

We pitched our tents about one kilometer to the west of the monastery, near the spot where we had encamped at the beginning of November 1929, and where I had said good-bye to the Gobi-group.

VISIT TO THE SUNIT WANG

Next day, while GEORG and TSERAT went to our caravan to repair the leaky petrol-drums, HUMMEL, BERGMAN, LARSON and I drove to the lamasery and filed into the courtyard, where the Prince of West Sunit (BARUN SUNIT WANG) had pitched his large, gaily coloured yurt. This potentate, whom the Chinese call TEH WANG, was the Mongols' vigorous spokesman in the independence-question. He was a strongly built man of medium height and of distinguished appearance, and championed with force and authority the independence, freedom and honour of CHINGGHIS KHAN's blue-blooded race.

He knew us well; we had been guests in his stately palace, built in Chinese style in the middle of the treeless steppe farther east. After the usual questions about our journey, he spoke in considerable detail of the Mongols' demands for independence, and tried to prove that such an arrangement would be to the advantage both of China and of Mongolia. LARSON had been adviser to him as well as to other Mongol princes, and was now endeavouring to bring the negotiations to a peaceful conclusion.

SUNIT WANG asked us about our plans in Sinkiang, and what routes we meant to take. He did not seem particularly interested in these questions. Possibly he thought that »as the shortest and best route to Hami starts from Kuei-hua and touches Batu-khalagh-sume, we Mongols shall in any case dictate the conditions on which trade is carried on.»

VISITING THE TASHI LAMA

Later in the day we were received by the TASHI LAMA in the finest building inside the monastery precincts. We were met in an ante-room by a lama. He offered us tea, and presently led us to the audience-chamber. His Holiness came towards us with his charming and friendly smile, stretching out both hands to welcome us. We were invited to sit down on rug-covered benches, and conversation, which was conducted via LARSON and a Mongol-speaking Tibetan, turned on Asiatic geography, the politics of Europe and its last remaining kings, HUMMEL's journey to the Tebbu Tibetans and mine to Tashi-lhunpo twenty-six years before. He smiled when I showed him the golden ring he had given me in Peking in 1926, which would certainly bring the expedition luck on its new trip.

I had no other gifts to offer him than the Chinese editions of »Across the Gobi