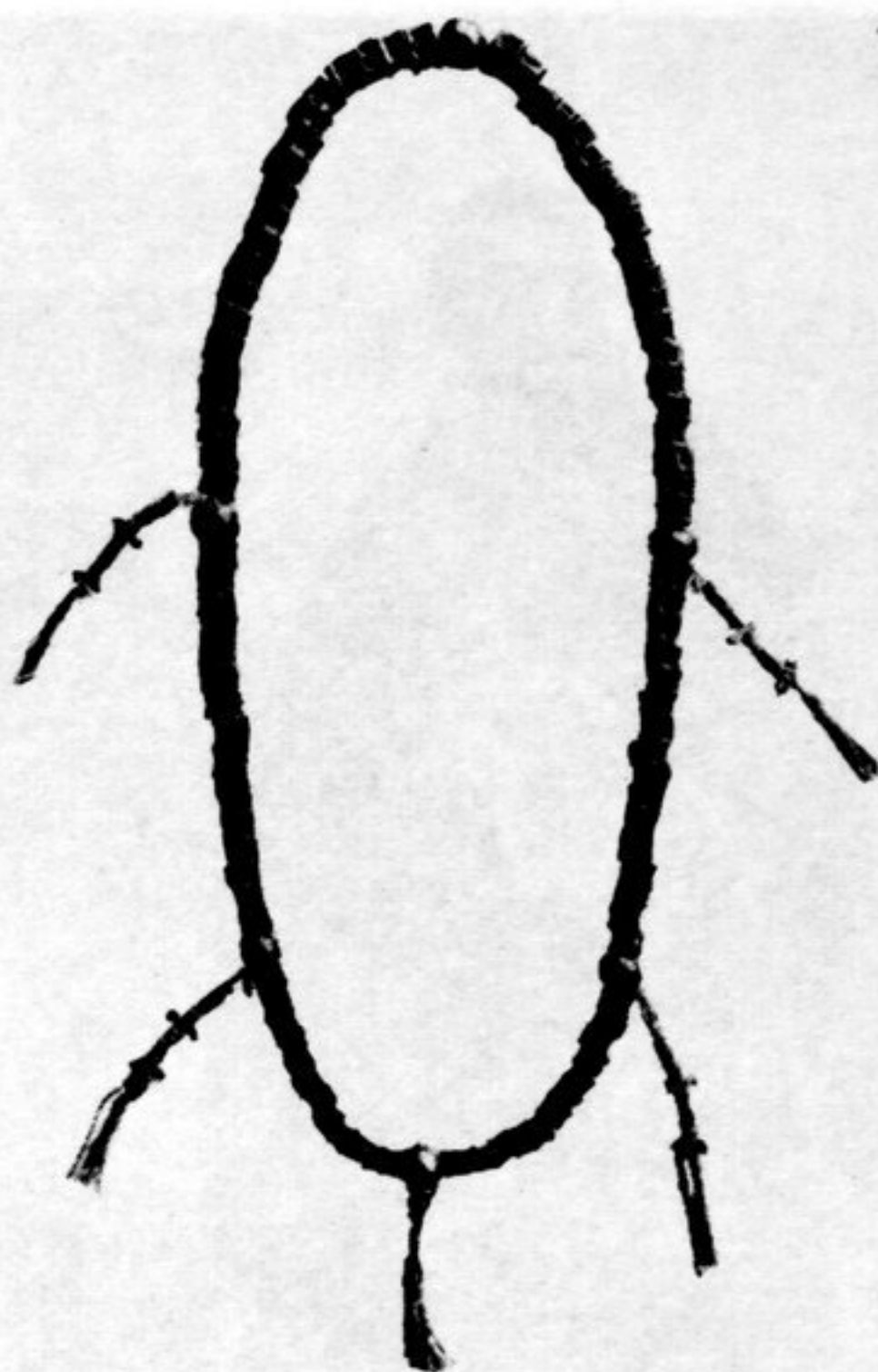




*A Buddhist rosary, broken by red balls and small thunderbolts (»dordjies») fastened to the forks. From Labrang.*



*A rosary composed of the vertebrae of snakes. From Labrang.*

the ground close to a venerable lama who had just hit me on the leg with a stone. The dust thrown up by the shot made them come to their senses and the hill was soon deserted. A messenger whom I despatched to the superior of the monastery to inform him of what had happened, brought back the news that the worthy prelate had promised to cut the throat of the miscreant who had hit me with a stone. Pacified by this assurance that the authors of the disturbance would receive just punishment, I fell asleep.

The distance covered to-day was 21—22 miles. Next to Kadia sy, or Kadiger according to Potanin, there are 17—18 houses, over half the inhabitants of which are Dungans, and about 30 Tangut houses. The livestock consists of 40—50 horses, 70—80 cattle and 800—900 sheep. Tchinkho, a kind of poor oats and peas are grown. The crop is 3-fold. SE storms are common.

Since I left Hochow, not a day has passed without my being advised to take another road from Labrang, as the road over Taochow had a bad reputation for robberies constantly committed there. The jai who was to have accompanied me, thought it wiser to disappear at Labrang and I was unable to engage a couple of Tanguts as guides. The explanation was always the same; the road was dangerous. At our last stop for the night the tales took on definite shape. Bands of 30 or 40 Tanguts infested the neighbourhood and attacked almost everyone who was obliged to take that road. One of the gangs was said to possess modern rifles, the others being armed with ordinary local weapons. The country was wild and desolate for long stretches and the bandits kept a lookout from a hill and ambushed travellers. In fact, it seemed impossible to cover this part of the journey without one

*March 30th.  
Vankur village.*