

We are glad — we have all prayed to God every day. He has preserved us all the way — TSERAT and JOMCHA must leave here this instant so this short letter I hope will be greatly added to by explanations from them.

God be with us all — pray for us — greetings from EFFE and

GEORG.

Our depression vanished like mist before the morning sun. We wanted to leap, dance and sing! The drivers were alive — they had managed to escape MA CHUNG-YING's eagle claws!

But how had the letter reached us? Investigations were made, and it was discovered that TSERAT himself had knocked at our gate, but had been turned away by the sentry. The sentry had taken the letter and sent it in to us. BERGMAN and I were now graciously permitted to go to the garrison headquarters under military escort.

We were received by a Colonel NAREIKA. He said:

I have just received a letter from General BEKTEEV in which, among other things, he apologises for being obliged to use your lorries for three or four days longer. He asks me to tell you that SÖDERBOM and HILL are well, and that all four lorries will be returned in perfect order.»

»Thank you for the good news, Colonel. I should be glad if you would forward a letter of thanks that I am going to write to the General. Our Mongol driver TSE-RAT came to our quarters about twelve, but he was turned away by the sentry.»

»Curious! I gave your two Mongols a written order to the sentries to let them in. They had evidently been there once before they got the chit. Their lorries are in the yard next door.»

A messenger was sent next door, but TSERAT and JOMCHA had just left — provided now with chits.

We therefore hurried home. On the verandah we saw a group in the greatest excitement. TSERAT and JOMCHA were sitting in the middle of it, a fusillade of questions being fired at them in Chinese and Mongolian.

About an hour and a half later two Russians who had accompanied our drivers on their night journey came and announced that TSERAT and JOMCHA were to go and set out on their journey from the commandant's quarters.

When we were once more left alone we pieced together the following narrative from the stories of TSERAT and JOMCHA.

The convoy had left our courtyard at about midday on March 13th. They reached Chadir in the night, rested for a few hours and went on to Yangi-hissar, where TSERAT had collided with EFFE's lorry in the dark and smashed his radiator. He was accordingly left at Yangi-hissar, while the three others went on to Bugur.

TSERAT, feeling lonely and forsaken, went to see the local *hsiang-yeh* and showed him a certificate of identity written by YEW. The *hsiang-yeh* promised to help him, and he began to repair his lorry.