



*A 70-year old Tangut in the village of Tahlisi.*

Minchow, like Taochow-Sin-cheng, is supposed to have been built about 500 years ago during the first years of the Ming dynasty. In former times a Tangut prince is said to have resided at Minchow and even to have lived on the hill where the mission station stands at present. — Nowadays the town is the residence of a Tchou, subordinated to Kung-Chang-fu, and a Tysy under the Hsietai of Taochow. Before the Dungan revolt the Taotai of Tsinchow was resident at Minchow. — The town has a population of about 2,000 tja, of whom 10—15 % are Dungans. About 4—500 tja of the inhabitants are peasants. There is less trade here than at Sin-cheng which is the principal centre in this neighbourhood for trade between the Tanguts and the east. The main articles sold are honey for 15,000 taels — Lanchow, opium 65,000 — Taigung near Tajuan, teihuang (herbs) 35,000 — Tsinchow and Lanchow, njuhuang (herbs) 10,000 — to the east, musk 25,000 — to the east, deer horn 15,000 — to the east and «tankui» (herbs) — Tsinchow and Lanchow.

Minchow is connected with Titao by a mountain road (said to be possible for arbahs with difficulty) over Chungzeiti 70 li, Lama 40, Luotja mou 35, Cheng tja tsur 60 li — 5 days; Kung-Chang-fu by an arbah road over Hungshuikui 20, Tatseitan 85, Santsa 90, Chang hsien 30, Kung-Chang-fu 70 li — 5 days; Tiechow by an arbah road over Katapu 60, Tanchang 60, Kuanting 80, Saza chow 80, Tjaokung 60 and Tiechow 80 — 6 days (thence to Szechwan); Siku by the same road to Kuanting and thence 80 li to the W to Siku. 2 or 3 roads lead to Ning yuan and 1 direct to Tsinchow. It is said to be only one day shorter than over Ning yuan, but bad.