

NOTE BOOK

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① Inner Mongolia. In a magnificent yurt, coloured inside red and gold, in the palace of Prince Teh Wang, Prince of West Summit direct descendant of Genghis Khan, a leader of the Free Mongols!

(x a yurt is the same shape as an Eskimo hut, round but bigger & made of rough wool on wooden framework)



yurt.

Sunday, July 14, 1935.

My dearest Everybody,

I have written my Sunday letter home from lots of strange places — from a rubber plantation in Java, from Siam, from the ruins of Angkor, from a horrible Chinese inn, — but this is the strangest of the lot. I am the guest of His Highness Prince Teh Wang, the greatest man among all the Mongols, whose forefather, Genghis Khan, formed the huge Mongol Empire which reached to Hungary and nearly overran Europe and whose other forefather, Kublai Khan's Dada used to read about in school (Coleridge). It has been the most colourful day I have ever had — a Mongol feast in honour of the spirit of the mountain just near, and I also had a good interview with Prince Teh Wang who wants to set up an independent Mongol Empire, including the Mongols under Soviet rule in Outer Mongolia & the Mongols under Manchukuo. The splat of colour, with bright silks and gorgeous head-dress and fire horses, Mongol tents, spirit worship and wrestler rides, lamas and archers — has been magnificent.

July 19. Friday Ujumuchin 25 miles from Soviet Outer Mongolia,
35-40 miles from the Manchukuo border, in the wedge which
Outer Mongolia drives N.E.

This is a lama town where the head
Prince of the Sibirigol League
of Mongolia has his residence.

Outer Mongolia
Inner Mongolia
Manchukuo

This has been the most exciting week I have ever
had in my life, packed with adventures and
strange encounters. It has been so full that I have
not had a chance of continuing my letters, because
we rattle along for about 20 hours a day in
a lorry over sand-dunes, through rivers and when
one interviews living Buddhas and Japanese
agents and Buriat and Mongol princes, it is hard
to find a minute to write beyond the notes of my journey
and talks.

Frid. Evening July 19 In a Buriat (Mongol) camp on a hill, in
a tent; wonderful view with great herds of cattle, horses
and sheep in the distance; - also, as I write, a glimpse
of blue hills which form the frontier of Manchukuo and
Inner Mongolia.

I did not have time to continue the
letter this morning, because we decided to return
westward and here we care back with the Buriats,
who are very hospitable and clean. Soup with mutton
is now being prepared by our Russian chauffeur.

I have almost forgotten what a bed is like and to sit around a table and not to eat meat with my fingers will be very funny.

Sat. morning It got too dark to write last night and it was bitterly cold, because Inner Mongolia lies nearly 4000 feet high, higher than Snowden. Prince Otkeroff, our Buriat host, has gone off to catch horses and we are waiting till he comes back before going to call on the Living Buddha (the second most important living Buddha in Outer Mongolia). The Living Buddha has a motor car and we shall travel together to visit some Mongol princesses. So I shall now start the narrative. I am sitting on a box which is covered with a very bright Mongol small carpet. The nine guests of the Buriat settlement and our tent and also the tent of some Russian trader (from Kalgan and Trentsin) are behind me.

Journey into Inner Mongolia. On Thursday, July 11, I got up at 5.30 breakfasted and went by rickshaw from the Legation Quarter, ^{Peking} to the station which is very close. Here Baron von Plessen, who is the double of Tom Ellis but a few years older, was waiting for me. He had shorts & I had also bought shorts. We had a first class compartment and soon the train steamed off. At the next station Dr Herbert Müller, a friend of Wolf & I, entered and we formed a trio. (Dr Müller & I are left; the Baron had to return to Peking on Mon.) Plessen and Müller were exact opposites. Plessen is tall, sensitive, nervous about catching trains & buses, exact.

Correct, speaking public school English; Müller is small, pleasantly cynical, philosophical, does not worry about anything, jokes all the time and all my German friends, when we are almost bumped ~~to~~ to pieces in going over a mound he grins, if the lorry nearly tumbles over on one side he roars; he never loses his good humour and is an excellent companion.

Thus the train left Beijing with the Three Musketeers. We travelled towards the fine towering mountains about 20-30 miles to the North of Peking, and saw the Great Wall, or rather there are many walls which defended China against the Mongols. The Mongols have been slowly driven back for over 150 miles to the West of the previous frontier and all the villages we passed through were Chinese. Poor old Mongols! They have a hopeless position and have been losing their land to the Chinese. We went under the Great Wall in a tunnel, came out and saw a magnificent view, a vast plain surrounded by blue mountains, which are full of iron ore and which the Japanese wish to develop.

At 3:30 in the afternoon (after 8 1/2 hours) we came to a huge collection of mud houses, with some stone houses in the middle, surrounded by hills. It was Kalgan, the outpost for trade

between Mongolia and China. There two magnificent cars (5) who waiting for us. We were to be the guests of M^r Purpis, a Latvian, the "King of Kalgan", who is the chief trader in Inner Mongolia and sells about 30,000 horses each year to the Chinese Army. Our chauffeur was the former chauffeur of the Panchen Lama, who with the Dalai Lama is the chief Lama of Tibet and Mongolia. He drove us through the dirty town to a kind of mud-wall fortress on the outskirts of the town. It was the Wostwag, the Company for Trading with the Mongols, a German firm. We entered the courtyard, which was full of hides, tobacco, boxes of silks, wool; there were many lorries which go from Kalgan across part of the Gobi Desert to Uroga in (Soviet) Outer Mongolia.

M^r Purpis, a very nice man, very strong & vigorous, in breeches & ~~the~~ leather boots, came to welcome us. He gave us a wonderful dinner that night. We had a warning to beware of Mongol dogs which are said to leap at men's throats if the men are afraid. (But I do not have the slightest trouble with Mongol dogs. Either they take a liking to me or they are terrified of me and slink away. They can tell at once that I have no fear of dogs).

Our caravan (2 cars & lorry) was to start off next morning at 4 o'clock, just about dawn.

6/ Plesser, Woke Müller, & myself. (The Baron was just like an alarm clock) before 4 o'clock, we dressed, drank tea without milk or sugar, the effect of the sunrise over the hills was fine, ~~our~~ caravan rattled out of the fortress.

The evening before a Chinese Foreign Office representative asked us to sign the following:-

"We, the undersigned herewith certify that we are going to visit Inner Mongolia on our own risk for any eventualities which may happen during our travelling."

"We carefully considered all warnings of the local Chinese officials who will take no responsibility should anything happen to the undersigned."

Von Plesser
Hebert Müller
Garrett Jones.

Kalgan 11th July, 1935.

Next to me in my car was a tremendous Cossack; he had a head like a melon - only square, shaved bald; he was terrifically strong and fat & had bumpy legs from being so much in the saddle. We laughed & joked all the time. He was very much of a child. His name was Viskovitch and after the revolution, he walked 800 miles in winter across Mongolia, from Uroga to Kalgan! When we left the town

boundary, ^{today} gradually getting lighter, we had to slow ^{down} ⁽⁷⁾
on special visas for Chaha and Suiyuan (as the Inner
Mongolian province is called) while blue-uniformed soldiers
formed by General Sung stood there with fixed bayonets

And so we rattled along terrible
tracks into Inner Mongolia. We left the last
Chinese towns behind; gradually cultivated
fields disappeared; we entered the steppes and
were in real Mongolia by the afternoon.

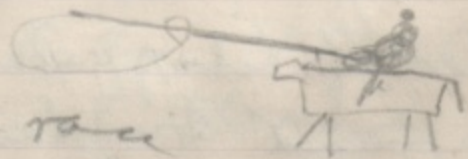
At 3 o'clock - after we had seen our first
yurts and herds of camels and of cattle, we left
the main Kalgan-Urga road or track (see map
& draw straight line between Kalgan & Urga; Urga
is of course Bolshevik) and came to Larsen's
camp. (see Sven Hedin's "Tents in Mongolia" in
Cardiff library). The scenery was similar to that
around Hughesooka; ^{dark} green hills & rolling plains.
Larsen is a Duke of Mongolia; a Swede,
formerly a missionary, who has become a great man
in Mongolia. He lives in an old temple on the side of a
hill, surrounded by yurts.

The bread-and-butter there was wonderful: just like
Wiltshire or Wiltshire; but before I had eaten two or
three pieces the shout came: "Caravan! forward!" and

8/ off we rattled towards the West, sometimes along a cart-track, sometimes over the steppe. We had not seen a single tree for 150 miles; i.e. from Kalgan to Larzai's camp.

About 4 o'clock we saw a grand sight - over 1000 horses on the plain; a few tents (blue) had been pitched. It was Mr Purpis' Horse Camp, where he had 1250. Here we were to camp for the night.

It was just like the Wild West! A number of Mongol horsemen were there and a great performance began. Mr Purpis was to choose the 25 best horses to bring to Kalgan. Mr Harner & he directed the Mongol horsemen to choose one out of the wild horses. The Mongol ~~was~~ armed with a long whip which was also a lasso would descend ~~and~~ on the chosen horse who



would fly away. A great race would follow, the Mongol catching up the fugitive horse, throwing the whip-lasso round his neck and bringing him to a stop. Five or six Mongols on foot - very plucky - would - on horse's being brought back - leap at horse, holding him by the mane & tail. Then another Mongol would board the wild horse with P for Purpis.

Then supper - soup with big lumps of mutton - cooked by the Russians. We ate it in wooden Mongol bowls. We then slept in tents.

Up early next morning (Sat. July 13)

— watched more horse big carts by the Mongols. Then one car, with Plessen, Müller and myself, left towards the palace of Prince Teh Wang. "This is puzzling," said Plessen. "When one is invited for a week-end in England, one knows what to expect. But a week-end at the palace of a Mongolian prince! I just can't picture what it is going to be like."

After about 10-15 miles of rushing across the steppe, we went over a hill and in a hollow we saw two collections of strange buildings. The first was of grey stone with brightly coloured roofs in Chinese style and a number of yurts surrounding it. We saw a wall with pictures of big blue birds upon it. That was the palace of Prince Teh Wang.

The other collection of buildings was a number of temples about 500 yards away, with this fantastic Chinese gables of dragon designs, rising above a series of mud houses. That was the residence of the Panchen Lama, who, they say, cannot go back to Tibet because he is anti-British and we, of course, control Tibet.

We drove towards the Prince's palace, when about five Mongol soldiers with pigtails (all Mongols except lamas, wear pigtails) rushed out - with rifles. One barred our way with his rifle and then grinned. He would not let us go to the Palace but pointed to a building on the hill with yurts around it. (We learned later that only the Prince and his family could come down the straight way to the Palace and that ordinary mortals should come the side way, although we could leave by the princely way). The soldier (in blue-grey ragged uniform) jumped on to our side-board and directed us to the building and yurts on the hill. Here a number of Mongols in brilliant though dirty red and blue silks bowed to us and led us into a yurt where we sat bow-legged on Mongol carpets (about a yard square). My brought us Mongol tea with mare's milk in it (awful!). We sat there in silence for some time, then wandered about the yurts. After about one hour and a half word came that the Prince was ready to receive us.

We went down the hill entered a courtyard and saw the dazzling painted entrance with two green statues of lions (but Chinese lions with funny heads.) Two soldiers stood with fixed gleaming bayonets. They

Saluted as (presented rifles) as we passed and we entered another courtyard.

(Now we are breaking camp. We shall say good bye to Prince Oshiroff & if we go to the Living Buddha again).

Sunday, July 21 10 o'clock.

"On the Track of the Living Buddha" - in a Mongol camp (3 yurts), we have been following the motor car track of the Living Buddha across the steppes but cannot find him. We followed his track last night till dark and then pitched our tent near a spring about a mile from a Mongol camp of about 3 yurts. Now we're off again. I'm afraid we can't find the Living Buddha. So we'll make our way southwards.

6 o'clock.

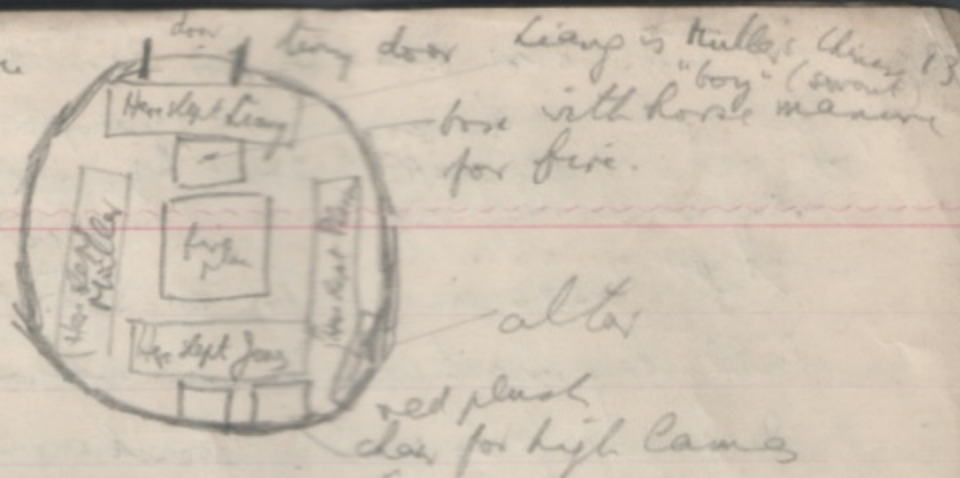
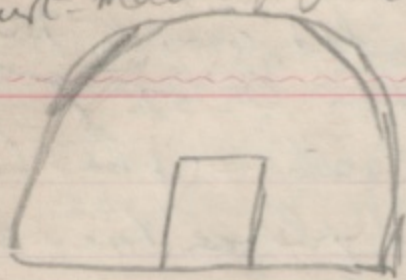
Hurray! We have tracked the Living Buddha like Boy Scouts from one prince's camp to another. We are going to spend the night in the camp (7 yurts, about 20 camels) of the Prince of East Sumnit and we leave early tomorrow morning for Larsen's Camp, the Living Buddha coming with us in his car. (Please show this letter to Mr. Davies. I think he'd have a good laugh out of it. Also to J. P.)

How to continue the narrative.

We waited in a room in the palace (Sat. ~~Sunday~~) until a big man in dark ^{blue} silk robe, with black silk skull cap on which was a red button and having a very long pigtail came in. He had a reddish face, rather hunched and looked about 45-50. He was the prince. He was accompanied by his counsellor, a dignified wrinkled man with strange head-dress. We bowed and grinned. Muller said we would like to sleep in a yurt. The prince bade servants take us and we went to a courtyard where there were three yurts. We were taken to the further one (a soldier with fixed bayonet guarded the second, because it contained the prince's seal.)

We entered the tiny door and found ourselves in a brilliantly colored interior. All round the circular wall there were bright red ^{stut} boxes with golden designs of bats (Sign of good luck). There were two big chairs ~~one~~ opposite the door against wall, but we were requested not to sit in them because they were for high lamas. Just near the door there was a red & gold open box full of dry horse manure. In the middle under the opening there was a space with a fire place. ~~At~~ On the left of the two lamas' chairs was a Tibetan Buddhist altar with pictures. There was room for four of us to sleep on the floor.

Plan of ^{an} yurt at palace
just made of felt.



The Prince had 50 guests (Chinese officials, British military attaché, Si Chale Bell & daughter, an American artist, some people from Legation, Embassies, and mostly Mongol princes and lamas) for July Sunday was the the greatest Mongol feast of the year, but there was not a single lavatory in the whole palace! not even for the Prince.

That night there was a great feast at the Palace, 20 kinds of soup; and mare's milk which is horrible.

On Sunday morning I woke up to hear the Baron say: "Gentlemen, it is five o'clock!" He woke us up much too early! We dressed, breakfasted from our own supplies and before 7 we dashed off to a hill about 7 miles away where the great feast was to be held. Dozens ~~of~~ of blue tents had been put off, hundreds of Mongols in silks, reds, blues; princes