

car had been got ready at once, and KUNG and TSERAT had travelled along the same »road» through the Quruq-tagh as on the reconnoitring trip towards Tun-huang. But on that journey they had not got farther than to Altmish-bulaq. Now they had steered a course from the foot of the mountains down towards our region in the Qum-darya delta. A good way from the bank they had come upon such loose soil that they had to leave the car and begin to search for camp No. 80 on foot. They had walked and walked, and APAQ seemed quite lost. They had at last found one or two of our party and reached the camp.

All this had happened on May 23rd, i. e. two days before CHEN and I returned to camp No. 80.

On the morning of the 24th KUNG had decided to make a boat-trip to the east to look for us; and for this purpose he took with him all the men who were at camp No. 80. They had paddled off in single canoes in good weather, landing on an island at a considerable distance to the east. When the wind rose and a sea was running they had thought the most prudent course was to return back west. But the gale increased to such an extent that they had to land on a small island on the way.

On the morning of May 25th they had meant to continue their return journey to the west; but the water was too rough for the canoes, and they had stayed where they were.

We had now to wait for no-one. Everything had worked out better than we had dared to hope.

I had often wondered *how* we should be able to get back from Lop-nor. Would the country be at all possible for cars? But now we had every possible reason for gratification at the upshot of the Lop-nor expedition.

In the evening CHEN, KUNG and I sat up discussing new plans. KUNG had told us that when he left camp No. 70 on May 21st nothing had then been heard from Korla about the promised petrol and lubricating oil. It was already clear to me that the next step I must take was a dash to Urumchi to get the oil supplies we required.

GOOD-BYE TO LOP-NOR

May 27th was a day of hard work for us all. We were to leave the delta of the Qum-darya and return to the parched, barren desert. The baggage had to be sorted out. The small car could take only KUNG, CHEN, TSERAT and myself; and as we wanted a servant and cook, we took CHIA KUEI also. We needed provisions for three days, cooking utensils and a minimum of bedding. So, with petrol and water, the car was heavily loaded.

At camp No. 80 we left 500 catties of flour, which was stowed away in the tent in sacks. Ten canoes were left behind and sunk, so that they might not be damaged