

## FIRST NEWS FROM THE WEST

On January 4th, MENTU woke us up with the words: »Two mounted men coming from the west!» We rushed out. Our telescope was mounted on »Flag-top Hill». One could already make out that the mounted figures were Mongols. They were riding their camels hard. Finally, we recognized them as BONGKH and SONIN GIPCH. With their weather-beaten faces and fluttering goatskins they might have been cast in one mould with their mounts.

In five nights they had ridden from Ta-shih-t'ou, bringing fifty catties of flour and several exciting letters from our absent companions. One of these was from MARSCHALL. He had heard that HEMPEL-HASLUND and MÜHLENWEG had reached Hami, and that WALZ had been seen under military escort on the way to Urumchi.

Here follows HEYDER's report on the journey from Sebestei to Ta-shih-t'ou:

On the first day he had shot six gazelles and seen one wild camel. The 17th of December: no water, hard west wind. Two of the camels died. The 18th: Snow-storm, short march; no water. The 19th: severe snow-storm. One of the camels was shot to provide meat. The 20th: the storm increased in strength. They lay still. The 21st: raging snow-storm; impossible to set out. The 22nd: two camels froze to death; all the others seriously weakened. It was determined that LARSON, with two Mongols and the whole of the baggage, should be left behind; the others, with the camels and bare necessities, should continue. The 23rd: start with 102 camels, of which number two died on the way. No water, but snow. The 24th: severe snow-storm; only three kilometers' march; no water. The 25th: storm; a couple of the camels succumbed. The Mongols got flour for the last time, after which they would have to live on camel-flesh. The 26th: hard wind; one camel succumbed, and one was shot for the meat-supply. The 27th: another camel fell by the wayside. The 28th: reached four yurts, the first since the Edsen-gol. Bought flour, sugar and five sheep. The 29th: reached Ta-shih-t'ou. One camel died.

They hoped to reach Hami in seven days. The two Mongols were despatched to us.

Finally, there was a message from LARSON, saying that he was encamped 160 li to the west of Sebestei, that the camels' resistance had been broken by four days' snow-storm, and that he could manage with the supply of flour he had been left.

So now we had received the first news — if not from the outer world then at least from our own van, hearing something of the hardships they had been through.

## RETURN OF MARSCHALL

For twenty-four days we four Swedes had been frozen in at the Sebestei spring. Although the most perfect harmony had prevailed we were beginning to feel the monotony, and longed for something to happen. On the evening of the 5th we