



*A Tangut from the neighbourhood of Khi tha shan.*

or two encounters. It sounded unbelievable, but thinking it wiser to be prepared, I armed my men with all the arms in my stores and in my ethnographical collections. I brought out Tangut swords and Tangut rifles without wicks or charges to make the men feel more confident. Soon after we had started I noticed that a soldier, who had been sent from the last post to accompany me to Taochow, had also preferred to forgo his reward and had disappeared with a sword as big as himself.

The road runs almost due S along a narrow ravine with steep sides. After 3 or 4 miles we left it and proceeded over very uneven ground with traces of grass. We passed a village of a couple of houses on the right and saw a couple of others, about as small, at a distance, each in a fold of the ground. About 7 miles from Kadia we came to the monastery of Hatsuo su. It was comparatively well built with several large temples, apparently rich, judging by their exterior. I was told there were about 1,000 lamas in the monastery. Close to it was a small village, containing a sarai. It would have been interesting to see the monastery, and perhaps I should have been more successful this time, but I did not want to waste time and we rode on. At first we followed a small stream or river, flowing in the opposite direction to ours and supplying water to the Hatsuo ho that runs northward. The terrain consisted of grassy hills, either in long ridges or in more or less isolated mountains. There was a succession of small villages along the river, the very restricted fields of which lay either in the valley or on a gentle slope. Numerous flag-staffs indicated the nationality of the population without our having to make enquiries. The men and women were out at work. Ploughing was done entirely with yak-oxen, of short stature, obviously a cross-breed.