

the tyres while he traversed the Kuei-hua pass. He then used standard tyres, and these suffered badly on this rather short trip. We were therefore obliged to procure stronger tyres from Tientsin. In order not to expose these to extra wear in the Kuei-hua pass, we drove with single tyres this time. But now double tyres were put on again, which made travelling over soft ground easier.

On the night of November 15th the temperature was -19.8°C . (-4°F). Winter was coming on. We were called and had breakfast early. When everything was ready for the start we took leave of ARASH and drove off across the gently undulating steppe past the little lake Ulan-nor. A herd of horses followed us for a time at full gallop, crossed the road with clattering hooves and were left behind. Now and again we met ox-carts and riders. Here was an opium caravan of, I suppose, a hundred camels, striding along to the rhythmic beat of its copper bells. Then another, twice as big. They were coming from Liangchow and were escorted by soldiers to protect the valuable smuggled goods.

We reached the frozen Targhan-gol. According to BERGMAN, this streamlet is a tributary of the river at Batu-khalagh-sume. The cultivation by Chinese colonists ends here; and the wild undulating plains of Inner Mongolia with hills and low mountain-ranges cropping up at fair distances are from now on left untouched by the plough.

Shortly after traversing the Targhan-gol we crossed an old ruined frontier-wall, some two meters high, but rounded and smoothed by time, with mounds of ruined towers every 500 m. BERGMAN had mapped it for long stretches during the previous expedition.

In a depression in front of us we at last sighted the goal of our day's trip, the great lamasery of Batu-khalagh-sume or Beli-miao.

AT BATU-KHALAGH-SUME

We drove on to the level space outside the temple-gates, where the TASHI LAMA's Tibetan escort was being drilled. A swarm of people surrounded us as soon as we stopped. Among bare-headed lamas in red, flowing mantles, Mongolian, Tibetan and Chinese officers and soldiers we saw a distinguished little group of Westerners — our old friend LARSON, Mr OLIVER from Reuter's with his wife, M. BÉCHERAT from Agence Havas and a French professor. They had been brought here by LARSON to get news of the Mongolian princes' negotiations with the Chinese Minister of the Interior concerning Inner Mongolian independence.

The TASHI LAMA himself was staying in the monastery. His object was to work for a peaceful solution. Another old friend of ours also turned up in the crowd, the DILWA GEGEN, a Living Buddha from Urga and leader of the refugees from Outer Mongolia.