

After a march of 24.7 kilometers we pitched camp a good distance from the well Shara-khulusun. The site we had chosen for our camp among dry saxaules was called *Dsakh-shara-khulusun* or «The Boundary of the Yellow Reeds», which, of course, is no proper place name. Just at this point the wilderness was traversed by a road between Urga and Suchow. It was said never to have been used as a motor-car route, though one trial trip by car had been made, and it was provided with signposts in the form of wooden notice-boards on which two black hands had been painted. In these flat regions of hard, sterile ground one can drive a car in almost any direction, so that the road-builder's only task is to mark the route with signposts.

The part of Mongolia in whose eastern outskirts we now were might well be called «No Man's Land», — it is not subject to the authority of the Mongolian Republic, and there are no nomads — not, at least, on the stretch that we covered as far as Sinkiang; and the Chinese have not so much as a tiny trading station there. In several places, however, we found traces of abandoned poppy fields. Concerning the route we had now taken JANTSANG related that it had been in use for scarcely two years, and that the Chinese merchant caravans between Kuei-hua and Guchen used it to avoid the inland revenue stations higher up on the Edsen-gol. From our camp LIII we had the western end of Ghashun-nor due north and at a distance of forty li. The chain of mountains whose blue contour one saw to the north bore the name *Tostu*, and on one of its peaks the obo of the *dzasak* of the Balten province is erected. Here annual sacrifices are made to the patron spirits of the province. The lower mountain-chain to be seen in the north-west is called *Unuktein-khara* or «The Black Fox Mountain». Black foxes and crossed foxes are said to abound there. In the same mountain region the wild camel also has his native haunts, and it is from here that he sometimes extends his wanderings as far as to Ghashun-nor. In this particular year he had twice visited the lower reaches of the Mören-gol in herds of about ten individuals. JANTSANG and several others had seen the swift-footed and shy visitors before, like the wind, they had swung round to return over the desert whence they had come. The Torguts refrain from killing these wild camels for fear of provoking the wrath of the gods; only the Mongols of the republic hunt them from time to time.

Our old Torgut informant also spoke of the high mountain *Tsaghan-bogdo* or «The White God», situated at a distance of eight days' march to the north-west. The valleys were rich in vegetation and were also haunted with bears.

As we set off to the W. N. W. on November 12th, thus leaving Ghashun-nor behind us, we were met with a hard westerly wind, though the weather was otherwise clear. The temperature the previous night had been -9° C. The desert landscape consisted of coarse sand or fine gravel on a soft foundation. The route was often so smooth that it might have been macadamized. The undulations of the ground were imperceptible to the eye. One felt their indication, however, in