

Next day came an order that all our luggage should be taken to the guest-house for examination. The adjutant who brought the message repeated that an expedition was to start for Lop-nor to search for the treasures they believed we had hidden there. »If we find them,» he said, »you'll all go to prison.» We must all wait in Urumchi as long as this expedition was in the field. What was the use of our swearing on our honour and conscience that we had not hidden so much as a collar-stud, either at Lop-nor or anywhere else?

All six of us were invited to lunch that day at Mr APRESOV's hospitable house, and I told him how we were placed. He replied that it had come to his ears that SHENG TUPAN had been informed that we had found valuable treasures during our excavations at Lop-nor, and had hidden them in or near Korla. The reason for our repeatedly expressed desire to go to Kashgar was simply this — that we wanted to stop at Korla on the way, dig up the hidden treasures, take them with us to Kashgar, entrust them to the British Consul-General there, and with his help have them sent on to India.

The whole of this libellous account of our activities had been concocted by Mr HUANG, and SHENG TUPAN had apparently been foolish enough to credit it.

On September 17th we were all six received by SHENG TUPAN. He began by asking us not to smuggle any gold out of the country, as the ban on the export of gold was still in force, and he had found that considerable quantities were being smuggled out through Turfan.

»We need all the gold we can get hold of in Sinkiang ourselves, to pay for all the war material we have bought from Russia.»

We asked permission to leave as soon as two damaged motor-lorries had been repaired.

»You can have passes whenever you like,» he replied. »How long will it take to repair the lorries?«

»About ten days.»

»Then let's say that you leave Urumchi on October 1st.»

A little later, in jesting tone, he said:

»As you're so fond of Sinkiang, doctor, and the people like you, why not stay on here and help us develop and improve the province. We should find Mr YEW and Mr KUNG valuable, too. It's not easy to get engineers up here from the coast, and we have been compelled to apply to Soviet Russia.»

## HIGH AND LOW SPIRITS IN URUMCHI

September 18th, the third anniversary of the fall of Mukden, was celebrated with a mourning procession through the town and a fiery speech by SHENG TUPAN.