

After mature deliberation, and in collaboration especially with Professor SIU, the following plan of campaign was drawn up for the immediate future:

1. LARSON was to take the main caravan and practically the whole of the baggage to 'Ta-shih-t'ou. He was to be accompanied by the German and the Chinese members of the staff. LARSON was allowed to borrow seven of NORIN's camels, as they had had a less trying time than LARSON's beasts. When we sent MÜHLENWEG on ahead to 'Ta-shih-t'ou we had expected him to be back by the 8th of December. Later inquiries, however, had apprised us of the fact that the distance was much greater than we had supposed. But if MÜHLENWEG had found what he was looking for he ought certainly to have been back by now. Perhaps there was nothing to be got at 'Ta-shih-t'ou. I therefore left LARSON and his companions to judge the position in the west themselves, giving them a free hand to act as they deemed best.

2. MARSCHALL and LIU, followed by the digger CHIN and a camel-man, were to proceed westwards on the Hami route by forced marches. At the first place where a relief-caravan could be got together they were to hire camels for the baggage left behind at Sebestei, buy the provisions we should need for our stay here, and, if possible, hire or purchase a cart and three mules for my account. MARSCHALL and LIU also borrowed seven of NORIN's camels. They were to return as quickly as possible. When MARSCHALL had taken over NORIN's stock of money we had just seven dollars left at Sebestei.

3. LIU was to return here with MARSCHALL in order to be able on his second westward journey to make a map of the marching-route, as this would of course not be possible during the forced marches at night.

4. HASLUND was to meet us at the village of Tash-bulaq, situated about one hundred kilometers to the east of Hami, bringing with him money and post.

For most of us there was little enough sleep that night. The provisions had been gone through and divided up, and we who would be remaining behind received our due share. At the last moment HUMMEL confiscated the big gramophone for us, for those of the company who would be taking the Hami route would scarcely have a chance of listening to it, while as it turned out, it contributed in a high degree to making our stay at Sebestei enjoyable.

Late that evening those who would be leaving us came to my yurt to say Good-bye. I bade them each severally a hearty farewell, expressing my hope that they would soon manage to collect the relief we needed in the form of camels, cart and provisions.

At a quarter past five on December 15th the caravan set off in pitch darkness. An hour later MARSCHALL's section followed suit, and finally, at seven o'clock Professor SIU, together with HUANG and the boy WANG, also left camp. All bands were now broken, and an impenetrable silence sank around us. We were four Swedes, two Mongols (MENTU and a Lama from Alakshan), NORIN's three Chi-