Death on the Chang Tang
Tibet, 1950
The Education of an Anthropologist

Frank Bagnall Bessac
& Susanne Leppmann Bessac
with Joan Orielle Bessac Steelquist
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The publisher and authors have attempted to obtain permission from and to credit copyright owners and photographers. If mistakes or omissions have occurred, we welcome any corrections or other information that readers can provide. During a long life one acquires pictures from many sources. Some, like the pictures of the Mongols, Alashan, Lhasa and Samye, Frank took. Pictures of Taiwanese architecture were taken by Susanne. Back some fifty odd years ago few had good cameras. Those who did took pictures and shared the results with those who were present and especially interested. Though we may not always remember names of photographers or subjects we are delighted to have been able to preserve these photographs so they may be shared here.
In Memory of

Harry Joachim Bessac, 1958-1961
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, thanks to all you friends, hosts, teachers of your ways of life: Manchu, Han Chinese, Mongols, Tibetans, Hmong, and Taiwanese. Without you there could not have been an education in anthropology.

The pictures reproduced in plates 3 through 21 were, for the most part, taken by me (Frank) prior to 1951. Some are the gift of friends and comrades who shared the experiences with me. In the chaos of time I have forgotten who took what, and worse, your names. I have included your pictures for the information they provide, because I like them, and as a greeting to all of you wherever you may be.

Joan Orielle Bessac Steelquist, #4 daughter, was pivotal in putting the text together, checking dates and facts, and providing correct words for songs and poems.

Dave Tracy, son-in-law, read and rewrote an earlier draft. The idea of using insets for material that does not follow the timeline of the main narrative is his.

Many have heard or read parts of these memoirs: former students Swain Wolfe, Ray Risho, Wei Xiaoming; our children Barbara, Andrea, Turan, Bret; good neighbor Barbara Stanley; and last but not least, Susanne Springer of Joseph’s Coat Wool Shop and Salon.

Terry Long and former graduate student Lyn R. Fisher have provided layout and graphics work from the inception of this project in 2001.

Without G. G. Weix, from the Department of Anthropology, the manuscript would not have reached publication. Finally, members of UM’s printing and graphics department, in the spirit of the late Al Madsen, have eased the process to fruition.
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Late April 1951: The waves lapped against the pier near Fishermen’s Wharf, confusing the mirrored lights of Berkeley, California across the Bay. Frank (Francis Bagnall Bessac) was sitting next to me. We were both graduate students in the anthropology program at U.C., Berkeley. Frank had entered in January 1951, second semester. We had all heard about him by then because of a \textit{LIFE} magazine article about him published in November 1950.\textsuperscript{1} In those pre-television days to be featured in \textit{LIFE} meant instant stardom at least for a while. All of us unattached female graduate students were eager to take a closer look at this tall, handsome stranger with the bloodshot, aching eyes.

Then Frank asked me in John Howland Rowe’s seminar if I knew of a good Chinese restaurant. Of course, I did not. We students were too poor for testing out restaurants. We went to the greasy spoon we called, “We never close; we never clean,” or its look-alike. But Frank was flush with the money he had received for that article in \textit{LIFE} so we wandered around San Francisco’s China Town and ended up at Fishermen’s Wharf that beautiful, portentous, April evening.

Frank had written the \textit{LIFE} article together with a journalist, Jim Burke, who met him together with U.S. government officials soon after Frank reached Sikkim. Burke had finessed this meeting by simply not attending the official press conference. Articles about the Mackiernan/Bessac party had appeared by then in leading newspapers giving the official interpretation of events. After that, others got their hands on the text of the article Frank wrote with Burke. The result of all this kneading and shaping was a carefully contrived story that concealed the route Frank and his companions took and the identities of people who had helped them, spiced up and obscured with inaccuracies and, of course, sensationalized with pictures.

The \textit{LIFE} article discouraged Frank. He put off writing a full and truthful account of his experiences riding camel or horse across the steppes, deserts and mountains of China, Chinese Turkestan, Tibet and Mongolia until some other, less-encumbered time. He did regale his children and college students with ethnographic anecdotes from those years, but for serious reconsideration he wanted to wait until the statute of limitations gave him free access to documents in the National Archives, many marked “Top Secret.”\textsuperscript{?}

Over time these five years, from 1945 to 1950, faded into the past. Then others began to write — Westerners, Tibetans, Chinese, and Indians. Ted Gup just calls Frank a Fulbright student and leaves it at that. Young Tibetans puzzle over a “Mr. Frank” and about some mysterious mission to Tibet in those last few months before the end of Free Tibet. Thomas Laird, in a full-blown deconstruction, imbued with “Sixties’ righteousness,” has mixed his anger about the Vietnam War with events from
another time and a very different public mood. It is time that Frank present his own reminiscences of pre-Communist China, Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan and Tibet.¹

But now Frank is almost completely blind. It was in the summer of 1980, driving home in the failing light from backpacking in the Mission Mountains of Montana, after fishing for rainbow trout in the clear mountain lakes that we hit a horse, or the horse hit us. Either way, Frank suffered a brain concussion which on top of the juvenile glaucoma he has battled much of his adult life, meant that he has been essentially blind ever since. I have become his academic assistant, his understudy, reading out loud, helping with research papers and student projects. We decided to write his memoirs together. He would try to answer all my questions (after fifty odd years of marriage I knew much of the main outline) and then I would try to compose a manuscript.

Gertrude Stein ghostwrote her own life by pretending to write the autobiography of her friend, Alice Toklas.⁴ This I hope to avoid. Still, writing a husband’s life, even after so many years together is treacherous ground. I do not know of other examples where a wife has tried to do such a task, in quite this way.

Mehrdad Kia, from the History Department at the University of Montana, told me of a somewhat similar example — the diary of Mohammad Hasan Khan E’temad os-Saltaneh. This is another example to avoid, but fascinating to me as I grew up in Iran and walked to school each day on the street named Gawameh Saltaneh.⁵ (Saltaneh is a title, not a family name. The two men were not related.) Os-Saltaneh was chief interpreter, or at least foreign newspaper reader, for Naser-o-Din Shah, Qajar (1881-1896). The Qajar Court, originally a Turkish speaking dynasty with strong nomadic antecedents, ruled Iran (then generally known as “Persia” in the West) until 1925, when Riza Shah Pahlavi usurped the throne with British help and Soviet acquiescence.

Os-Saltaneh dictated much of his diary to his educated and powerful wife, Ashraf os-Saltaneh (powerful because of her special friendship with the Shah’s then favorite concubine). He gleefully boasted about his exploits and adventures knowing that she would feel threatened. According to Kia, the diary became a tug of war between them exploiting each other’s insecurities.⁶ The Qajar Court was a complex world, full of intrigue, violence, insecurities between men and women, and strife between settled peoples and pastoral nomads not unlike the turbulent world of East and Inner Asia which is the central theme of the memoir I have ghost-written.

A quite different piece of writing — very relevant to this enterprise — is A Tibetan Revolutionary, the Political Life and Times of Bapa Phuentso Wangye,⁶ written in the first person by the anthropologist, Melvyn C. Goldstein, together with William R. Siebenschuh, and Dawei Sherap, a Tibetan intellectual now living in China. They based the book on conversations with Phuenwang (shorthand for Bapa Phuentso Wangye). This unconventional book presumably tells the political life-story of the Tibetan-speaking Khampa revolutionary who plotted the invasion of Tibet from Kham, across the Drichu, “the River of Golden Sands.” According to this book, Phuenwang was trying to guarantee Tibetan autonomy and believed that the best way to do so was under the umbrella of the Communist International. At roughly the same time, Frank was trying to help the “Inner Asians” maintain their independence or at least their bargaining power with the encroaching communist states. Sadly, these two men countered each other’s efforts.

Like Goldstein, I too will use the first person in writing this memoir, fully aware that this is a questionable practice. To assure greater veracity I include references to all relevant U.S.

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¹ I went to the Community School in the Presbyterian mission compound in Tehran.

² The Chinese call the Inner Asian peoples nei-fan or “inner barbarians.”
government documentation that we have been able to acquire from the National Archives with the help of Montana's Senators, Max Baucus and Conrad Burns, and the Freedom of Information Act. Information that moves outside the timeline of the main story or tries to explain the larger setting will be set apart in boxes. Footnotes in my voice are noted with SLB.

As the title suggests, this memoir is not simply a retelling of Frank's experiences in pre-communist China and Inner Asia. I have interwoven episodes from his later field research related to East and Inner Asia. In this sense, this is a memoir of his anthropological education, not his regular academic education at university, but of his education in the field in Yunnan, North China, Manchuria, Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan, Tibet and Taiwan, and here in Montana with Hmong (Miaozu) from Laos, and Tibetan refugees resettled in Montana.

I know, of course, that however carefully I follow Frank's oral narrative, however many questions about details I ask, and however generous he is with his answers, the past is not quite knowable to those who have not been a part of it. I did not meet Frank until January, 1951, when he walked into the graduate seminar. The period of his life which forms the central focus of these memoirs took place before I met him. However, I grew up in Iran at a time when camel caravans with rhythmic tread still passed our house on their way towards Central Asia; nomads with black goat-hair tents camped on the plains of Persepolis, and Turcomans brought their prize horses to the royal racetrack near our house. I also met some of those laughing, generous, naïve-maybe, GIs who came to Iran to facilitate the transfer of "Lend-Lease" war material to the Soviet Union in the grim days of World War II.

We are now an old couple living in the Rattlesnake Valley of western Montana. Above us rise the barefaced hills, Jumbo and Sentinel — the guardians of "Hell Gate," the ancient approach to the buffalo hunting grounds of eastern Montana. The landscape reminds both of us of a time when we were young, before we knew each other. What was that world like?

As hard as I have tried to be an honest scribe, and much of what follows tries not only to present the facts as Frank has told them to me, but often uses his own words, the organization and the descriptions are mine. Facts may be knowable, but it is the words with which they are told that reveal "the beautiful circuit and subterfuge of our thought and desire."

Susanne L. Bessac, Missoula, Montana.

From here on the text is in Frank B. Bessac's voice.

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a The Rattlesnake Valley is so-called to add Western chic. There are no native rattlesnakes in the valley.
Figure 3: Patterned silver base of a wooden Mongol tea bowl. This was a gift from the Prince of Ulanchap. The five bats symbolize the five blessings: Age, Health, Wealth, Virtue, and a Natural Death. They circle what appears to be the Chinese character for long life, shou, signifying good fortune. It was probably made by a Han silversmith in some oasis town.
Plate I: Frank Bagnall Bessac

Above: 1944, Frank in the Cavalry in Kansas

Right: Frank at the OSS office in Beijing in 1946

Below: Frank in 1948, a Knight of Genghiz Khan, Ulanchap Aimak

Below right: Frank in 1975, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Montana
Plate II: At Cornell University
Learning Chinese in 1944, Frank is second from the right. Fellow students in 1944, Frank in front second from left and Milton Barnett third from left in front
Frank and Milt (Milton Barnett), revisiting Cornell in 1990.
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Above: A girl selling peanuts
Left: "Holy Man"
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Left: One of the gates with “spirit screen”
Below: Main compound building and courtyard
Bottom Left: The Dining Hall
Bottom Right: The Garden
Plate V: Chinese Faces
Boy with kite picturing "Monkey," the supernatural who guided Xuan Zang to India to bring back Buddhist Scriptures. Beijing 1946
Sign Painter
Street Vendor preparing paper flower wreaths, used especially in funerals
Soldier with Cigarette. Manchuria, 1945 (photo. Bob West)

Below: Frank third from left, with members of the 8th Route Army of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) in Kalgan, 1946.
Plate VII: Eastern Inner Mongolia in winter

Above Left: Mongol ladies dressed up

Above Right: The Dilowa, integral to Frank's knowledge of Mongolia, he was a close associate of Owen Lattimore, influencing him and through him Frank's education about Mongols. He stayed with the Bessacs at Berkely in the 1950's.

Left: Return flight to Dolon Nor, 1946, Frank in front

Below: Yurts around a temple
Plate VIII: Ordos Region of Mongolia in summer
Top Left: Mongol woman at door of temporary summer shelter
Top Right: Preparing food on an outdoor stove
Right: A man fixing a pot, a tinker or maybe even a smith. Smiths tend to have special supernatural powers in nomad societies, like a shaman, even when Buddhists.
Lower Left: Mongol woman with ornamented braids
Lower right: Mongol woman preparing fleece
After the Second World War, when I was traveling in East Asia, modern, "scientific thought" had reached every corner of the globe. It was not called "globalization" then, but the assumptions about the nature of man, set free with the Reformation in sixteenth-century Europe, had become the dominant paradigm. Marxism, capitalism, democracy, British colonialism, fascism, and even much of the American Protestant missionary effort, were focused on similar assumptions about man's place in the universe. The means were different, but the goals, the prizes sought, were not that different. The mission of man on earth was to create a more perfect material life for human beings here and now. In a fiendish variant, James Watt, the Secretary of the Interior under the Reagan Administration, claimed that man should use up all the earth's riches as quickly as possible as Armageddon would bring an end to the earth and to this life. The welfare of man in the here and now is what matters.

This had not been the way the majority of mankind considered their place on earth, but by the 1940s, societies with different priorities had mostly been marginalized, if not exterminated. Islam with its proscription on worshipping the creation rather than the Creator retains a somewhat different perspective that has been dampened by its origins in such a stark almost lifeless desert—an environment worn out by too much human civilization, too much grazing of livestock, too much irrigation agriculture in a dry, hot land.

By the 1940s, Tibet, center of Buddhism, home of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, stood as a lighthouse, a rallying symbol of a very different conception of the meaning of human life: a conception that recognizes a web of connectedness binding all life, manifested as a compassion for all sentient beings, the community of all life, and cultivation of those inner powers which transcend the surrounding visual world. This implied the prohibition of mining for precious metals, damming rivers for power plants, bulldozing and clearcutting forests, and fishing in the rivers and lakes.

I remember the Buddhist monk, Dilowa Gegen,a from Outer Mongolia, who was staying with us in Berkeley. He reprimanded the little sons of Gambojab Hangin, a Mongol friend and a scholar working on a Mongol dictionary with Ferdinand Lessing. They had caught a nice mess of fish off the pier: "You must not kill fish. A fish provides so little meat it is not worth killing and you are impeding a soul from moving along the path towards enlightenment!" I have seen the Dilowa lovingly carry ants that had moved into our sugar bowl outside, then gently blow them off his hands.

Of course, this was the ideal, not always observed. There was mining in the areas claimed by the Tibetan government but contested by other governments: Amdo (Qinghai) and along the other

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a Dilowa Khatag meaning a Reincarnation "without seal," i.e., without the large endowment that goes with the office.
borders of Political Tibet, in so-called Ethnographic Tibet. There was even gold mining in Tibet itself at Thok Jalung. This area was described for the British by Nain Singh, one of the “pundits” who secretly mapped Tibet for the British Raj in 1865.9

Wild animals were surreptitiously hunted except in the vicinity of monasteries. Killing domesticated animals, sheep and even horses, the Dilowa said, was different. These animals would never have been born without the husbandry of man. Mongols and Tibetans, devout Buddhists, yet pastoral nomads, saw no other way to survive on the grasslands and high pastures unless they butchered their flocks. It was, of course, done ritually not to damage the animal’s essence and disturb its chances at a benevolent rebirth. Tibet remained one of the great wildlife sanctuaries of the planet, preserving remnants of big game herds of the Pleistocene era.

In the lands surrounding Tibet, such as India under British rule and even after it returned to self-rule in 1947, and China under Confucian and now Marxist ideology, the philosophy of man’s domination of the earth for human purposes had won out as the supreme good superseding other considerations. The domination of Earth, managed for man’s purposes at whatever cost to other sentient beings, had become the driving force everywhere. With Mao Zedong’s proclamation of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) from the Gate of Heavenly Peace in Beijing, October 1, 1949, the keystone was in place for an entirely man-focused world.

The Tibetans declared their independence after World War I, but as with previous eras, whoever controlled the lands to the east of Tibet was eager to meddle in Tibetan affairs. It was from the east that Tibet is more approachable and it is to the east where live many peoples of various self-identifications who speak languages related to Tibetan. The rulers of China9 claimed the territory of Tibet as an integral, unalienable part of their dominions. They had done so since the Tang Dynasty (618-906 AD), when Tibetans had actually conquered the capital at Changan (Xian), and the Chinese continued to do so regardless of the changing dynasties and territorial permutations. Kublai Khan (1215-1294 AD), grandson of Genghiz Khan, b converted to Tibetan Buddhism. First the Sakya sect and later the Gelupa sect, “Yellow Hats,” in their role as the ruling sects of Tibet had provided a Di-Shi, “spiritual teacher,” for the rulers of China. Tibet was in the higher priest/patron position of the teacher and the master, while China’s rulers were assigned the lower role of pupil. Tibetan civilization was recognized as superior in spiritual power. To maintain their hold on temporal power the rulers of China had to maintain “the mandate of Heaven,” the ultimate moral and spiritual power that defines a state’s legitimacy. This was true despite Mao Zedong’s proclamation in the 20th century that “power comes from the mouth of a gun.”

During and after the Second World War, both Chinas — the Communists and the Nationalists — declared that, “Tibet is an integral part of China.” Both these Chinas hoped to forge a modern, centralized nation-state out of the old Qing Empire. Both Chinas point to the summer palace of the Chien-long Emperor (1736-1795 AD) at Rehe (Chengde) as proof of their right to incorporate Tibet into their new states. At Rehe the Manchu Empire has been symbolically laid out with a scaled down Potala representing Tibet.

Tibet, despite the claims of governments to the east, the intrigues from Russia (initially Tsarist and later Soviet), and the pressures emanating from India and the lands to the south, had felt fairly secure. The Himalayas, Pamirs, Karakorum, Kunlun and other mountain ramparts formed an impressive and nigh-impenetrable border, and together with the Chang Tang, the icy high plateau of northern Tibet, discouraged invaders. In the 19th century Western explorers became eager to

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a The Chinese call their country Zhongguo, the “Middle Kingdom.”
b Genghiz Khan was the founder of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1378).
c The Communists (CCP) were led by Mao Zedong. The Nationalists, or the Guomindang (Kuo Min Tang = KMT) party, were led by Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jeshi).
add Lhasa, the holy city on the "Roof of the World," to the list of their conquests. A succession
of Russian, British, French, and Swedish explorers and military men tried to "gate-crash" the
mountain ramparts only to be turned back by Tibetans before reaching Lhasa.

For the Western explorers, the allure of entering Tibet was the adventure itself, the glory of
getting there first. Conducting geographical surveys and searching for precious metals were
certainly also important. Most important was the rivalry between the British and Russian Empires,
the "Great Game" as the British called it. Tibet became a buffer zone between these rivals, each
keeping a watchful eye on the other to make sure neither power succeeded in dominating this
valuable piece of real estate while the lands of China remained weak and disunited.

By the 1940s, only a few Westerners had gained admittance to the holy city of Lhasa. Sven
Hedin, the Swedish explorer (financed both by Alfred Nobel family's wealth amassed from oil
and explosives, and the Tsar of Russia) tried repeatedly, but in vain, to enter the city of Lhasa. He
dedicated his book about Tibet to Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India.

In 1904, under orders of Lord Curzon, Francis Younghusband led an expeditionary force to
Lhasa, killing hundreds of Tibetans. There had been a rumor of Russian intrusion into Tibet. What
he found in Lhasa was one lone Buriat Mongol monk from Siberia. Younghusband turned back
overcome by an epiphaney:

"I went off alone to the mountainside and gave myself up to all the emotions of this eventful
time. My task was over and every anxiety was passed. The scenery was in sympathy with
my feelings: the unclouded sky a heavenly blue; the mountains softly merging into violet and
as I now looked towards that mysterious purple haze in which the sacred city was once more
wrapped ... I was insensibly suffused with an almost intoxicating sense of elation and goodwill.
This exhilaration of the moment grew and grew till it thrilled through me with overpowering
intensity. Never again could I think evil, or ever again be at enmity with any man. All nature
and all humanity were bathed in a rosy glowing radiance; and life for the future seemed naught
but buoyancy and light ... And all that single hour on leaving Lhasa was worth all the rest of a
lifetime.""!

Tibet settled back into isolation.

Later, Sir Charles Bell became an intimate of the 13th Dalai Lama when His Holiness fled
to Sikkim to avoid attacks by remnants of Manchu troops after the Manchu (Qing) Empire
disintegrated. Parts of Lhasa were reduced to rubble. When the 13th Dalai Lama returned to
his city he made some efforts to carry out reforms by easing the rigid social stratification, and
strengthening Tibet's defenses, while reaching out tentatively to the outside world. Some Tibetans
were sent to school in India and Britain. Some troops were trained by Indian and British officers.
A British Customs Mission was established at Gyantse. Britain could have extended protection
over Tibet at that time, but it did not. With the death of the 13th Dalai Lama in 1933, the abbots
of the great monasteries moved against reforms, fearing that any opening to the thinking of the West
would mean the destruction of the spiritual bastion that they believed was Tibet's unique mission to
maintain. They were also quite aware of the advantages that isolation offered to their own power.

By 1938-39, the Germans joined in the "Great Game" with an amazing agenda. Heinrich
Himmler, Hitler's Reichsfuehrer, obsessed with exploring the origins and spread of the "Aryan
Race," decided that Tibet was a likely spot to find remnants of the original Aryans, those tall and
blond supermen. He supported and co-opted the expedition to Lhasa led by Ernst Schaefer.
The British, especially Hugh Richardson, who was then a British resident in Lhasa, were very
uneasy about this expedition but unable to persuade the Tibetans to stop it. At roughly the same
time Himmler was supporting another German mountaineering expedition that was venturing
to conquer Mount Nanga Parbat in the Karakorum Range. This mountaineering group was not
allowed to proceed by the British and was interned at a prisoner-of-war camp at Dehra Dun in India until the end of World War II. Some escaped. Two climbers eventually came to Lhasa — Heinrich Harrer and Peter Aufschnaiter.

During the Second World War, the United States on several occasions had contact with the Tibetan government. One of these was when Lieutenant Robert Crozier and his fellow airmen found refuge in Lhasa after their B-24 cargo plane crashed while flying “the Hump” in 1943. The reaction of the people of the holy city of Lhasa was not reassuring. It seems that as the pilot was desperately trying to find a place to bail out, as the plane was running out of fuel in a snowstorm, he had inadvertently flown over the city of Lhasa. The populace was terrified at this desecration of holy space. Lhasa was (and is) to Lamaist Buddhists what Mecca is to the Muslim world — the holiest, most sacred site of pilgrimage. After parachuting to safety near the village of Tsetang south of the Tsangpo the airmen were given warm clothes to guard against the winter cold and taken to Lhasa by their rescuers. Expecting an official welcome they suddenly faced an angry mob vowing to stone them to death!

The 1911 revolution that overthrew the Manchu dynasty in Beijing ushered in a republic that disintegrated into the rule of warlords with competing armies, all of which were nominally under the Nationalist (Guomindang) Party headed by Chiang Kai-shek. The Japanese invaded soon after. The Chinese had their hands full and were not overly concerned with the status of Tibet. Many Tibetans wanted their country to be recognized as an independent and more secular nation-state, less under the control of the monastic and aristocratic hierarchies and certainly not under the thumb of Chinese Ambans.

With the end of World War II, the surrounding powers that had been much too busy destroying each other to bother with Tibet suddenly became very interested indeed. The Tibetans were vulnerable and very much alone. Few in the West were aware of Tibet or, given the host of problems the aftermath of the war ushered in, were much interested. The British, who among Western powers had the closest contacts with Tibet, were in full retreat from all their previous colonies, including the withdrawal from India. They had just instituted a socialist government of their own which made them less hostile to a communist regime threatening from the PRC. The United States discovered that they had underestimated the power of the Chinese Communists. With Communist victory in the civil war and with Chiang Kai-shek’s withdrawal to the island of Taiwan, Americans found themselves persona non grata in the lands they had tried to protect from the Japanese and with whose people many Americans believed they had established a special friendship.

The Great Game became the “Cold War” and the U.S. blundered into the power vacuum created by the demise of the British Raj. At the newly forming United Nations, no nation, except maybe Albania, argued against the Chinese line proclaimed by both Chinas: “Tibet is and has always been an integral part of China.” The Soviets, recognizing an advantage for their positions, successfully argued for separate U.N. seats for members of their dominions. Ukraine, Belarus, and Outer Mongolia were recognized as distinct nations and given their own seats. Only the Chinese Nationalists were awarded a seat at the U.N. to represent all the nationalities and ethnicities of what had been the Qing Empire. The Nationalists were given this seat even though they controlled only the island of Taiwan. They were in no position to assure the autonomy of Tibet. Besides, they and their friends in the United States (the “China Lobby”) feared any policy that did not reaffirm the

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a The Hump was the nickname for the 530-mile long air route from India to China over the Himalayas. This supply route became operational in April 1942 after the Japanese took control of the land route through Burma.
b The Ambans were delegations sent by the Manchu to “manage” the Tibetans in Lhasa.
unity of China. Despite anxious delegations from the government of the Dalai Lama to the United States, the motion for a seat at the United Nations was simply allowed to lapse.

Late July, 1950, I stood before the highest Tibetan government cabinet, surrounded by the Tibetan National Assembly, the Tsongdu,* in the great hall of the fortress-like Potala palace in Lhasa, one of the most amazing and beautiful buildings in the world. After a narrow vote by the Tsongdu I was instructed to deliver a letter composed by the Tibetan Foreign Office to the United States government, begging for immediate political recognition of the State of Tibet as an independent nation and asking for immediate military help. Help was desperately needed. Filled with zeal and the momentum of victory, Mao's Chinese Communist troops were massing at the borders of Tibet, eager to incorporate Tibet into their "workers' paradise." How had I come to stand there in the Potala, at the very heart of Tibet? What circumstances had allowed me to be in a position of such extraordinary trust, aware of the momentousness of the occasion, yet with such heart-breaking lack of real power to influence events?

April, 1950, at about the 33rd parallel north and 88th longitude east, in a border area between the uninhabited, icy reaches of the Chang Tang and the lands of the Drokpa, the nomads of northern Tibet. I stood looking down the barrels of the guns pointed at me by a Tibetan border patrol guarding the approaches to inhabited Tibet. My companions — Douglas Seymour Mackiernan, Stephan Yanuishkin, and Leonid (Ilionit Leofka) Shutov — lay dead on the ground before me, shot at point-blank. Vasili Zvanzov was seeking cover behind the tent flap, gravely injured. We had finally reached the first nomadic encampment south of the Kunlun Mountains in Tibet. I looked into the eyes of the wild Tibetan gunmen and then, I do not know why, they lowered their guns and let me live.

The Military (1943-46)

In Yunnan as Parachute Commando

I first came to China in 1945 as a GI with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). I had volunteered to serve with Chinese parachute commandos. These commandos were ostensibly under Chinese Nationalist control, but were stationed in Yunnan out of the eyes of the security office of Dai Li. This was an American show. General "Vingar Joe" Stilwell, the wartime commander of U.S. forces in China, was completely disillusioned with Chiang, whom he called "Peanuts." Stilwell had already been relieved of his military command by 1945. The Chinese commandos, strengthened by seasoned OSS veterans from the war in Europe, especially those involved in supporting partisan fighters in the Balkans, welcomed me because I spoke "Chinese." The war in Europe had ended, but the Japanese showed no signs of surrender.

It felt odd when John Bottorff, William Kaufmann, and I, who had all studied Chinese together, climbed up the steps of a Curtiss "Commando" C-46D to fly "over the Hump." The Japanese still controlled "the Burma Road" from Burma to Kunming, in Yunnan province in south China. There was a roll call after we boarded: general, colonel, major ... and then Private Bessac, sitting alongside the brass and legendary European resistance fighters.

We had arrived in Calcutta hot, excited, full of passion and not a little anxiety, after weeks on a converted passenger ship zigzagging across the Pacific, avoiding Japanese attacks. We did not travel in a convoy. Except for the usual seasickness rounding Tasmania the trip was not bad. I spent my days reading Proust and dreamed of my ancestral home on the Dordogne in France, of blooming chestnut trees, and freshly baked Madeleines. In Perth pretty Aussie lassies welcomed us

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* The Tibetan cabinet is the Kashag and is composed of four Sha-pe.
and thanked us for going to fight the Japanese.

At the receiving station in Kunming, Yunnan, a WAAC asked me, “Typewriter or parachute?” I had no intention of getting this far only to end up behind a desk writing reports. “Parachute!” I said, and became point man for three Chinese Nationalist parachute commandos. We were detailed to cut the rail line between Guangzhou and Hong Kong behind Japanese lines in a desperate attempt to end the war with Japan. Once we had cut the rail line, I was expected to melt into the rice paddies and disappear among the local population. This seemed quite an accomplishment given my six feet three and prominent nose: da bi zi, as Chinese derisively call Westerners. It was assumed that since I spoke “Chinese” I would naturally be able to converse with the local population.  

During the first weeks in Yunnan, “the land south of the clouds,” we were given jump training. We flew over the lovely, old, walled city of Kunming that seemed little changed from the days when Kublai Khan conquered the independent Nan Zhao kingdom centered there in 1253. Mirrored in the lakes were low walled houses interspersed with pagodas and a verdant countryside of humped hills. It is always spring in Kunming and the city is usually clothed in a warm, misty rain. We

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**Defining “China”**

Resembling the Ottoman Empire that had been dismembered after World War I, the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) had also been a conquest state that provided an administrative overlay to a great diversity of peoples. Some like the Hmong (Miao) and Yi practiced intensive agriculture in the river valleys and coastal plains. Beyond the easily cultivated lands there lived people who practiced mixed agriculture and animal husbandry; beyond them lived nomadic pastoralists. The inclusion of all these peoples into one empire had always been unstable and fractured repeatedly throughout the history of Chinese empires. The peoples living beyond the Great Wall of China were often the conquerors, in time assimilated. Those who remained beyond the Wall were never fully controlled until after World War II.

The glue that held the Ottoman Empire together was Islam and the Arabic language of the Holy Koran, written in Arabic script. The “Grand Ponte” was also the Caliph, the central figure for Sunni Islam. For successive Chinese empires the glue that held their hegemony together was an administrative bureaucracy with accompanying writing system using characters — archaic ideographs or logographs — and the literary tradition of histories, myths, romances, poetry and philosophy written in this script.

The so-called Han peoples, a bureaucratic generalization encompassing agricultural peoples with various histories who speak similar Sinitic languages, at least outside the home, are the most numerous ethnic group. But, even Mao Zedong in his youth recognized that he was not quite a Zhongguo Ren, “a man of the Center,” since he belonged to the Xiang and Kan language group, quite distinct from the ruling group in Nanjing. He even considered fighting for a sovereign, independent Hunan province. In the southern and western provinces (Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan, Guizhou, Yunnan and Sichuan, old Xi Kang) live dozens of ethnic groups, who wore distinctive clothes in the 1940s, and who speak mutually unintelligible languages representing quite distinct language families: Austro-Asiatic, including Mon-Khmer and Vietnamese (minus the Sinitic overlay); Sino-Tibetan Burmese, including both Tibetan and Mandarin Chinese; Tai Kadai Malayo-Polynesian (also known as Austronesian languages); and the Miao/Yao languages, which may be related to Sino-Tibetan. The Great Wall to the north and west originally defined

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*a Women’s Army Auxiliary Corp, a women’s military group established in 1941 by Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts.

*b In The Stilwell Papers is a LIFE photograph of GIs resting near their training plane. The dark-haired fellow may be me, but I cannot see the picture clearly; if the picture was taken while Stilwell was in China, it could not be me … but still ... ?

*c Actually, the city walls were built much later, according to my modern guidebook.
the border between the world of intensive agriculture and the very different world of the pastoral nomads. The peoples beyond the Wall, for the most part, speak Altaic languages: Manchu, Mongolian, and Turkish (including Uighur and Kazakh). Tibetans speak a Sino-Tibetan language and occupy a unique position influenced both by the steppe and from the south and east by agriculturists. There are also some Indo-European speakers on the borders of Chinese Turkestan. The inclusion of all these peoples in any Chinese empire has always been bitterly contested.

The writing system that has been used to administer these diverse peoples has not changed fundamentally since the time of the oracle divination bones of the Shang and Xia dynasties almost four thousand years ago. The Shang and Xia rulers probably spoke an Austro-Asiatic language. Although the Shang were vanquished by the Zhou peoples (who were Sino-Tibetan speakers) coming down from the northwest around the eleventh century BCE, the ancient writing system of the Shang-Xia continued in official use. As an ideographic system it can theoretically be adjusted to write any language. The Han Dynasty, which existed roughly at the same time as the Roman Empire, instituted civil service examinations requiring knowledge of the ancient script signs to write a court language, Guan Hua, in which the official records were kept. As students of Chinese characters soon realize, characters demand a special mindset. One cannot improvise, ignore small variations, and guess freely. Each character is composed, constrained within a rectangle, a walled world. One must obey the master, practice, and be patient. This becomes a strangely seductive, aesthetically pleasing enterprise that almost unknowingly enmeshes the student in a Confucian way of looking at the world. Many Western scholars of China have easily been seduced to look at China through the eyes of the literati, the court gentry, in part at least by learning to read Chinese characters.a

Standing there by the open door, contemplating the vast darkness of the Kunming plain, knowing that my venture had little chance of personal survival, I was so hyped-up that when the jump was suddenly called off it was difficult to hold me back. We were told that some of the seasoned OSS pros thought that the venture was too dangerous. Griping and expecting the higher-ups to foul-up was part of the OSS culture of equality, self-reliance, and resourcefulness.

Now, having read Dan Pinck’s book, it seems that what “the brass” had in mind was not as farfetched as we thought back in ’45. Pinck was an OSS agent behind Japanese lines working closely with Nationalist guerrillas, and also some Communist fighters, in the area we may have been ordered to jump into. (We would not have been given our exact orders until just before the jump.) He describes hearing about the planned attack by United States forces from the sea. Clearly, the

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a This was brought home to us on a trip back into the “Ji-zhong” (the old Communist Eighth Route area in Hebei) and Tai-hang Mountains (the “Masada,” the area of empowerment for Mao Zedong’s Red Guards, similar to climbing up to Masada for Israeli soldiers in memory of the defense to the last man carried out by the Maccabees) as part of a conference arranged by the “Contemporary History” (sic) Department at Nankai University in Tianjin in 1991. In the small town where we were to spend the night, in what was left of an Italian mission compound, the literate China scholars rushed off to decipher already tattered Marxist slogans on walls and gates while the bus driver took us under his wing. We wandered around the town answering his questions about the past and the present from a Western perspective and hearing about his own affairs and thoughts. As anthropologists we were not as enmeshed in the Chinese literary world as were the historians with whom we were at the conference.
"The Land of Women" and Hmong Refugees in Montana

Genetic materials on the Y chromosome and by mitochondrial DNA inherited through the mother suggest the continuation from ancient times of populations associated with language stocks and social organizations in the areas we now call southern and western China. During ancient times, south China was probably inhabited by peoples who tended to be more matricentered than the later, more patrilineal organizations. In the past, the southwestern area was known as "the land of women." Even today the kinship systems and varied marriage forms reflect a range of customs from "free love" (what modern rulers of the PRC disapprovingly call "walking marriage") to rigid patrilineality including the reluctance of young wives to live with their husbands at his family's home among the Huidong and among "sisterhoods" in the Pearl River Delta. In the Tibetan world there is dual descent: a daughter takes over the fealty obligations of her mother, a son those of his father. Among the Nosu, men do not marry but go to visit sweethearts in the houses of their mothers, similar to Hopi customs in North America. The mother's brother is the head of household, the "father figure." The Manchu government (Qing Dynasty, 1644-1912 AD) in an attempt to forge national unity, tried to force its ideas of patrilineality on the native peoples of the southwest. With the Naxi they succeeded, with the otherwise culturally close Nosu they did not. The various Miao and Yao groups tend to be ostensibly patrilineal.

With the collapse of South Vietnam in 1975, some Hmong (Meo, Miao) fighters from Laos under General Vang Pao (closely allied with US forces, especially the CIA in the "Secret War in Laos") ended up as refugees in western Montana. This was the result of a long-standing relationship between the OSS/CIA and the Forest Service smoke-jumping unit in Missoula, Montana. About 1,000 found a home in Montana (only some 250 remain), where we got to know them. Although these Hmong were most recently from Laos, they remembered that their ancestors came from Guizhou and Yunnan where many related peoples still live. Some local Hmong have since gone back to visit these only to return frustrated as they found it very difficult to communicate with each other. In the myths of the Mua surname group (they say they are "Hmong Tsia") told us by the late Xia Long Mua, their ancestors came originally from the northwest. They claim a special relationship with the Zhou Dynasty expressed, they say, in such things as hairstyles, embroidery patterns, and supernatural power. More recently, Xia Long (which means "Silver Dragon" in Mandarin, a name given him by the Haw Traders, a sinic-speaking merchant group in Southeast Asia) said his ancestors came from Yunnan. They moved to the mountains of North Vietnam where they heard that the soil was uncommonly fertile. From there some moved on to northeastern Laos.

In their marriage arrangements Hmong in Missoula are quite patrilineal but the mother's brother's son has first rights to marry his maternal aunt's daughter in a cross-cousin marriage. If she does not wish to marry him her future husband must pay an indemnity to her cousin. In the modern refugee context this means that both the husband's family and the wife's family have equal rights to assistance from Hmong who have found a haven in Montana. Only after death do Hmong wives become a part of their husband's clan-like patrilineage. It is the patrilineage that controls rebirth.

We found that it was easy to become enmeshed in these conflicting obligations when trying to help both Hmong and later Tibetans find a new home in Missoula. A young Hmong woman moved in with us for a while until her mother-in-law begged us to allow her to return to her husband (with whom she had been fighting). Her own family later felt responsible for us. They believed their daughter had possibly harmed us, not willfully, but because, as she and many other Hmong and their neighbors in...
idea was for the paratroopers to join up with Pinck and his group when a general United States attack on South China began.

While we anxiously waited every day to jump, only to find the jump had been postponed again, the war suddenly ended. On a hot August evening some guy jumped up on the mess table and shouted, "The war is over!" We thought it a poor joke and were ready to lynch him, but he was right. The United States had dropped two atomic bombs on Japan. The Emperor of Japan had surrendered.

It was an overwhelming moment. The Western Alliance held a monopoly of the most terrifying weapon yet invented by mankind. The United States was the dominant force in the world, for good and ill. We were certain it would be for good. We felt indescribably happy and went out on the town and got drunk on mulberry wine.

To drown the ancient sorrows,
We drank a hundred jugs of wine
There in the beautiful night.
We couldn't go to bed with the moon so bright.
Then finally the wine overcame us
And we lay down on the empty mountain —
    The earth for a pillow,
    And a blanket made of heaven.
— Li Bo (Li T'ai-po; 701-762 AD)

Early the next morning, we received orders to keep to our barracks, that is, our tents on the hillside. The Governor of Yunnan, a member of a Tibeto-Burmese speaking minority group, had declared independence from the Chinese Nationalist government.

I had visited villagers on the other side of our hill only to find that my Chinese was quite useless. The people wore interesting clothes of blue and white batik, decorated with brightly colored embroidery. The clothing was different from that worn by other Chinese I had met so far. They belonged to one of the many non-Han minority groups that form a large part of the agricultural population of southwestern China.

My foray to the other side of the hill made me aware for the first time of the great ethnic and cultural complexity of the lands the West calls "China." The peoples themselves call the country, Huaguo, "the Flowery Kingdom," or Zhongguo, the "Middle (or Central) Lands." Now, of course, these lands are the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the borders are guarded by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). But for me as an American soldier in the OSS back in 1945 it was not at all clear how to define the "China" for which we were ordered to fight. I had thought of "China" as a homogenous nation-state. Now it began to dawn on me that defining whom I was to assist might indeed present a problem. Essential to our OSS mission was the idea that we would assist local freedom fighters, some from behind enemy lines, others — like me — leading Chinese

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a The first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. The Japanese surrendered to the Allies on September 2, 1945; they surrendered to the ROC in Nanking on September 9, 1945.
b The governor of the province of Yunnan, a member of the Minjia minority group, declared independence in 1945. Some shots were fired before the crisis was resolved and the governor was bought off with the promise of a position in the Nationalist government of Chiang Kaishek. The Minjia are a group of sinicized Tibeto-Burmese speakers. The eminent anthropologist Francis L. Hsu used Minjia informants for his fieldwork in his book Under the Ancestor's Shadow.
c Inherent in the name Huaguo is the complex philosophical and religious idea of the Five Colors: the East is green-blue, the South is red, the West is white, the North is black, and the Center (the earth) is golden-yellow.
(cont. from page 8)

China believe, Hmong and many minority peoples are endowed with special 
mania, supernatural power, also known as ku, "poison," which is dangerous to outsiders, a powerful reinforcer of ethnic 
boundaries. Our Hmong daughter's own family (but not her husband's family) — both those members 
who have come to the United States and the family members who have remained in Southeast Asia 
— have since tried to make up for this. From the family in the mountains above Dien Bienphu we have 
received matching embroidered squares like those presented as part of the marriage exchanges between 
affinal relatives. Recently, our Hmong daughter called to say that her own daughter would like to make 
an ethnographic study of us for her Master's Degree in Anthropology! She is welcome any time she is 
able to come.

The distinction between the rulers of Zhongguo and the peoples living along the periphery, the 
"inner barbarians" — Mongols, Manchu, Turkish-speakers, Tibetans, and even some of the Yi and other 
peoples of southern China — was and is defined in terms of language, livelihood, marriage customs 
and self-identification. It is also, maybe politically more importantly, defined by writing systems. The 
administrative script of the PRC continues to be the archaic system of idiosyncratic characters or 
logographs used by the Shang/Xia dynasty thousands of years ago.

Characters are still the writing system both in the People’s Republic of China and on Taiwan. Under 
Mao Zedong the characters were modified, but not rationalized. The result is even more arbitrary than 
the traditional characters still used on Taiwan.

Those groups, who wish to emphasize their distance from — or even opposition to — empire, have 
long used their own writing systems. Up to the time of the Communist takeover (and maybe still) the 
Naxi (Nakhi, a Yi group) in Yunnan used a ceremonial script, quite distinct from Chinese characters. At 
least 500 years old, maybe much older, this script may derive from the script of the Harappa civilization 
in the Indus Valley on the Indian subcontinent, of five thousand years ago.

A non-official script gained converts among some of the Hmong in Laos. Some Hmong told of 
possessing a secret writing system that a visionary, probably over the border in Yunnan, had dreamed. Those who learned the writing, a syllabary, formed a resistance group first against the French, then 
against Communist Vietnamese and Pathet Lao. Remnants withdrew to the Pu Byia Mountain in Laos, but were routed, as the Hmong in Missoula claim, by "yellow rain." It is not clear what, or even if, this 
rain really fell.

Nueshu, the women's script associated with Yao (lu Minh) groups and linguistically close to Miao/ 
Hmong, may be seen as a protest script. Women used it to “speak bitter,” as Taiwanese say, telling of 
how they suffered in their husband’s home. Hmong here in Montana told us that they believe women 
have long had a script expressed through the batik patterns of their skirts and possibly in embroidery 
patterns. Hmong women (especially "Green Hmong") had secretly preserved their ancient traditions in 
this manner.

The peoples living beyond the Great Wall — Manchu, Mongols, Turkic speakers, and Tibetans 
— have long used their own scripts based on a few phonemically defined symbols, both syllabaries 
and alphabets. All these scripts derive ultimately from Mesopotamia reinterpreted by way of India or 
Arabic script introduced with the spread of Islam. Once aware how these systems work, anybody of 
middling intelligence can learn to read, puzzling out new words without a master teacher. By using a 
non-Chinese writing system all these people are publicizing their distinctness, and at times, their open 
opposition to Zhongguo overlords.

When the Manchu "on Mongol saddles" set up the Qing Dynasty in 1644, their administration used 
(cont.on page 12)
soldiers guided mostly by our wits. How could we tell who were the freedom fighters? Who were treacherous Japanese collaborators? Who just local opportunists?

With the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty in 1911, Sun Yatsen (who received his education in Hawaii and Hong Kong) and his revolutionaries (later trained by Soviet agents) were determined to shape the unwieldy, loosely associated peoples who were more or less under Qing hegemony, into a modern nation-state. They planned to forge the many languages, dialects, religions, cultures and peoples into a modern nation by teaching a single language, "Mandarin" (Guo-yu or putong hua) in all the new schools they planned to establish. The idea was that Mandarin could then be written with an easily learned alphabetic script, thereby allowing China to join the modern, Western world.

The West accepted the revolutionaries’ vision that all the lands and peoples who had been allies of, or paid tribute to, the Qing Emperors were therefore irrevocably a part of any successor empire. Owen Lattimore opposed this view, as he wrote in 1934:

"The smothering of the Great Wall frontier by the power which China drew from the West finally (resulted) in one of the most extraordinary situations in all Chinese history: the proclamation of the Chinese republic and the recognition of a Chinese title to sovereignty in Manchuria, Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan and Tibet ... treating the Manchu Empire as if it were the Empire of China ..."

"There is no doubt whatever that the Mongols and the Tibetans, the two most solid national groups affected by this historic reversal, regarded the fall of the Manchu Empire as the destruction of a framework, which ought simply to have allowed the original component parts of the Empire to resume their own national identities. Nor can there be any doubt that legally and historically they were right." 19

To the West the Qing Empire was China. To the West the whole area constituted a natural unit. It could readily be reinvented as a democratic United Peoples of China.

Both Nationalists under Chiang Kaishek and Communists under Mao Zedong claimed to be the legitimate heirs of Sun Yatsen’s revolution. Both claimed that they adhered to Sun’s principles and were dedicated to a modern, just, and popularly-governed, unified federation of all the different nationalities that had been associated with the Qing Emperors. Both agreed with the ideas symbolized by Sun’s flag for the New China: the five stripes of color, each representing an ethnic group: Manchu/red, Han/yellow, Mongols/blue, Uighurs/white and Tibetans/black.

Other nations did not — or could not — insist that Sun’s program of self-determination be carried out. Instead, the world accepted the fiction of what Jiang Zemin and the present rulers of the People’s Republic of China call “the Motherland.” This is an odd term for peoples who so officially promoted the worship of ancestors through the patriline in the past. What are the rulers of the People’s Republic of China thinking when they use this term?

In 1931 the Japanese established a puppet state, Manchuko, in the old Manchurian homeland of the rulers of the Qing Dynasty and invited the last emperor, Pu Yi, to be its nominal head. By then
Han literati skilled in Chinese characters, but for their own use they continued to keep records in Manchu script. The Han literati became the servants of the Manchu court while the Manchu rulers tried valiantly to retain their own traditions, forged beyond the Wall. They insisted on archery practice, distinctive dress and footwear (no bound feet for the ladies) in order to maintain their separate Manchu identity.

the Nationalists and the Communists, who originally formed a single, socialist party, had split and become mortal enemies. Chiang Kaishek’s armies chased the Communists on the “Long March” as the Communists struggled to find sanctuary in the far north of the loess country of Shaanxi. The Nationalists were then chased westward in 1937 by Japanese armies to sanctuary in Sichuan. The rich coastal cities of Shanghai and Canton (Guangzhou), Tianjin and Beijing surrendered to Japanese armies. With the defeat of the Japanese by Allied Forces in 1945, the civil war between the Communists and the Nationalists resumed in earnest.
On December 7, 1941, when I returned from football practice to my fraternity house on the College of the Pacific campus in Stockton, California, I found the place strangely hushed. Usually there was a game of pool in progress as Dave Brubeck (the future progressive jazz pianist) tried out riffs on the piano. Instead, someone was fiddling with the radio dial. It was “the day that will go down in infamy.” The Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. A significant part of the U.S. fleet that had huddled there in fear of sabotage, had been destroyed. The United States was now at war. Some of my frat brothers signed up right away. Dave Brubeck, I think, was among them. He ended up playing piano for the troops behind the lines at the “Battle of the Bulge.” But I was advised to join the Army Enlisted Reserve and finish my studies. I was majoring in History, expecting to become a high school teacher and football coach.

It was not until 1943 that my number was called. I volunteered for the Combat Engineers in the hope that the Army would teach me some of the mechanical skills that my childhood friends had mastered so easily and which I lacked. I had visions of emerging from the military able to lift the hood of my car, make a few, well considered adjustments with the savvy of “Click & Clack the Tappit Brothers” and voila, the Tin Lizzy would start up.

After basic training in the combat engineers, learning how to handle TNT — and not getting a primer in engine repair — it was assumed that I would become an officer since I had a college education. However, the Germans and Japanese had not been killing off sufficient numbers of officers. In fact, there was a glut. Not quite knowing what to do with me the military suggested the language training programs: the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP). I was asked to repeat sentences in various tonal languages to demonstrate that I could hear the differences. Having successfully repeated the Mandarin phrase, Wo shi mei guo ren, “I am an American,” with the correct tones, I was sent to Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, to learn “Chinese,” the newly proclaimed *lingua franca* of “Modern China.” It was stressed that we were learning to speak, not write, this vernacular language, and the underlying assumption was that this was indeed the language spoken by all the various peoples who inhabited the lands designated as China on our maps.

For me, a provincial from the Central Valley of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, Ithaca was my window on the big world. My parents, sister, and I had made a road trip across the entire United States in 1941, it is true, but I was unaware of the great racial, ethnic and social divides of my own country. There just were not many non-whites, not even Mexicans, around Lodi. The
few Native Americans who had greeted my homesteading ancestors in the 1840s had fled to the
mountains.

On their way in covered wagons to California following the Santa Fe trail, in 1849, my great
grandmother, Frances Brown Kerr, scared off marauding Paiutes with a sawed-off buffalo gun
while awaiting the return of her husband, Dr. William Reed Kerr, who had gone for help when the
wagons stuck in quicksand. Screaming, “Drop that boy!” she aimed, but did not shoot. One of the
men had picked up my great uncle. I do not know if the Paiute really had dire intentions or if he
was just teasing. She told my grandmother that this Paiute tried to drop grasshoppers into the stew
and generally hung around making her nervous. Frances died in 1919. The sawed-off buffalo gun
held a place of honor in my bedroom together with an assortment of Indian baskets.

My Aunt Lila Hurd roomed with a black fellow student during nurses’ training in San
Francisco. Artemisia came to visit sometimes. In my fraternity it was Dave Brubeck who was
aware of racial prejudice because of his friends in the jazz music world. A Japanese student was
blackballed from pledging the fraternity even though most of us wanted him in. (In my fraternity
unanimity in pledging was demanded as though we were the ancient parliament of Poland. I
do not know where the rule came from.) But it was, oddly enough, not until years later in 1959
when coming to Austin, Texas for my first real job as an anthropologist, that I discovered racism. I
had gone to a laundry to wash my clothes and was confronted with washing machines that said,
“White,” and others that said, “Colored.” I began carefully sorting my things accordingly: colored
clothes for the “colored” machine and “whites” for the other, when the attendant began to laugh
and told me I was completely off the mark.

Classes at Cornell were challenging. We spent all day studying spoken Mandarin using the Yale
Method of Romanization, leaving written characters until later. At other ASTP Chinese programs
during the war the cumbersome Wade-Giles Method of Romanization was used so the Yale method
accepted at Cornell was a pedagogical breakthrough. The Chinese Communists have since
instituted “pin-yin” to write Mandarin with roman letters. The Nationalists and their successors on
Taiwan still use a modified Wade-Giles Romanization.

At Cornell we were drilled in spoken Mandarin by a young woman, Mrs. Ho-ching Ong, from
Beijing, with much emphasis on getting the tones correct first before moving on to vocabulary and
grammar. This is a must when learning tonal languages. Once bad habits are in place it seems
impossible to learn to speak without a heavy accent. Grammar and history were respectively
taught by Gerry Kochs and Knight Biggerstaff. I met Gerry Kochs again on my first field trip
to Taiwan in 1964, where he and his wife, Ellen, treated us like long-lost children and
were incredibly helpful. I was introduced to anthropology by Laurie (Lauristan) Sharp,
another excellent teacher.

The well-known Chinese anthropologist, Fei Xiaotong, was also at Cornell when I was
there. He was then concentrating on land reform and problems of rural development.
Later, Fei returned to the PRC and became the coordinator of the PRC’s minorities
program, deciding which groups — ethnic
groups and language groups — could claim
the title of “minority” and, it is hoped,
receive some autonomy and other benefits.

Land Reform

Qin Shi Huangdi (220-206 BC), the first unifier
of “the Warring States of China” also began by
carrying out land reform as he disbanded the
“nine field” system that provided the economic
underpinning of the Zhou feudal order.

In a similar manner, Napoleon, in his
conquests, freed the serfs and laid the groundwork
for land reform in Europe. It was in Prussia that
this land reform was carefully worked out to
come a model for later land reform in Japan
and Taiwan.
The classification followed lines suggested by Lenin and Stalin for the Soviet Union. Ideally, the Chinese Communists, like the Soviets, were committed to a multi-ethnic state with autonomy and self-determination for all peoples. In a general way the Nationalists shared this perspective.

Rural development and questions of land reform were in the air at the time. In the United States the shift from a predominantly rural nation had begun, but still many of us knew first hand the hard work of farm labor. We welcomed improvements in agriculture and the introduction of labor saving devices. We were also quite aware of the growing concentration of wealth and land ownership in the hands of a few. This development ran counter to the romantic Jeffersonian idea that the independent yeoman farmer would guarantee democracy. Land reform, with the end of serfdom and the ideals of equality, fraternity, and liberty, inspired the French Revolution. After the American Civil War, forty acres and a mule were promised (but not delivered) to the newly emancipated slaves. The idea was always the same: that for democracy to have a chance the electorate needs to have sufficient economic independence to stand up to the powerful and force the mighty to respect their opinions and needs. Land reform was central to the programs promoted by the Soviets and by both the Nationalists and the Chinese Communists.

Malcom Bersohn was the genius among us students at Cornell. He only needed to hear a foreign word once, it seemed, before he had memorized it correctly. I had to sweat. Still, I did well in Mandarin. I had suffered through German at college to little effect. Mandarin was different. I am not really clear why it intrigued me. The American people had been carrying on a long love affair with the Far East. We all heard of the work of missionaries, but this, if anything would have put me off. I did not want to go to China to teach the Chinese to become like us. My Aunt Fanny (Frances

Maps

The result of all these romanizations and different languages is very confusing, especially for reading maps. Not only have the names of towns and landmarks changed as governments have changed, but there long have been different names for the same place depending on what the local people spoke or which language the dominant group found it expedient to use.

I have tried to locate places using a number of different maps:

1) Herbert Mueller’s map of all Mongolia (1939) that I purchased in Beijing. It uses Wade-Giles Romanization, even of Mongolian names.

2) A more detailed map of Tibet I picked up at Cave Book Store in Taipei, Taiwan, which was notorious for its disregard of copyright law. The map lacks the place of publication. It was first published in 1919 then reissued in 1938. Was this map prepared under the auspices of the British Raj? The British in India had trained Indian surveyors to work secretly in Tibet for them. (The surveyors were so-called “pundits.”) They laboriously paced out distances and recorded their observations in secret scrolls inside the prayer wheels they carried, pretending to be pious pilgrims. By 1919, many other explorers had traveled across Tibet (not without much opposition from Tibetans) so that my map is surprisingly detailed about routes that I thought no Westerner knew about before Doug Mackiernan and I went that way.

3) 1946 and 1952 maps of the Far East prepared by the National Geographic Society. The 1991 map uses pin-yin romanization, the 1952 map, Wade-Giles. The 1946 version which Mackiernan had along on our travels used Wade-Giles as well.

4) In the maps of the Joint Operations Graphic Series #1501, 1975 (Defense Mapping Agency, Topographic Center, Washington D.C. 20315), the place names are given in romanized Chinese characters using a form of Wade-Giles. Thus, Timurlik becomes T’ieh-mu-li-k’o. I will write names in pin-yin adding other names or versions in parentheses.
Notes from My Field Work Concerning the Land-to-Tiller Program and Ethnic Identity on Taiwan (1964-69)

In 1964, facilitated by Milt Barnett, I went to Taiwan. Taiwan was readily accessible. Mainland China and Inner Asia were closed to Americans in 1964. I had also applied to go to Afghanistan, but the Taiwan grant arrived first. Back at the University of California, Berkeley, I had become interested in questions of applied anthropology, such as rural development, especially after Walter Cline (an exceptionally fine man and friend) died too young of cancer. He shared my interest in pastoral nomadism. I had hoped to write my dissertation under him. I was left without a major professor at the department in Berkeley. The department was generally in some disarray that encouraged the administration to invite George Foster to become chairman. I clashed with his approach to development policies. I left Berkeley and finally received my Ph.D. degree from the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

The Nationalist Party under Chiang Kaishek had established a military dictatorship on Taiwan after the defeat by the Chinese Communists, much to the displeasure of the population they found already living on the island. Members of the Guomindang swore, "We shall return." Even though the little girls on our street in Taichung played hop-scotch singing, "One two three, Taiwan has a great mountain, Ali Shan, see you next year on the mainland, da-lu," there was little possibility of their reconquering the mainland and ousting the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), although the myth was kept alive for many years.

Funded by a U.S. Agricultural Development Council grant, I conducted research on the effects of the 1952 Land-to-the-Tiller Program instituted by the government of Chiang Kaishek. My interest was in how individual families had adjusted to this program. The well-known Chinese ethnographer Martin Yang, who was then at Tai-Da University in Taipei, helped me set up my research. While my family lived in Taichung in a Japanese house (with high-pitched tile roof and tatami mats, a part of the old Japanese military canton), I lived in two villages: one in central Taiwan near Taichung and one up in the mountains.

The villagers themselves were very interested in understanding the ramifications of the recently completed land reform. They welcomed me. Much as I remember from my years on the mainland, the countryside was teeming with children. Joint families generally occupied the low, mud brick courtyards. Although there were minor architectural differences and the land was much lusher, the villages reminded me of the countryside of Hebei province.

By 1964, the former tenants had paid off their government mortgages and now owned their own land. The former landlords had, for the most part, invested the money they received for their reallocated holdings in manufacturing enterprises. Everybody in the villages was extremely busy, the farmers with planting three crops a year (cabbages in winter) and the ex-landlords with different trading and manufacturing schemes.

Especially under Japanese occupation (1895 to 1945) pressure on tenant farmers had increased and the length of their leases had decreased. This meant that they and their families had to tear up roots and seek new land to rent every few years. Now the land they owned provided a safety net and a sense of place even for poor families. Landlords had long enjoyed that luxury. Every family could now have their own ancestral hall to assure spiritual support for their fathers and grandfathers.

The village in the plain nearer Taichung had originally been part of the large holdings of the Wu-feng Lins, a localized lineage which readily adopted outsiders. A wonderfully ornate and quite splendid "great house" was slowly falling into ruin next to the ex-landlord house where I rented a room.

(Cont. on page 18)
Hurd Manning) may have influenced me. My mother’s oldest sister lived in a stately home on Grand Avenue in Alameda and dabbled in selling Chinoiserie.

I had a number of “Volga German” grade school friends and have them still, especially Irwin Loeppke and Chris Keszler, together with Italian-speaking Joe Valenti who was and is part of the gang. This may have been a point against immersing myself in German or Italian. Those friends were so very un-exotic, just like me really, even if they belonged to the Seventh Day Adventists or the Roman Catholic Church and argued enthusiastically for creationism. A more practical consideration was that the German, Italian, and French courses in the ASTP were soon to be phased out.

When I had free time at Cornell we — usually Johnny Bottorff and I — would take the “Black Diamond” into New York City, staying at the ritzy home of fellow student Bill Kaufmann, and would see as many Broadway plays as time permitted. It was then that I first saw Oklahoma! Tickets were cheap at the U.S.O. I enjoyed New York immensely and decided then and there I would come back to live in Greenwich Village. As I had a history degree, I thought I might work in historic preservation some day.

Another friend I made at Cornell was Milton Barnett, later fellow anthropologist, mentor, friend and rescuer from the many pitfalls of my academic career. Milt and Helen were already married then. They had met teaching at a progressive school up the Hudson Valley. Milt did not get to China during the war, maybe because his ideas were too “pink.” After the war he received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from Cornell. His interests in rural development and land reform inspired and assisted one of my major anthropological interests: the effects of “the land to the tiller” program on Taiwan.

When the program at Cornell ended I was asked if I wanted to apply for the Signal Corps on Hawaii. Hawaii was very tempting, but I turned it down. I said I needed to use the language I had spent so much effort learning.

But there was more to it than that. By 1944, the war had been surrounding us for five years, starting with Hitler’s invasion of Poland in 1939, and it was three years since Pearl Harbor. In that time the United States had gradually been forged into a unified nation at war. Just about everybody was deeply involved in the war effort through the military, through war work, and through constant updates on the radio. This was a time of incredible national resolve and esprit-de-corps. In America’s subsequent military engagements, such as the Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf wars, most of the nation has been able to continue peacetime pursuits, making the war a sideshow. But in 1944 war was central. Not to contribute was a blot on one’s character. By then my older brother, Marion Reed Bessac had been slogging through the North African campaign and up the boot of Italy while I had been having a great time at Cornell. A good friend, Ray Lang, had died on one of the atolls in the Pacific. I owed and so I said, “No,” to Hawaii.

I told this to a friend, a Quaker, Joan Christopherson. She was appalled at my hyper-patriotic attitude. She told of traveling on a train, which was full of GIs enthusiastically going to the war. How insane the scene had seemed to her. I was like one of those GIs and am still proud of it.

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a German speakers, first settled in the Ukraine and Volga area mostly by Catherine the Great of Russia, who had come to this country to avoid military conscription.
The great house was decorated with ceramic plaques illustrating scenes from "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms," *San-guo-ji yan-yi.* This long novel, compiled in the 14th century, recounts the exploits of Guan Gong (later the red-faced god of war and scholarship), associate of Liu Bei, founder of the Shu-Han Dynasty, counseled by Zhu Ge Liang as they tried to establish a successor dynasty to the Han, during the chaotic period of Three Dynasties (222-280 AD). The ceramic plaques carry the message of loyalty to the emperor. The original builder of the great house — a late 18th/early 19th-century robber baron, who seems to have married into the Lin family (there are two ancestor tablets on the altar) — was concerned with aligning himself with the Qing Empire across the water. He overreached by building a grand gateway which the Wu-feng Lins resented and made him lower in height and splendor.

Through the first half of the nineteenth century, Taiwan was a wild place with little governmental control. Under the Japanese, the fractious family of the original builder of the house had fallen on hard times. Some descendants suggested this was due to opium addiction secretly encouraged by the Japanese occupation. One of the many children from families who later lived in the old house confessed that as a child he loved to knock the heads off the figures on the ceramic plaques. Now he is trying hard to restore the old place.

The much-less elaborate landlord house, where I rented a room, was built in 1919, along the same general lines as the "great house": the ancestor hall and the kitchens, one for each wing, one on the east and one on the west, along the northern end of the central courtyard, facing south. A muddy pond lay just before entering the courtyard. Here again there had been trouble with gates. The gate had been moved to the western side of the compound. This it was hoped would improve the *feng shui*, the "wind and water" balancing of geomancy. Lin Zhenxiong (Henry) and his educated and resourceful wife, Li Sumei, from the Dragon Wing, the senior line, became my good friends and assistants. When I last saw Sumei in Albany, New York, she was just expanding a fancy Japanese restaurant she owned. Zhenxiong had by then earned more than his first million.

The farmsteads and some other previous landlord compounds lay widely scattered. It was a village in an administrative sense and because all households shared in the worship of the local Earth God, Tudi Gong. Responsibility for the incense burner, the most sacred object of the cult, circulated among farm families in good standing. Near the village graves there was also a "hero" shrine — a commemoration to an unprotected, restless "ghost," a person who had perished without descendants.

The other village I lived in, the village in the foothills, lay across the river from a fair-sized town in an intermountain basin. Years after I first visited the village, Gary Seaman, a fellow anthropologist, spent three years off and on in this village. He called it "Pearl Mountain Village" and has published quite extensively on his experiences there.\(^\text{27}\) A narrow, wooden bridge afforded the only access to a nearby town during the monsoon season. It was so minimal that our interpreter's grandfather was swept over the side in a storm and drowned. My interpreters from Hoklo (a dialect of Southern Min) into "Mandarin" were Liao Zhongsheng, Li Sumei, Liu Lubang, and Yi Shufen. That old wooden bridge had been the gift to the village by the largest landlord after a child drowned while wading in the river on the way to school. Death by drowning is one of the terrors of Taiwan. It is not just because it happens during sudden floods, but because the spirit of the drowned easily becomes a "hungry ghost," i.e. an unattached supernatural force. Taiwanese erect food displays for the "hungry ghosts" or "little brothers" annually in August to mitigate danger from these free roaming ghosts.

The villagers who had previously rented land, and this meant most of the people in this village, had made their final payments to the government just like the villagers on the plain. They now owned the (Cont. on page 20)
The Horse Cavalry, Fort Riley, Kansas (1944)

After completing the course at Cornell, all East Asian language students were assigned to probably the last boot camp offered by the U.S. Horse Cavalry, at Fort Riley, Kansas. For a farm boy, dealing with horses posed no problem. For some of those poor city slickers at Fort Riley, who literally did not know one end of the horse from the other, it was. I remember we had to gallop down a steep path and at a turn in the trail these poor guys routinely turned white and fell off. Howard Kaufmann (he studied Thai at another ASTP program) was also at Fort Riley with me. Howard did not fall off his horse. He did, however, try to "steal" my favorite horse. What a tease and what a loyal friend! After a time at the University of California, Berkeley, he too found the Anthropology Department there not congenial. He received his Ph.D. at Indiana University.

OSS –SI

It was while on bivouac during a freezing November day out there on the Kansas prairie that I was called back to headquarters. Actually, my captain, a Captain Sewers (sic), was quite disgusted with the summons for me to go to headquarters for a new assignment and dropped the notice into the muck for me to pick up. He thought it was just another way we weaklings had devised to avoid proper training. It was not.

At headquarters I met the same man who had asked me about Hawaii. He welcomed me and asked, "Do you want to join the OSS?" I had no idea what the OSS was, but, what the heck, it must be better than shoveling frozen horse manure. So I asked, "Will this get me to China?" He thought it might, and John Bottorff and I were off to the "Little School House" in Washington, D.C., near the Watergate. When we reported, the welcoming WAAC said, "Oh, yes, OSS-SI." I joked, "SI, secret intelligence?" It was.

The OSS during World War II was a highly pragmatic, loosely-organized improvisation often in conflict with the older, more established military intelligences. It was formed by "Wild Bill" Donovan at the express orders of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to work around what Roosevelt felt were hide-bound intelligence services. It was an elite corps that included many from Ivy League schools on the eastern seaboard. As one of its main missions, its participants were to help in any way possible with partisan and resistance groups behind enemy lines. OSS members were involved in various plots to assassinate Hitler. These plots were improvised "on the ground," not prepared in some situation room with orders transmitted to OSS operatives. Generally, we OSS men planned our own projects and then asked for approval from higher-ups.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. was in the OSS, as was Julia Child. David G. Mandelbaum, anthropologist at Berkeley, was OSS in India, and one of my professors, Schuyler Van Rensselaer Camman, the noted art historian and student of Oriental rug symbolism, was OSS in Manchuria behind Japanese lines, I believe. More importantly for my later career was the fact that Owen Lattimore, the noted student of Mongolia and Chinese Turkestan, was OSS or at least close to those who were in charge of OSS in China, besides having other duties during the War.

We were under military discipline, of course, but at the same time we were encouraged to act independently, to make decisions without looking fearfully over our shoulder at the chain of command. Rank was downplayed. It was the closest thing to "playing Lawrence of Arabia" that the U.S. Army at the time had to offer. For a young man who had been raised in a pioneer family and regaled with stories of pirate ships (euphemistically called "privateers") during the

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a Strictly speaking, my parents were not farmers, but we did have some livestock and a few horses.
land they cultivated. There had been four landlords in the village. Two were merchants in town, two lived in the village. Most of the land was in paddy rice with some sugar cane and fruit trees. The mountain land was officially off-limits to Taiwanese farmers. It was reserved for the Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) speakers, the original population of this island. Trees were surreptitiously cut and Guomindang soldiers blamed by the villagers. Villagers then felt free to plant the cleared hillsides with manioc that was an important subsistence crop. Now it has become a delicacy sold to tourists. There were also some tea and bamboo plantations. Mushroom cultivation was pushed by the Farmers' Association as the cash crop of the future. In short, this village, like the one on the plain, was rural and quite unindustrialized forty years ago. My plan was to visit every farm in both villages to develop a longitudinal community study. I got back in 1968/9 and then in 1989/90.

Some nine distinct Malay languages are spoken on Taiwan. Five distinct groups met in the area of the village: Atayal, Bunun, Thao, Pazeh, and Papora, of whom the latter two are now extinct. Villagers said those living to the east lived in caves and survived by gathering, others by hunting. You could still meet Atayal women with elaborate facial tattoos. Taiwanese tend to look down on the Malay speakers. As Lin Zhenxiong suggested they are “our Indians.” The ancestors of Hoklo speakers came from Fujian province on the mainland, which seems to be the original home of the Malayo-Polynesian speakers as well, only many thousands of years earlier.

I did not want to ask the villagers outright what their own family histories told. One woman said that it was her mother-in-law who insisted on the altar to the dragon under the earth (there is another dragon in the sky) placed under the family altar table, as she was an aborigine from Sun Moon Lake. I would not be surprised if half the village were not in part of aborigine descent. My landlord said, “When I was a boy these aborigine families could look at you in a certain way and thereby kill you. [The ku poison?] They took their eyes out at night and replaced them with tiger-eyes. Why, my wife’s grandmother could do this!” Who knows how many other grandmothers also turned into tigers at night? To be tiger-like is a common epithet applied to members of minority groups. Some Hmong think their name in China, “Miao,” refers to their relationship to tigers or at least cats. They hate the term and insist on being called “Hmong.”

From the Ming Dynasty (1368-1662) on, the “one field, two owners” system was used to open up lands on the mainland and Taiwan to Han settlement. A person of wealth received a patent to the land that he brought under cultivation by providing farmers with money and tools to do the work. These then became sub-owners. Some families living in the southern part of the village had come from Amoy, in Fujian province, in the 1880s, and acquired the land from the first cultivators. Several related Hakka (migrants or guest people) had come from Guangdong province as late as 1895, and surreptitiously until 1949. The Hakka speak a distinctive “dialect” including Mandarin and other languages. They believe themselves descended from refugees coming from the north, but so do other minorities like some of the Hmong from Laos. Somewhere in their past the migrants intermarried probably with the She, another minority group speaking a language similar to that of the Hmong (Miao) and Lu Minh (Yao).

Before the land reform the largest landlord in the village had been a Hakka. He was adopted by a peddler who had come to the island illegally after the Japanese prohibited further Chinese immigration. The peddler married a rich widow. The couple had no children themselves, so they adopted a Hakka boy from the village who had the same surname (a common Hakka practice). The landlord astutely sold off his lands to his tenants before the land reform was implemented. He got a better financial deal this way.

(Cont. on page 22)
Revolutionary War), of the Santa Fe Trail, the Gold Rush, and grizzly bear attacks, the OSS was an acceptable assignment.29

Before other training we were put through all sorts of arcane tests, like leaping off walls into the dark, devised by the psychologist Erik Erickson to discover for which tasks we might be suitable. At the end of the tests I was called before an interrogation board with bright lights shining in my eyes. The trick was to keep my made-up story lines straight. I became hopelessly muddled. The committee declared, “You have failed.” I felt very crestfallen. So it was off to the trenches or even the typewriter stateside after all.

I left the interrogation hall. A kindly elderly lady saw my plight and came over to speak soothing, motherly words. It was just what I needed. I opened up to her until she casually asked for my identifying code. My alarms went up and I asked, “Is this X condition?” She smiled. I had passed the real test and now I was in the OSS.

SI meant “Secret Intelligence” all right and that meant swearing on my sacred honor not to reveal secret missions. This oath held me back later from exploring and exposing Douglas Mackiernan’s affairs. It becomes difficult to decide what should or should not be discussed. Silence becomes the resort of least resistance.

**Catalina Island**

First I was put down someplace near the Mexican border alone and told to find my way back without papers. It was pretty dull stuff as I remember it now.

For a stint of survival training we were put down on Catalina Island and told to survive. Catalina then had been off limits to fishermen and other visitors for some years because of the war. It did not take me long to discover the untouched abalone beds. I also felled an albatross with a well-aimed pebble. In those days, before my eyes failed, I was a good shot, and even got my sharpshooters certificate.

All in all, Catalina was not so bad. We sat around the fire, eating abalone, and listening to some of the seasoned commandos tell of exploits in Yugoslavia with the partisans of Tito and Michilovitch, or leaving a bomb in a suitcase to assassinate Hitler.29

**OSS, China (1945-46)**

After things had quieted down in Kunming, most of the Mandarin-speaking American parachute commandos of the OSS were ordered to various areas that had been controlled by the Japanese to assist in the surrender of Japanese troops and the rehabilitation of Japanese collaborators. We were to be in charge of agents who collected the data we would then collate and transmit to headquarters.

I was sent to Beijing, driving up some of the way in a dilapidated old jeep that had been flown into Yunnan over “the Hump” and should have been on its way to the junkyard. With a knowledgeable Han driver I drove northeast through some spectacular countryside, home to different minority peoples. We came through parts of old Xi-Kang, home of the tall and war-like Khampa, who were Tibetan speakers, but not part of political Tibet. We saw Nosu villages. We passed temples, Minjia villages, and fine landlord houses. Finally we reached Chongqing, the wartime capital of the Nationalists, and then flew on to Xian, the ancient capital, Chang’an, in Shaanxi, of the “Glorious Tang Dynasty.”
The ideals of the Land-to-the-Tiller Program resembled those of the Communists on the mainland (Nationalists and Communists had, after all, been originally united), with two important differences. The land was not forcibly taken and given to the tenants. The landlords were compensated and helped to set up manufacturing ventures. This also allowed some newly-landowning farmers to diversify their incomes by working off the land. Perhaps, equally importantly, those who carried out the program were members of Chiang Kaishek's entourage from the mainland. They themselves owned no land. This assured fair, mostly corruption-free land redistribution. This unleashed tremendous energy among the new owners who discovered a stability they had not known before.

Land reform brutally enforced by the Soviets and in similar manner later by the Chinese Communists herded farmers into collective farms and communes. This resembled a return to serfdom in important ways. It was very difficult to leave the village and move to town without special permits. The Guomindang program instituted on Taiwan established the ideals of the Enlightenment: that of the individual land-owning yeoman.

As now, the city walls were standing, (was it Zhou Enlai who prevented his fellow communists from demolishing them?) but they surrounded a city area then that was much larger than the area actually inhabited, bearing witness to the decimation of the population since the city's glory days. The terra cotta army of Qin Shi Huang Di was then still unexcavated. The Museum and Tang Gardens awaited postwar Japanese reparations. We visited the usual sights — the Hall of Stelae and the Wild Goose Pagodas.

From there we flew to Beijing. On the way from the airstrip to town we were confronted by a truckload of Japanese soldiers who as a last act of defiance tried to force us off the road. They were the only Japanese troops I ever saw. Most Japanese troops had been withdrawn to protect the "Home Islands" before the end of the war.

**Manchuria**

Some members of our OSS group parachuted into Japanese prison camps in Manchuria to rescue our prisoners of war. As we were writing this memoir, John Bottorff happened to call. He is writing his memoirs. "Do you remember when we flew up to Mukden (Shenyang) to rescue that chap, what was his name?" It was Bob West and my memory here is better than John's only because Bob came by to visit in Missoula and refreshed the old brain. As John and I have pieced it together, West had parachuted into Manchuria and had then stayed behind to see what else was happening. Then Soviet tanks started rolling into Manchuria.

At the Yalta conference President Roosevelt, concerned that the war with Japan would drag on for years, costing thousands of American and even more Japanese lives, asked Stalin to help. Now, when no longer needed, Stalin was happy to oblige by rolling his tanks into Manchuria. This made it awkward for our man West. We flew up there to extricate him and fly him back to Beijing. Seeing the Soviet tanks lined up made a strong impression on me of the military power of the USSR and their willingness to use it.

I still own a pistol with gold chased barrel that Bob West brought back from his mission to Manchuria. It supposedly belonged to Pu Yi, "the last Emperor," ruler of the Japanese puppet state, Manchukuo. Not too long ago Wei Xiaoming, a Chinese student with contacts to one of the
imperial sisters still alive, showed pictures of the pistol to her in case she wanted it back. But she said, "Pu Yi had so many pistols, how can one be sure if this one is indeed one of his?"

An OSS plane went off to Hanoi to arrange for Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh to accept the surrender of Japanese troops. The allies did not want Japan’s allies, the Vichy French, who had remained undisturbed as secondary colonial masters in Vietnam during World War II, to take credit for Japan’s surrender. During the war, Ho Chi Minh had been a close ally of the OSS, as had the King of Thailand.

**Beijing**

In Beijing (then known as Beiping, “northern peace,” as Nanjing was the capital), we were billeted in a rather grand villa with several courtyards and a moon gate. Each of us had his own room. The mess hall was a large, European/Chinese furnished banquet hall. There was a library including the latest books concerning China and the Pacific Theater. Here I found Owen Lattimore’s *Desert Road to Turkestan and High Tartary* (I read his *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* later). Before heading out on missions we were also supplied with briefing papers and instructions.

A secretary for the OSS was the oldest daughter of the administrator for the Beijing area when under the Japanese, a man I knew as Wang-gong, or Ruler Wang. Her mother was German. She had two lovely, younger sisters. I had my eye on the youngest, Lianna. She was about eighteen then.

I think I first met her at a party organized by her sister, probably at the time of the harvest festival — the Moon Festival, when married daughters return to their natal homes. Everybody eats moon cakes. The festival celebrating lovers occurs a month earlier, too soon to influence Lianna and me. (The Lovers’ Festival is on the thirteenth of the seventh moon. At that time, magpies form a bridge across the sky to allow the cowherd to meet his love, the weaving maid, but only for that one day each year.) Lianna and I met again years later in Taipei. She was a refugee there. We had both married others and had children. It was a poignant moment.

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**Moon Cakes**

Moon cakes, rather doughy with sweetish bean curd centers, used to be decorated with a picture of Rabbit pounding the elixir of immortality in a pestle on the head of Toad or with a picture of the damsel, Heng 0. According to ancient myth it was Heng 0 who had stolen the elixir from her husband, the Great Archer, after he shot nine of ten suns and moons that threatened to burn up the earth. The one remaining sun hid in terror. The earth was plunged into darkness and all life was in danger. But Chanticleer with his ringing voice coaxed the one remaining sun out of her hiding place. (For Hmong the sun is female, the moon masculine. I do not know what gender Han Chinese assign to this heavenly body.) Life on earth was saved. Heng 0 fled to the moon to become the three-legged toad. A past student just sent us some modern moon cakes, but these have no pictures, just Chinese characters printed on them.

In the past, everybody the length and breadth of the land knew this ancient myth that was told by grandparents, by elders around the fire, by itinerant story tellers, or was performed in street dramas and puppet shows. Even members of General Vang Pao’s Hmong Army from Laos told us this story when they came to Montana. The myth possibly celebrates the victory of the Zhou people over the Shang/Xia whose sacred number was ten, not nine as for the Zhou. In Beijing in the ‘40s a tapestry of visual symbols provided a common language of meanings interwoven with puns and rebus writing, as on the lavishly-embroidered "Mandarin squares" sewn on the robes of court officials.

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*a* The Moon Festival is the fifteenth of the eighth lunar month.  
*b* The bridge is the Milky Way and the lovers are two stars.
The leading families of Beijing were invited to the Moon Festival party at the OSS compound. It was really quite a fancy affair. Lianna was thrilled to be counted among the grown-ups. We danced outside, below the full, honey-colored moon. She was still so young, just outgrowing her schoolgirl bob, so eager for life, and so scared. We heard the music inside playing ...

"Ye lai xiang: Fragrant comes the night"a

Na nanfeng chuilai qingliang,
Na yeying tisheng qichuang,
Yuexiade huaer dou rumeng,
Zhiyou na yelaixiang tuluzhe fenfang.
Wo aizhe yese mangmang,
Ye aizhe yeying gechang,
Geng ai na hua yibande meng,
Yongbaozhe yelaixiang.
Wenzhe yelaixiang,
Yelaixiang, wo wei ni gechang,
Yelaixiang, wo wei ni siliang,
Ah ah ah.
Wo wei ni ge chang,
Wo wei ni siliang.
Na nanfeng chuilai qingliang,
Na yeying tisheng qichuang,
Yuexiade huaer rumeng,
Zhiyou na yuelaixiang.
Yuelaixiang! Yuelaixiang! Yuelaixiang!
Wenzhe yelaixiang.
Yelaixiang! Yelaixiang! Yelaixiang!

I wonder if this was the party that Dan Pinck mentions in his reminiscences of his days in the OSS behind enemy lines. After the war, waiting to be demobilized and sent back to the States, the OSS allowed him to wait out his rotation orders in Beijing. He naturally thought that he would be billeted with other OSS in our fine compound on Liu Tiao (6th Street). When he finally found the compound, which he had to do himself since no one had bothered to meet him at the airport, he remembers:

"There seemed to be a party on at the OSS quarters. I heard music and laughter, and before I knocked on the door I looked in through the French doors: there were men getting up to let ladies sit down and inviting women, European women as they were called, to get up and dance. I saw a Chinese general inside.

a Ye lai xiang is literally translated as "night-comes-fragrant." The singer that popularized the song in the 1930's and '40's was the German-Japanese singer, Yoshiko Yamaguichi, whose stage name was Li Xianglan. This translation is by Ed Pcaslee. The song is originally Persian. The tuberose is not as common a flower in China as in Iran.
"I wasn’t what you would call presentable, but nevertheless I knocked on the door ... A fellow came out; he looked at me but didn’t appear to see me for a few moments. I stared at him and remained silent. His moustache looked as if it had been pasted on his face. ‘Ah, my boy, so glad to see you. As you see we are having a dinner dance this evening in honor of the mayor, you know. Awfully sorry we couldn’t meet you. You understand. It took me four days to line up the orchestra. Had them come from Tientsin!’”

He was packed off to the Grand Hotel. I think I heard rumors about the affair, but never met him.

**Shijiazhuang**

Officially, I was still an enlisted man with abysmal pay, but that did not stop “the Outfit,” as we called the organization, from allowing me the freedom to propose and execute daring missions. I would discuss the situation with my Chinese liaison and then propose a plan of action to headquarters in Shanghai who generally gave me the go-ahead. The first important venture in which I headed outside Beijing, after that trip up to Manchuria with Johnny Bottorff, was as liaison with the Communist Eighth Route Army to check on violations of the Marshall-brokered truce between Nationalists and Communists in the North Chinese countryside. Nationalist troops, poorly provisioned despite millions of dollars in U.S. aid, were foraging off the countryside that was under Communist protection. Actually, as I later learned, these were not seasoned Nationalist troops, but troops that had collaborated with the Japanese and were now siding with the Nationalists in the civil war.

A radio operator, an interpreter, and I traveled by jeep, as this was the only vehicle that could negotiate the deeply eroded roads of the North China Plain. These roads were no wider than the axle of a horse-drawn cart, and in some places had sunk six feet into the loess so the driver could not see the surrounding countryside, a real boon for bandits of all stripes through the ages. We came under Nationalist fire, but ultimately reached the Communist positions near Shijiazhuang in Hebei province. We recorded their grievances, drank maotai jiu with them and headed back.

I returned to Beijing late at night, tired and still a bit shaken from the excitement of being under fire. So I slept late the next morning and after arising, went down to the kitchen to see what the Chinese cook could whip up for me. He was most accommodating. But I had failed to see the new, large sign, “No breakfast after 8:30,” just put up by my commanding officer, a man who had been very helpful to me in getting to Beijing. When he became aware of my blatant disregard of his orders, he was furious. This was the last straw. I had also forgotten to address him as “Major.” In the OSS we did not salute officers. Poor man even threatened me with a court martial. He must have been under tremendous pressure about which I was quite unaware.

Actually my relationship with Major Brian Brady went back a way. I had met him at Collingwood where the OSS selected us out for different tasks. Brian, who was great at organizing, was less successful negotiating the trials of daring-do, such as balancing on a pole over dark pits, that kind of thing. So John Bottorff and I gave him a hand. He was grateful. Later, when he was in Beijing setting things up he put a word in for us to come up. Beijing was a plum of an assignment. Now he was my commanding officer. Thoughtlessly I continued to treat him like my equal, my protégé in a sense. The affair blew over in time, but in a way it set the stage for later episodes in my

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*a* Maotai jiu is a wickedly potent drink. It is similar to bai jiu, “white lightning,” that is best savoré while eating raw garlic.

*b* Collingwood was a mansion built by George Washington’s brother. It became OSS headquarters during WWII.
life when I lacked sensitivity for the emotional states of those in a position of power over me, or as I saw it, I did not play the patron/client game.

Bandi Gegen Sume (Pantigegen Sume, Beizi Miao)

Hardly had I returned from my foray into what China Hands call the Ji-zhong, when I had the opportunity to travel to the headquarters of the Communist Eighth Route Army at Kalgan (Jiangjia Kou, Zhangjiakou) at the outer defenses of the Great Wall on the border of Inner Mongolia. The Wall, actually several walls, had been built, joined together, rebuilt and repaired over thousands of years in order to define the boundary between “the Steppe and the Sown” — to keep the warriors of the Steppe out and the subjects of Zhongguo in.

Before modern technology the horsemen of the Steppe were the greatest fighting force known to man. It was these men who forged both the Ottoman and the Manchu empires and the empires of Gengzh Khan, of Timurlane, and of the Moghuls in India. For thousands of years, rulers over Zhongguo feared the ability of the peoples living north and west, beyond the Great Wall, to organize, invade or precipitate revolt against their rule. The rulers of every dynasty had wished to control Manchuria, Mongolia, Xinjiang (Sinkiang, Chinese Turkestan), and Tibet.

But now, with machine guns and tanks in Chinese and Soviet arsenals, even the most disciplined horsemen — aiming arrows with their composite bows while looking back over their shoulders as they made a swift get-away — were no match to even a single airplane. The advantage that the peoples of the Steppe had enjoyed over the tillers of fields was lost. The new rulers, or would-be rulers, after the 1911 revolution that ended the Manchu Empire, insisted that the lands beyond the Wall must submit to their rule.

From Kalgan, north and west of the Wall, nomadic pastoralists grazed their flocks over the great grasslands of Asia while to the south lay the land of farmers and city dwellers — walled and boxed. Farmers had gradually pushed further and further onto pasturelands and were often farming very fragile, marginal land up to and beyond the outer defenses. The contrast between the two worlds separated by the Wall — that of the self-reliant nomadic pastoralists to the north and the community-defined settlers to the south — only became a reality once I traveled north of Kalgan.

I set out by jeep with radio operator and interpreter on March 6, 1946, reaching Kalgan in time to meet Ulanfu (Yun Ze), the Mongol leader who sided with the Communists. He was there attending a conference. Lenin had written a treatise, Concerning a Nationality’s Right to Self-Determination, that Stalin elaborated in his role as Commissar of Nationalities. Their ideas had been nominally instituted in the Soviet Union with the establishment of republics. Each minority group was to be defined according to a number of criteria and then given a place within the Soviet State. At that time the United States did not promote multi-culturalism. Native Americans were expected to meld seamlessly into the general melting pot of immigrants, forming a cohesive English-speaking state. Chinese Communists and their allies at Kalgan were discussing how they should implement these Soviet precepts once they had won the civil war.

No one could tell me in Kalgan what was happening to the north in the true grasslands near the border with Outer Mongolia, as they did not know themselves. I decided to find out. When Ulanfu heard what I planned, he rushed off in the same direction to find out for himself.

A young aide-de-camp from Communist headquarters asked to go with me. He was roughly the same age as I, had spent two years at university in Beijing and then taken off for “the Western

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a While Stalin professed agreement, he later attempted to reduce ethnic groups into autonomous regions but was initially thwarted by Lenin.
Hills,” another way of saying that he joined the Communist guerrillas. Like many other young Chinese intellectuals he was drawn to the Communists because they were “modern,” “scientific,” and at the vanguard of history. We found each other congenial. As we traveled north over the rolling steppe with its vast horizons we argued politics all the way to Bandi Gegen Sume (Beizi Miao, Xilin Hot), in Xilingol League in the far northeast near the Outer Mongolian border, and back. The young man, and I will not reveal his identity, was an idealistic communist, wanting so much to see his native lands regain a position of respect in the world. He extolled the Communists’ work on land reform, redistribution of land to the tiller, of women’s rights, of health care, and of autonomy for minorities. I kept bringing him back to questions of how this was to be achieved and what checks there were on the power of “the dictatorship of the proletariat.” He had no answers, but turned instead to blind faith in the “Great Helmsman.” “I believe in Mao Zedong,” he repeated, which did not reassure me.

We drove the jeep as far as Dolon Nor when we realized that our petrol supply was not going to get us up to Bandi Gegen Sume and back. The American radio operator (I do not remember his name) who had come with me from Beijing radioed back to Beijing to get instructions. The response was that the guys in Beijing sent an airplane to fly us up into the steppe. My Chinese Communist friend was speechless when the airplane circled overhead and then landed just for us.

We flew over miles of snow-covered steppe. It was still early in the year and winter held its grip. Then the plane dipped and circled around a lonely Buddhist monastery isolated in the vast space. We could see a central hall, with the wheel

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a Outer Mongolia was and is an independent country. It became the first Soviet “satellite nation” under the protection and tutelage of the USSR in the 1920s.

**Revolutionaries and Visionaries**

The aide-de-camp’s attitude was by no means unique. Another young man born like me, in January 1922, was expressing similar sentiments far to the southwest, in Kham on the border of political Tibet. The Khampa Tibetan revolutionary, Phuenwang, had been given a privileged education by the Guomindang in Nanjing. While at school he, like Ulanfu, the Mongol Communist, had read Lenin and Stalin on minority policy and had become convinced that only under communism did minority peoples have a chance of survival in the overwhelming tide of Han Chinese dominance. He was also angry at the warlord Liu Wenhui, who was abusing power in his home area of Batang, now in Sichuan Province. For this he blamed the Guomindang government of Chiang Kai-shek. To what extent Chiang had any real control over warlords even if they declared their support to his government is another matter. Phuenwang was expelled from his elite school and declared a subversive.

He saw the Soviet Union as a glorious model of minority rights and protection, not realizing that what sounded wonderful theoretically was in reality also very vulnerable to domination by Russian commissars controlled by Moscow. There was an important difference between the Soviet and the Chinese Communist situation of which I was insufficiently aware: there are many fewer Russians than Han Chinese so even in the worst cases there are not that many Russians or relocated Chechyns and Volga Germans to move onto the lands of native peoples. The Soviet Union also stretches over many more miles of open land than is the case in densely settled China. Even with massive population transfers (Volga Germans to Kazakhstan) much of the land still belongs to the previous inhabitants while the movement of settlers into Inner Asia is the frightening result of Chinese Communist expansion. Despite all the horrors of the Soviet reality it would still have been preferable for the peoples beyond the Wall and maybe even Tibet to have come under Soviet control rather than that of the Chinese Communists. In hindsight, this vision may seem better, but was less apparent when I was in Mongolia and the Soviet troops were massing in the northeast.
of the law flanked by two deer (antelope) on the front facade, surrounded by square cells for the monks. When the maroon- and saffron-robed monks realized that our plane wished to land they ran out to circle an old airstrip that the Japanese had laid out when they controlled Inner Mongolia. The pilot said he had to get back, but promised to pick us up when we had completed our mission. We watched the plane fly south becoming smaller and smaller and then vanish. In my wildest dreams I had not expected to find myself in a place so far and so different from any I had known. We stayed for about two weeks.

Camels were brought to the lamasery and I rode out some ten miles to the closest nomadic encampment to hear what the Mongols there had to say. We were formally received at the ger of a prosperous widow with a daughter and a son. She invited me to spend the night, which in the Mongolia of the time suggested interesting possibilities for a young man. A good bit more freedom between the sexes was permitted than was countenanced in the rather prudish America of those days. Being Buddhists they were not burdened by variations on Sharia law as Muslim pastoralists were. A baby born out of wedlock was not the terrible disgrace that it still was in 1940s U.S.A. The daughter of the ger wore the traditional elaborate pearl headdress and was quite lovely.

The widow’s son poured out his heart to me about how fed up he was with the Wanggong, the traditional government of Banner Princes. This form of governance had existed since the establishment of the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty. Mongol warriors had provided the major fighting force for the Manchu take-over of the Ming Dynasty before the Manchus assumed the reign name “Qing.” The Mongols had been in a position of both ally and vassal to the Qing. They were organized into Banners, but were kept away from the Qing power centers. With the end of the Qing, warlords took over the ruling of provinces along the border of Inner Mongolia and freely extended their power over adjacent Mongol lands. 

The Japanese revived the Qing form of governance, and offered autonomy to the Banner Princes, under Japanese suzerainty. With the defeat of the Japanese the Princes had no source of revenue. They turned to selling off Mongol assets or leased Mongol grazing lands to raise cash either for their own benefit or to provide needed services. Ordinary Mongols wanted a rational modern state. They did not want this state as a component of Chinese Communist or Chinese Nationalist control nor under Soviet control. They asked for self-determination and for independence.

I enjoyed the Mongols I met. They seemed much more open, less constrained by etiquette and finely-wrought rules, so much less “corrupt,” I thought, than the peoples of “the Sown.” Their fierce reputation, based on when Mongols had subjugated the known world of Eurasia in the 13th century, had been softened with their conversion to Buddhism. They frolicked on horseback around me, showing off their skills. There was laughter and joking, as I imagined cowboys out West would act. The Mongols out there near Bandi Gegen Sume were self-sufficient, and seemed true “riders of the purple sage” in my eyes.

When I felt that I had completed my mission, we radioed back for the plane. True to the pilot's word, the plane reappeared, circled and landed. We climbed aboard to the wild cheers of the monks and herdsmen from the vicinity. We flew back to Dolon Nor, picked up the jeep, and returned to Kalgan. At Kalgan I reported what I had seen to Nie Rongzhen, commander of the Eighth Route Army, then refilled the gas tank and drove back to Beijing.

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a Kazakhs and other Turkish-speakers call these round, felt covered, moveable structures yurts.

b Of course, I did not know what a cowboy encampment was really like. Even though I had grown up in the countryside and had ridden horses, my knowledge of cowboys came from the movies and from reading Zane Gray and Owen Wister. The cowboy mystique is still very much with us here in Montana, even when most of the population and our crop of western writers do not much resemble the “Lone Ranger” or “The Virginian.”
I was impressed with General Nie Rongzhen and the soldiers of the Eighth Route Army. At the end of my mission when I reported to them I suggested that the young man who had accompanied me north should become a liaison officer for Communists with the OSS stationed in Beijing. I was under the impression that both the young man and the commander had a plan like that in mind. So I suggested it. This was a mistake. I was reprimanded by the Communist commander for trying to set up guanxi, “connections by the back door,” a practice the leaders of the Eighth Route were trying to stamp out. My friend would probably have been appointed by the commander if I had not put in a word for him. Instead, my suggestion was rejected out-of-hand.

The Communist leaders of the Eighth Route Army believed with deep-felt fervor that by applying Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought they would bring into being a new man: honest, hardworking, and dedicated to helping others before helping himself. Then “the dictatorship of the proletariat” would wither away and with it the need for government and the state. How fortunate we are in the U.S. that the framers of our Constitution had not so rosy a view of the perfectibility of man. In their jaundiced view man’s aggression needs to be curtailed at every turn if some ghastly dictatorship is to be avoided. No checks and balances restrained the government the Chinese Communists were so ideally working to establish.

As anyone who travels in the PRC today knows, the Communists failed miserably at rooting out guanxi. Back-door connections today are absolutely the very essence of life in that unhappy land. Sad to say, it is and probably has always been much more so in the United States than I want to admit. I asked after my companion in 1984 when I was back in the People’s Republic of China (PRC), not without using guanxi of my own. I knew that he had achieved a high position in the foreign office. He was even sent to the United Nations in New York. In response to my inquiry he let me know that it was still not appropriate for him to admit to our friendship!

Beijing streets in 1946, like today, were teeming with people. Everyday I jogged along the narrow alleyways, dodging wheelbarrows piled high with goods, old ladies with bound feet, vendors balancing carrying poles, beggars, rickshaws, bicycles, and “honey carts.” Prince De, who lived around the corner from the OSS compound, could not but notice me. Prince De (Demchugdongrob), a direct descendant of Genghiz Khan in the thirty-first generation, member of Sunud Banner in Xilingol League, was a man of medium height, with an oval face, eagle eyes, straight, black hair and a narrow nose. He had been the puppet ruler of Inner Mongolia under the Japanese. Just how he traced his descent from Genghiz Khan I did not ask. Mongols generally are patrilineal. The oldest son inherits the position of ruler from his father as was the case after the death of Genghiz Khan.a (At the Qing Court the inheritance could be more contentious with different factions and wives supporting claims. At the Ottoman Court in Turkey the succession became so contentious that the winner in the struggle routinely murdered his brothers.)

The Mongols around Prince De had heard that I had been to Mongolia, to the lands of Xilingol. Eager to learn what I had discovered they invited me over. As Gombojab Hangin, later Professor of Altaic Languages at Indiana University in Bloomington, recalled for me in Berkeley, “We carefully orchestrated this meeting. I hid behind a curtain to take notes on all you said without you becoming suspicious. I also wanted to be sure your Chinese was understood by Prince De.”

Prince De hoped to secure the Mongolian Autonomous Government he had headed under the Japanese, in some form under the new rulers of China. He wanted to continue the legacy of Genghiz Khan’s descendants who had ruled over Mongolia after Genghiz Khan became supreme leader in 1206. Prince De wanted to safeguard Mongol pasture and water from expanding agriculturists. He knew this would require political clout. The Mongols needed a government

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a Genghiz Khan actually divided his Empire between his sons. Both he and his eldest son, Juchi, died in 1227. His third eldest son, Ogadai, was appointed the supreme Khan at the kurultai (“meeting”) of Mongol generals.
so their voice would be heard. The government of Outer Mongolia was not congenial. Under Soviet guidance a terrible bloodbath of older leaders and monks had occurred. Buddhism and its monasteries had been destroyed, the monks either killed or scattered.

The military, so I was told, had sent me to East Asia to free China from Japanese domination. I think the United States originally became embroiled with Japan because of our concern for the peoples of China. Chenault and his “Flying Tigers” were actively assisting Chiang Kaishek which the U.S., nominally at peace with Japan before Pearl Harbor, encouraged. I think the Japanese response was to attack Pearl Harbor. It was an easy step for me to transfer my sense of obligation away from the Nationalists clinging to power in “China” to the peoples who represented distinct nationalities under the Manchu: the Inner Asians, the Mongols, Kazakhs, and later the Tibetans. To my mind they deserved assistance in their struggle for self-determination every bit as much as the government of Chiang Kaishek had deserved United States help during World War II. I believed I was simply completing my mission when I informed Prince De of what I had learned.

I did not see that my reporting to him was a type of trade-off: information from me buying cooperation from him. How he might have understood my openness with information is another matter. He had been eager to befriend this young American intelligence officer. He continued to hope that I was a valuable contact in his fight for some viable future for himself and those loyal to him, even when I was an intelligence officer no longer. I took pains to explain this to him, but he and his supporters did not believe me as Sechin Jagchid has made clear in his book about Prince De. In Jagchid’s world, a trusted government agent held that position for life, passed it on to sons, and grandsons. Prince De trusted I still had the power to bring U.S. help to him.

Thinking back to those days and the subsequent lack of U.S. government action on behalf of the peoples of Inner Asia and Tibet, I wonder who at OSS headquarters approved my trip to Kalgan. During the war the noted Asian historian, John K. Fairbank, headed OSS in China and Owen Lattimore was for a time special advisor to Chiang Kaishek. Both men were fully aware of the importance of the peoples living beyond the Wall. With their return to the States and return to civilian life, interest in Inner Asia by the U.S. government got lost among all the other problems.
Post-Military Service (1946-47)

I was discharged from the military in the summer of 1946 in Shanghai. The sergeant tried to persuade me to re-enlist, but I had had enough of being a soldier. The government was obligated to return me to my original induction center in California. I returned back to Beijing after this trip home to work as a civilian with various successor organizations to the wartime OSS. President Truman felt uneasy about the free-wheeling OSS and wished to bring U.S. intelligence agencies under greater control.

My job was to keep in touch and relay reports from a network of agents, first, about Japanese and Japanese collaborators and then, about Communist activity in the immediate countryside near Beijing. Among the Japanese administrators I worked to clear was a man I knew as Baron Ujin. He had worked to establish village industries in the countryside and was well liked by the Chinese who had worked with him. After passing security clearance, he went on to work for the U.S. Occupation Administration in Japan and later became a noted businessman. Chinese collaborators were handled by Chiang Kaishek’s Nationalists.

I planned another trip at this time to Manchuria to see how the Evinki, Manchu-speaking reindeer herders, and some other Mongol groups there were faring, but nothing came of this venture.

I collected information on how villagers were relating to Communist soldiers and cadres in their midst. During the War the Communist command may have been in northern Shaanxi, but Communist cadres had infiltrated the countryside in North China while the Japanese controlled the cities. There were also Nationalist guerrillas. Arthur Hummel, U.S. Ambassador to China under President George H. W. Bush, had been a member of such a unit behind Japanese lines (personal information), but the Nationalists had not been as effective in securing the countryside as the Communists.

Student Days (1947-49)

The successor organizations to the OSS became reorganized as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1947. The CIA seemed much like the earlier organizations to me at that time, although it seemed a bit more bureaucratic, more top down, and less self-motivated. Many of the people I had met through OSS continued to work for the newly-reorganized CIA. But I did not understand that the CIA also continued the special relationship to the Office of the President as the old OSS
had occupied vis-à-vis Roosevelt during wartime. This was the case even though peace had been declared, a potentially dangerous anomaly.

Again, my government sent me back to the States. I had been told, privately, that I was being considered for a leadership position in the CIA, a position that would allow me to make a difference in how the world of China and Inner Asia might evolve. Even though I had already begun to study Classical Chinese and Mongolian at Fu Ren (Catholic) University in Beijing, this seemed too good an opportunity to pass up.

When I returned to Beijing from Washington, D.C., I found the CIA was dragging its feet. Could my eyes handle the new assignment? In the meantime, until higher-ups decided my future, I was asked to collect data undercover while continuing my studies. This idea did not sit well with me. Up to this point in the OSS and successor organizations my affiliation had been quite public. Now, I was to pretend one thing, be and do something else. I wrote a letter to CIA headquarters in Shanghai during the fall of 1947 and asked to be taken off the payroll. This they agreed to do. In my mind this ended my employment by the CIA and according to CIA payroll records sent to me, so it did for the CIA. There is however, still a file, I have been told, at the CIA marked “Bessac-pay” which nobody can access. I cannot access it because I do not have clearance, and no one else can because that would be a breach of privacy! A “leak at CIA” has even wondered in an email if important papers have been hidden in this file which nobody can now find.

After I resigned from the CIA I studied full time at Fu Ren University in Beijing. I had moved from the old OSS compound on Sixth Street into Arthur and Mary Wright’s old quarters on Fang Jia Hutong earlier that spring. These two well-known China scholars had spent years as Japanese prisoners during the Second World War, but the Japanese had allowed them to continue their study of Chinese history. They returned to the States to receive their doctorates, leaving me their old Chinese desk and their living quarters inside the Tatar City in Beijing.

They also left a network of friends. Beijing in the Forties was probably the most sophisticated and stimulating place I have ever lived. Despite Japanese occupation the aura of the Qing Court still pervaded the city. This was the time when wonderful old scrolls, silk robes, and porcelains could be bought for relatively little money in small shops near the Forbidden City. I could browse in excellent book stores, finding materials in English, Chinese, German, Japanese, and Mongolian. I had met a number of the literati and artists from that pre-war world through the kind offices of the secretary of the OSS, a lady related to some of the best families. I was invited to their houses and allowed to experience the fine-honed elegance and etiquette of old Beijing. Among their circle was one of the ladies from the Manchu Court. She was then about sixty, with a beautiful oval face and almond eyes, witty and well-educated.

I wore the robes of a Chinese scholar, a navy blue silk robe with high collar, even sometimes when riding my bicycle to my tutor’s house, north of Jing Shan, “Coal Hill,” where the last Emperor of the Ming Dynasty hanged himself. At that time the white shirt and dark slacks of modern China or the Mao jacket of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution were not in style. While walking up and down under the great elm trees in the gardens of the Imperial Examination School and of the Confucian Temple just around the corner from my courtyard, I memorized the “Four Books” that the old administrators of the Qing Dynasty had memorized in order to pass the imperial examinations.

I studied Mongolian under the supervision of Father Mostaert, a Belgian priest and expert on folklore, and practiced it on Prince De and his aides. I had stopped jogging. In the evenings I walked along the high wall that enclosed the old Tatar City (that part of Beijing which had been reserved for Manchu and Mongol retainers in pre-revolutionary days) watching old men slowly perform tai-qi exercises. The air was full of music — street vendors singing out their wares, a blind
masseur playing a reed flute to announce his skills, a Ma-tou-qin or morin hur “horse head fiddle” sighing in the cool of the evening. Xiao-bing, little sesame rolls, were baking nearby. A peddler offered his wares of steamed-red beets.

Both Fairbanks and General Stilwell found Beijing so much more attractive than the bustle of Shanghai and Tianjin. I believe I was charmed by the same highly-educated lady of the Manchu Court as Stilwell.” It was this pervasive anachronistic charm and my interest in history which encouraged me to study The Four Books as though I were a candidate for the imperial examinations of the past when all around me others were reaching out to the new. The Four Books are written in the old court language which is quite distinct from colloquial speech so that memorizing the ancient texts did not lead to fluency in reading the daily newspaper. In some ways, my years in China can be seen as a last, nostalgic immersion into an esoteric civilization about to vanish for ever.

When I knew Beijing it was a lowslung city. No tall church towers, minarets, or skyscrapers invaded the skyline. Massive walls enclosed the city, and in the next ring in, the Tatar City, and then finally, the Guo Gong, “the Forbidden City,” the Palace of the Emperor. (The Communist government demolished these walls in an exuberance of modernization.) Elaborate gates opened to myriads of narrow, winding alleys with a Daoist or Buddhist temple here and there. Grey walls and grey-tiled roofs were the backdrop to the Forbidden City with its golden roofs and cerise walls. The black or dark-navy lacquered doorways with exquisite brass fittings opened to courtyards that one could just glimpse past the spirit screen. (Evil spirits, as everyone knows, travel only in a straight line and so could not get past the spirit screen since they would have to turn a corner.)

My rooms on Fangjia Hutong were in the back of a narrow but deep town house, in the part known as the “Ming Court.” These are the rooms where a Manchu family would have kept their altar table. As Buddhists, did they have ancestor tablets? I am not sure. The house consisted of three sections, divided by courtyards. On entering through the main gate that was traditionally to the right or the east, there were rooms for the gatekeeper or for activities relating to the public. A professional painter of scrolls might have his workshop in these rooms. A middle section was occupied for a while by Gussie Gaskell, Librarian of Oriental Languages at Cornell University. I had the best part across the second courtyard, the high-ceilinged rooms allowing me to hang eleven-foot painted silk scrolls over my old desk and altar table at one end. At the other end, I had some comfortable Western style furniture. My quarters were not exactly the Ming Court in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, but to me they were close to it.!

There was a regular stove heated with coal, but as soon as the temperature became cozy, Lao Jiao (old teacher), my gentleman’s gentleman and cook, would rush in to throw open the windows as he believed so much warmth was unnatural and bad for my health. Lao Jiao, a middle-aged Manchu, did much more than supervise my household; he also took my education in hand. He arranged the placing of blue-glazed tubs containing flowering shrubs in my courtyard and advised me on whom to invite to the dinner parties I gave. Of course, he also had advice on lady friends. Among these was one pretty, young woman who, or maybe her daughter, many years later rescued my youngest daughter while she was studying in China during the summer and found herself quite desperate with prickly heat in stifling Beijing. She invited my daughter to Harbin in northern Manchuria and when it was time to leave presented her with a scroll. Those young Chinese women of my day wore the lovely, slim Qi-pao, “banner dress,” with a slit half-way up the thigh displaying their very shapely legs as they cycled past. We danced to the tunes of big-band swing and what the Chinese called “yellow coffee house” music, which was comprised of wonderful transcriptions of Chinese folk tunes. We often rode our bicycles out to picnic on the Western Hills or near the Ming Tombs.
For those who visit Beijing today with its monotonous, reinforced concrete, International Style and Modern Brutal buildings, it is impossible to comprehend how old Beijing could have been so lovely. I returned for the first time back in 1984, even before commu-capitalism had laid its uniformity on the city, and found that when walking along the dilapidated, half-collapsed old hutongs, “alleys,” the charm had vanished. The old-fashioned low houses soon to be demolished were long stripped of all distinctive decoration by successive struggle sessions led by Red Guards and other government terrors, and were covered with grime and soot. Too many families living in makeshift shacks had crowded into the courtyards. The small guard lions in front of the more prosperous gates stood beheaded or knocked over; all the old wooden placards announcing success in the imperial examination thrown away. The wonderful fingerprints of the past had been expurgated. Next to my old place the ground had been ripped up to build latrines for a girls’ school.

**Becoming a Knight of Genghiz Khan**

**Late spring & summer 1948**

In the spring of 1948, the plum tree framed by my bedroom window at Fangjia Hutong had long since burst into bloom when an opportunity presented itself to me. I was asked to distribute aid to drought-stricken Mongols in the Ordos and Ulanchap area as a field officer for the Mongol Branch of the China Relief Mission. This was a U.S. State Department agency, not a part of the United Nations Relief Association, UNRRA, which, I think, by then had faded. The United Nations Relief Mission had been established in 1944 in order to deal with refugees and war victims of the immediate post war era in Europe.

The opportunity to help did not just present itself. It was nudged along by Sechin Jagchid, the aide-de-camp of Prince De, and me. There had been three years of little rain resulting in much famine in North China. Help was reaching Han farmers, but not the Mongol herders. Jagchid approached me about this. I no longer had an official role in government, but I still had connections. I sought out the State Department chap who was in charge of U.S. relief in China and presented the Mongols’ case. The mission to help the Mongols was easily granted. The Soederbom brothers became the administrators for this project. They, especially George, had been in charge of UNRRA relief, and as sons of old Swedish missionaries spoke fluent Mongolian and Mandarin. George had been a guide to Sven Hedin, the Swedish explorer of the Karakorum, Tibet, and the Tarim Basin.

In the Ordos, the swath of rich loess within the great bend of Huang He, the Yellow River, much of the area had been taken over by Han farmers. In drought years this land was quite incapable of supporting agriculture with the inevitable result of erosion and famine. In the southwest corner of the Ordos one Mongolian banner had forbidden the building of roads in an effort to keep Han settlers out. In Ulanchap aimak, “district,” the Mongols were still predominantly nomadic pastoralists. I rode a horse or drove a truck, sometimes in the company of Ian Morrison, the journalist with *The London Times* and friend of Han Suyin. We rode to various settlements overseeing the distribution of grain and also distributed CARE packages sent by concerned U.S. citizens back in America.

A prince of Ulanchap was so grateful to the U.S. that he asked how he could present a horse to the President of the United States. Morrison and I persuaded him to send a saddle instead. I heard later that the saddle got side-tracked in the U.S. consulate in Guangzhou (Canton). This same prince decided to declare me a Bator, “hero,” in recognition of my efforts. The ceremony, held in his palace and administrative center made of adobe brick, consisted of the presentation of white silk
prayer scarves. It was a simple affair without the traditional blanket toss. I cannot now remember if I received the honorary owl feathers or not. Owl feathers worn in the foxfur-lined bonnet were the mark of the hero and were comparable to medals.

My Mongol assistant and I visited Ejen-khoroo, a shrine to Genghiz Khan. Nobody knows exactly where the dread ruler, who conquered across Asia into Europe, was buried. Several sites receive veneration. During the war between China and Japan the sacred casket supposedly containing his remains was moved by Chinese Nationalist troops to Xinlingshan in Gansu to keep the relics out of the hands of the Japanese, who wanted to use them for propaganda purposes. A traditional shaman, not a lama or member of the Buddhist church, but of an older religion to which Genghiz Khan paid his respects, was still in attendance at Ejen-khoroo. He agreed to carry out the traditional ceremony by which I, in a sense, would become a Knight of Genghiz Khan. After chanting and offering flour and distilled mare’s milk, kunriss, to the four corners of heaven we were asked to bow to some possessions of the great warrior. I was then asked to touch his bow while kneeling on one knee. My companions were lined up behind me receiving power through me. The shaman then tied a white prayer shawl around my neck symbolizing that I had pledged myself to the cause of Genghiz Khan.

I was told that this in fact made me a Mongol. As the Empire of Genghiz Khan was a federation which he had named “Mongol” (the name has something to do with silver and men of silver), any who accepted the silk shawl accepted vassalage to the Mongols and some degree of national identity. This, I felt, committed me on some level to help pastoral nomads preserve their rights to grazing lands and made me a dedicated actor in the great drama of the era: the end of the free pastoral way of life that had provided an alternative livelihood to sedentary agriculture in Central and Inner Asia since the Neolithic.

I visited Xinlongshan later with a Tatar friend from Kazan. Her family had fled from there after the Russian Revolution, she and her sister stowed in baskets on either side of a camel. Xinlongshan is not far from Dingyuanying (Bayanhot) where I was staying. We had been able to borrow a car and drove out into the green world of late spring on the steppe. Gentians and little pink carnations were beginning to bloom among the lush grass. The shrine was simple. The attendant did not offer to present us with special honors of Genghiz Khan.

The Communists have moved the casket back to Ejen-khoroo and have greatly elaborated the shrine with a massive statue of Genghiz Khan displayed in the central hall. The pictures I have seen make it look like a Guangdong Temple in Taichung, Taiwan that I was told was inspired by the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Is this the case here too? Of course, in north China, temples to Guan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy, usually include a huge statue of the deity standing upright, dominating the central hall. The Genghiz Khan tomb is now one of the money-making tourist attractions milked by the government in Beijing. For sale in the gift shop among other kitsch one can find snow globes with Santa Claus and his reindeer.

With the end of the summer’s relief work I returned to Beijing planning to join a group of American students who were continuing their studies with little regard to the threatening Communist victory. Malcom Bersohn, our genius from Cornell, was one of these students. He lived in my place as did Mike Rogers (later chairman of the Oriental Language Department at Berkeley) when I was off distributing relief in Mongolia. Very generously they shipped my things back to the U.S. for me once the Communists did win.

Malcom was quite a dedicated Marxist as far as I could tell. He decided to remain behind when most of the other students, including Johnny Bottorff, hurriedly left. With the growing xenophobia in Beijing he was accused of “cultural espionage” by his erstwhile comrades and subjected to severe brain washing. When he wrote to me in Berkeley he was still in a state of shock. He wrote of
The "Great Teaching" Da Jiao

My first closer look at the complexities of the Da Jiao, "the Great Teaching" — a multifaceted, polytheistic religion most of the people of Zhongguo participate in at some level — was when delivering grain in Inner Mongolia that summer. North of the Great Wall, in Shangdu, I was allowed to participate in a curing ceremony. Shangdu, ancient Xanadu (or Khandu as the Mongols prefer) had been the summer capital of Kublai Khan, ruler of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). The small, dusty, bordertown between the Sown and the Steppe I visited was not exactly Coleridge's:

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan

A stately pleasure-dome decree:

Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man

Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground

With walls and towers were girdled round:

And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,

Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;

And here were forests ancient as the hills,

Enclosing sunny spots of greenery. 39

In town many were Han Chinese. Mongols lived out on the steppe.

The patients, the wife and young son of a Han, not Mongol, family had been troubled with low fevers and headaches. Many Han had moved into the old Mongol area by then. The shaman, a neighbor and friend of the family, agreed to help. Just how he had gained his special powers I failed to ask. Shamanism was all-pervasive in Inner Asia and pre-Communist China. There were different kinds of shamans. Some were temporarily possessed by a supernatural. In American terms this might be compared to the ardent prayer of Pentecostal Christians. Like Pentecostal worshippers the shaman goes into a trance-like state and speaks in tongues often requiring an interpreter. Some shamans were more like priests; while others projected their chi, "life force," to seek out lost souls in order to retrieve them. Some shamans battled evil forces in a trance. In Taiwan all these different kinds of shamans still serve the public. Among Mongol pastoralists family elders could act as shamans or the family could call on a Gurtum associated with a monastery.

With the patients and the shaman sitting on the kang, a raised platform extending from wall to wall along the back end of the room and heated in winter by the flues from the kitchen fire, the shaman quickly and quietly went into trance. This is generally accomplished by controlled breathing (hyperventilating) among Chinese shamans. While in trance, the God of the City Gate took possession of his body and spoke through him explaining that the illness was caused by the ancestral spirits on the husband's side. The husband's family needed to take better care of their ancestral graves. Their forefathers were unhappy. As the God of the City Gate, I believe, he was in a position comparable to that of Tudi Gong, in rural areas, a protector of an area. As such he is both yin and yang, both concerned with the living and the dead, or at least their bones. The ancestors do not send out malignant spirits to chastise their delinquent descendants, but affect their lives through feng shui, an impersonal mana-like force flowing from their bones. After awakening from trance the shaman took

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days and nights without sleep, constant questioning about all contacts. "Had I known that this or that man I had introduced him to really kept a secret radio behind a curtain and was an American spy?" He apparently recovered enough to attend medical school later in the United States and to get married. There were rumors that all these tales of brainwashing were not entirely true. I met Harriet Miller, also one of the brainwashed students from Beijing, later in Taiwan. She was quite confused not knowing if she loved or loathed her Chinese tormentors.

Before hitting the books I decided to take a vacation to visit Lianna and her family in Nanjing. Her father, as a Japanese collaborator, was still having trouble with Nationalist authorities and his family had moved to be near him. Everyone was very kind to me, but her sisters never allowed us a moment alone. When I was ready to return to Beijing I was informed that travel for U.S. citizens to Beijing was prohibited. I am still not clear what was really going on. As the civil war reached a point of growing danger had my government put travel restrictions on U.S. citizens? Or were there those in the United States government who wished to keep an eye on me? I still do not know. Considering what Malcom and Harriet told me later, I was obviously lucky. I, too, would have remained in Beijing quite convinced that nobody could hold anything against me and that I had nothing to fear.

There I sat in Shanghai unable to get back to Beijing to continue my studies. I had a growing stomach ache that was later diagnosed as appendicitis and my eyes were acting strangely. While distributing grain in the Ordos I suffered a sun stroke. With a splitting headache and red suns arcing in front of my eyes, my comrades suggested a stiff drink. That was exactly the worst treatment. Did it have anything to do with the odd way my eyes were acting in Shanghai? Rainbow circles appeared around all objects and my myopia was much worse. My headaches continued. Back in 1946, after returning to the U.S. when discharged from the military, I visited an eye doctor who seemed puzzled at my growing shortsightedness. In 1947 when in the States, I saw him again. He told me that I seemed to have glaucoma which is usually a problem of the elderly. I did not pay much attention to what he told me, and just hoped for the best. He recommended I use drops in my eyes, advice that I followed religiously. It was now painfully obvious that something was seriously wrong with my eyes. I had juvenile glaucoma. At that time it was generally considered uncontrollable, leading inevitably to blindness in a few years.

For a while it looked as though the directorship of the Mongolian Branch of the China Relief Mission would be offered to me. Plans had already been made to move the headquarters from Baotou on the Yellow River up to Dingyuanying, the capital of the Alashan Banner in Inner Mongolia near Ningxia. However, the State Department had a policy which forbade the hiring of those with juvenile glaucoma to positions of authority in dangerous places. This was not simply an arbitrary rule since there was such a lack of knowledge on the correct treatment for this condition. This was the end of my expectations of becoming a member of the U.S. Foreign Service. It was a blow in many respects. I had been riding high — feeling confident and competent. Suddenly, the rug was pulled out from under me. I was not sure what to do next.

To add to my distress, the position of director for Mongolian relief was given to a career State Department chap by the name of Circassian who had little prior relationship to Prince De or interest in Mongols and other minorities. I went to see him and asked him to make sure that the trucks of the Mongolian Relief Mission be turned over to the Mongolian Prince should the mission be hurriedly evacuated. Some people said that he was more interested in getting the Neolithic pottery he had been able to acquire out of the country than to think about the Mongols. He later ran an antique shop in Colorado Springs, I believe. I was still so angry that in 1955, when I was in
a red strip of paper and wrote a stanza of the *Diamond Sutra*, a Buddhist holy text, which he then burned. The patients drank the ashes mixed into their tea. After that the shaman heated a tea cup and pressed the mouth against the woman's forehead leaving a round red mark.

The particular God of the City Gate may at one time have been alive and may have received his title from the emperor himself for meritorious acts while living or miracles attributed to him/her after death, or the history may have been forgotten. The history can, of course, always be rediscovered by a medium in trance, writing on a planchette of sand, or by other means, encouraging creativity. There are many gods, supernaturals, saints or restless souls in the pantheon.

In the PRC the Communists have tried to root out such beliefs. On Taiwan this has not been the case. In 1989, about to retire, I had hoped to do a community study on the mainland with the help of Nankai University in Tianjin. Then the Tiananmen Massacre shocked the world. China scholars in the United States pledged not to take part in research in China as a form of protest. We had let our house and made arrangements with the University. I called up Lin Zhenxiong, my old friend from Taiwan, and in his wonderful way he said, "Just come back to Taiwan. I'll take care of everything. Don't worry, no problem." He was true to his word.

Taiwan in the late Eighties was a new experience. In 1964–65 and 1968, as an American I was in a privileged position. The Taiwanese were often seen as Japanese collaborators by the Guomindang. Impoverished, they were quite powerless. Now, our Taiwanese neighbors in the villages I had studied before were often better off financially than this old university professor. As protégés of the Lins all Taiwanese doors were opened to us. Now we were the project of the villagers rather than the other way around.

It was a fight between Hakka families which had split the mountain village I originally visited in 1964-5 into two halves: one north, one south. In 1965 the southern half was connected to town over the rickety bridge while the northern half was more isolated. With the defeat of the Japanese a new temple to "The Lords of Benevolence" had been built in the southern half of the original village. To the right of the main altar was a small altar to Tudi Gong and to the left, an altar to the City God. Guan Gong, the red faced hero of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*' fame, presided over a central altar flanked by the God of Literature and the Kitchen God who also presided over the stove in every farm house — but no more. The supernatural is said to dislike the smell of gas stoves.

A "spirit writing cult," or *pai luan*, made its home in the temple. The Guan Gong Cult can be seen as part of a Chinese government sanctioned cult, or state cult. Spirit writing was frowned upon by the Japanese government. Villagers remember hiding from police raids directed at discouraging séances. In 1902 the spirit writing cult on Taiwan had been involved with curing opium addiction. The Japanese had a monopoly on opium and encouraged members of the landlord class to smoke opium. People living in the village on the plain confirmed this. They said opium addiction resulted in chaotic conditions which gave the Japanese more control over them.

Spirit writing is a well-established means for communicating with the gods, practiced by literati as it presumes knowledge of writing. A medium and his assistant hold a stylus attached to a two-branched stick, reminiscent of a water-witching rod, over a planchette of sand allowing the stylus to trace characters in the sand. These are called out by the assistant, verified and written down. In this manner long texts relating to the previous reincarnations of the supernaturals can be composed, a great inspiration for creative writing and for poetry.

(Cont. from page 36)
Colorado Springs to see an ophthalmologist because my eyes were giving me trouble, I refused to look him up. Maybe the real story was quite different. I never asked him.

There went my hopes of heading the Mongolian relief effort. There went my hopes of helping my Mongol friends and there ended my employment, in this case with the State Department, in the government of the United States.

**Fulbright Scholar, 1948-1949**

But all was not lost. In September, 1948, I was informed that I had received one of the first Fulbright Scholarships offered by the United States government. My scholarship was to study Mongolian and the cultures of pastoral nomads in Inner Asia. “Inner Asia” was how Owen Lattimore (a member of the Fulbright selection committee) translated the Chinese term neifan that refers to the areas beyond the Great Wall. These scholarships, which were established by Congress through the efforts of Senator William Fulbright of Arkansas, promoted study of foreign lands. The scholarships were to be kept strictly apart from U.S. government diplomatic or intelligence objectives. Foreign governments were to be reassured that Fulbright scholars were not undercover agents working for the United States government. Many of us studying in China at the time were competing to receive this prize. I was amazed when I was selected. I had heard of the newly-instituted Fulbright Scholarship Program earlier when still in Beijing and had immediately applied. I learned that I had been selected before I knew I could not continue with the Mongolian Relief Mission.

I decided to go to the mission hospital in Chengdu, Sichuan, where there was an excellent ophthalmologist (I think his name was Cunningham and that he was Canadian) for an innovative eye operation and to have my appendix out. By creating additional outlets for the fluid build-up in my inner eye it was hoped that the destruction of my optic nerve could be halted. In glaucoma the fluid within the inner eye does not drain properly. As the pressure from the fluid mounts it presses on the optic nerve. It destroys the nerve fibers and with the fibers, sight. It was a dismal Christmas that year in dank and dreary Chengdu where I played chess with the good doctor, waiting to see if the operations had been successful. My right eye was holding its own, but the left eye was now essentially blind. On the optician’s chart I could barely make out the big “E.”

**Dingyuanying (Bayanhot, Tze Hu, Ting-yuan-ying) 1949**

In the New Year, once I could travel, I proceeded from Chengdu to Lanzhou in Gansu Province. From there I drove with friends from the Mongol Relief Mission to Dingyuanying, an old-fashioned walled oasis town near Ningxia, a Chinese Muslim (Hui-Hui) area. The town contained the Alashan Banner temple and the residence of the Prince of Alashan. Relations between Moslems and Mongols were uneasy at this time when Ma Bufang was the warlord in the area.

I found myself a place to live in a small courtyard outside the walls of Dingyuanying, in the back of a carpenter’s shop. I hired a Mongol teacher and settled in. To keep the bed bugs from attacking me I carefully placed DDT around my bed only to discover that bed bugs are smarter than I. They climbed up the wall to the ceiling and then dive-bombed down on me. But the DDT kept the lice in check and warded off fleas for the extent of my travels.

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\[a\] Fritz Nelson, a cousin of my wife's.

\[b\] The temple looked much like the Yong He Gong in Beijing, only smaller.
When I approached the visiting god in the sanctuary behind the main altar in 1965, the Earth God possessed the medium. The god welcomed me:

You want to know about your future.
You, like the wild goose, are of the sky.
In late autumn you leave for the north
But your tracks are left in the south.

I am very happy that you have come to my temple,
A superior person from who-knows-how-distant a place.

The god's reasoning and subtle knowledge are difficult for men to imagine,
Without shape and shadow but with supernatural illumination.
(rough translation, FBB and SLB)

The spirit writing cult was introduced to the village in 1946 by a sometime school teacher, merchant, and member of a vigilante group active in the chaotic years following the withdrawal of Japanese administration and the establishment of the Guomindang on Taiwan. The medium who transmitted the above poem said that he had been drawn to the cult because of his interest in classical Chinese. He and a few other villagers attended a clandestine school for classical Chinese during the Japanese occupation. Mediums were selected by lot and then studied at a cult temple in Taipei. The temple to the Lords of Benevolence was especially supported by Hakka.

In 1965, there were only three other religious professionals outside those associated with the Buddhist Hall and the temple of "the Lords of Benevolence" introduced to me: a keeper of the Goddess Matsu's (patron saint of Taiwan) paraphernalia, a fa-shi, or master of magic spells, and a one-time tang-ki or self-mortifying shaman. Di Ye (Lord of the Dark Quadrant of the Universe, Xuan-tian Shang-di, Zhen Wu, "True Warrior," ruler of the northern quadrant while Money presided over the southern half) was the spirit guardian of the fa-shi. His specialty then was curing fright by placing a garment of the affected person on a bowl of uncooked rice. Di Ye communicated a message to him by rearranging the grains.

The tang-ki told me he used to beat himself with a spiked steel ball, and drew blood with his shaman's sword when in trance. He said he had relinquished his "art;" he was now "modern." Others in the village grumbled that all tang-ki are aborigines (Malay speakers), fakes, and out to make money. When we met him again in 1990 he was visiting the old farm house where his son, now the mayor of the northern half of the old village, lived. When he recognized me he leapt on his motorbike and rushed off to buy refreshments to entertain us. He lived in town now to be close to modern hospitals, he said. He is still modern, but likes to come back to the village, riding his motor bike through the traffic to the consternation of his children. He is quite deaf.

All three of these one-time religious practitioners were involved in a mass hysteria possession that had swept the village after members of the Di Ye Cult returned from a pilgrimage to the cult's home temple in Sung-Po-Keng near Nantou back in 1946. Mass possession in conjunction with pilgrimage is not unknown. A Taiwanese friend in another village explained that when it happens one can be sure that interloping evil spirits are involved. This is what supposedly happened. When the cult groups returned with their own god figures which they had taken along to be strengthened, the charming old gentleman in 1990, a tang-ki then, went into violent possession during which he knocked the statue (Cont. on page 42)
On August 5, 1949, Prince De called a congress in Dingyuanying of Mongol leaders, Banner princes, and Bators to discuss what could be done to safeguard their future. I was invited to attend and even addressed the assembled dignitaries. I spoke in Mongol, so my remarks were of necessity short. We met in the school auditorium decorated with red, white, and blue flags and a large picture of Sun Yatsen. Prince De wanted a picture of Genghiz Khan displayed as well, but the Mongols did not want to break ties openly with Chiang Kaishek.

I was eager to continue assisting the Mongols in any way I could. I wrote Owen Lattimore, then back in the States, about conditions in Dingyuanying and my hopes for the future of the Mongols. As mentioned earlier, I had gone to the then-Director of the Mongol Relief Mission, begging him to assure me that should the Mission evacuate in a hurry because of changing political circumstances, the trucks and materials would be turned over to Prince De. He did not comprehend the urgency of the request.* I did not know this until much later. It was Prince De himself, I think, who told me in Dingyuanying that he hoped to use the trucks to seek safety from Chinese Communists by reaching Tibetan territory. The idea was to establish a government in exile in Tibet. I do not remember exactly when it was that I found out that the trucks had not been turned over to Prince De, but instead had been abandoned to the advancing Communists forces. I think it was not until I got back to Washington, D.C. in 1950 that I learned what had happened. When I found out I was filled with despair.

The Mongols and I drank many toasts to the Provisional Mongolian Republic we had just declared in Dingyuanying. Then everybody scattered in a hurry. Fighting between the Nationalists and Communists was about to engulf Dingyuanying. Prince De fled first to the Alashan Gobi and later to Outer Mongolia. He thought fellow Mongols there would protect him, but he was wrong. He was endlessly interrogated and then handed over to the Chinese People’s Republic. Condemned to death, the sentence was commuted to life in prison. When back in the PRC in 1984 I was told that Ulanfu, the Mongol communist I had met back in 1946 in Kalgan, had been able to make Prince De’s life more bearable. Owen Lattimore adds that “... after a good many years he was released and allowed to work as a librarian in the great Inner Mongolian library at Huhe Hote (Koekhe Khot) which he himself had assembled.”† I also heard in 1984 that at least 10,000 Mongol leaders had been summarily executed during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), that chaotic period roughly contemporary with the period of the Vietnam War (1965-1973), the time Chinese intellectuals now call, “our Holocaust.”

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* Jagchid in his book about Prince De (1999), above cit. p. 410, relied to a large extent on his memory. He did not check with me.

† The passage where he writes of my involvement at that time is quite confused.
of Di Ye belonging to the fa-shi to the ground with his shaman's sword claiming that it was possessed by an evil demon. He said he himself was possessed by General Kang, the so-called brother of Di Ye. It was agreed that a fox fairy must have taken up abode in the statue during pilgrimage. It was burned ritually which was distressing to the fa-shi.

After the statue of Di Ye was destroyed other voices were heard claiming that the tang-ki was really possessed by the Black Dog Demon. This demon, the special familiar of an aboriginal village nearby, had been sealed in a cave by the Dark Emperor himself, but a powerful aborigine had been able to break the charm. New accusations resulted in the ritual boiling in oil of another piece of religious paraphernalia, this time a plaque associated with the Goddess Matsu. It was supposedly acquired in some unsavory manner during the pilgrimage. For this aggressive act the keeper of the Matsu paraphernalia, which belonged to the village as a whole for use in annual processions, was hauled off to jail for a number of days.

This left all three religious practitioners in a compromised position. The entire episode was extremely distressing to the villagers, providing a receptive mood for culture change. It was then that the "Temple of the Lords of Benevolence" was built with implications that the villagers now looked to Guomindang-brokered "modern Chinese culture."

When we returned to Taiwan in 1989/90 all the families I had visited before were still represented in both villages, but few were still full-time farmers. The bucolic villages I remembered from the Sixties had changed drastically. The one on the plain near Taichung had become an industrial slum. In the mountain village we found the mushroom sheds abandoned, left to collapse into tangles of black plastic. As on the plain, ex-tenant families had built new reinforced concrete houses that stood mostly empty. The few family members who dwelt in them fulltime looked after handicapped family members who were kept out of the public view.

Shui-cun, an edible bulrush, was an important cash crop. Light industry — painting Christmas tree ornaments and wooden toys — had peaked some years earlier. Two handmade rice paper factories owned quite separately by cousins were barely surviving. A factory creating artistic bronze lamps was strictly off-limits to the public for fear of industrial espionage and was owned by a leading politician in the area. A "Mainlander" was trying to start a saw mill. A nursery was growing cut flowers for the Hong Kong market and an ambitious project for raising exotic orchids was being built. New clusters of stores had opened, but the most important village industry concerned the supernatural — a form of tourism. As temples now announced specific days when a spirit medium would enter trance and answer petitions (in the past mediums made house calls as in Shangdu in 1948), clubs of worshippers traveled from temple to temple sampling the advice. The east-facing hillside above the village had become extensive burial grounds.

The temple of "the Lords of Benevolence," prominent in the 1960s, had lost membership. In 1990 a new temple to Di-Ye, the Emperor of the Dark Heavens, in the northern half of the old village was receiving more attention and donations. The new temple combined both wen-di, literary knowledge, and au-di, active exorcism of evil forces by a shaman or tang-ki. The new temple was based on a little house temple that had long existed in the village although I did not recognize this back in 1965. What did strike me was a clay statue of the White Tiger General that stood under the family altar table. Construction of the new temple had begun in 1988. Everywhere on Taiwan new temples were being built or old shrines enlarged. Ghosts, gambling and health occupied people at a time of growing political restlessness.

(Cont. on page 44)
The end of Prince De as a viable leader marked the end of an era, the end of the House of Genghiz Khan, and beyond that the victory of the Sown over the Steppe. The Manchu Dynasty recognized its ties to the peoples north and west of the Great Wall. It was sympathetic to the nomadic pastoralists that had been traveling over the grassland for thousands of years. The Chinese Communists are not. Their leaders came from farm families in the Yangzi Valley and further south. Mao was the son of a rich farmer in Hunan province who tilled his land with the help of hired day laborers. Deng Xiaoping came from a Hakka (migrants or “guest people”) family originally from Guangdong that had moved to Sichuan. Peng Dehuai’s grandfather had fought alongside the Taipings in the great and bloody revolt against Manchu rule of the mid-eighteen hundreds. The Taiping originated in Guanxi province, proclaimed by a Hakka, Hong Xiuquan, who said he was the younger brother of Jesus Christ. The Chinese Communists, these fanatic idealists, were determined to establish a centralized, top down government that would truly implement Marx’s “scientific” precepts, carry out the reforms the Western missionaries preached, while ignoring the “Sermon on the Mount,” and with this establish heaven on earth. Their “vision” was antithetical to that of the horsemen of the Steppe.
Modern Taiwanese Curing Ceremony Addressed to Me

One velvet, spring evening we walked over to the new Di-Ye temple unannounced (at least we did not know if this was planned). At first only a few people were present; some attendants, robed in blue, were chanting Daoist scripture while others were recording petitions on pink slips of paper. Others, for instance a restaurant owner from Pennsylvania, were busily burning paper money. Finally, the shaman who is possessed by the main god arrived, but could not achieve trance. Suddenly there was a call for the peaked cap, the tattered robe, the gourd filled with wine and the turkey wing fan which announced the arrival of Ji Gong, the tipsy monk, associated with the founding of southern Chan Buddhism, and the master of medicine. A serene-looking shaman, with eyes closed, seated himself at a table below the temple hall, put on the identifying regalia and began ministering to the sick. He joked, wrote charms in the air, and dispensed written charms that he burned in order to make infusions for the petitioners to drink, handed out pills and aromatic drinks in orange plastic cups.

It was difficult to observe carefully how Ji Gong was ministering to the people who lined up for a few words with him as suddenly the presence of another supernatural was announced. This was General Kang who stands to the left of the Emperor of the Dark Heavens on the temple altar holding a swordfish sword. He began shouting out syllables, banging the table in front of the main shrine, writing charms with the vermilion brush. For a visibly very sick young man in a wheelchair he took up his swordfish sword and began exorcising evil, front and back.

As all this was going on another medium appeared. A temple interpreter crouched next to him. He was soon possessed and began stroking his imaginary beard. Guan Gong himself was in attendance, delegated "Lord of the Universe" in 1990 by the supreme God of Heaven (Tian-di, "the Jade Emperor"). Guan Gong spoke, "There are some people from outside the village here tonight. One of them is an American who has trouble with his eyes. Bring him before me." It did not take the temple attendants long to spot me. They had all seen me grope my way along the slippery dikes between shui-cun fields. I was guided up the broad stone steps, up to the altar to Guan Gong. In a mighty voice the god spoke, "Seek out Ji Gong, he will help you!" With that the god withdrew.

As I was led to Ji Gong again there was a commotion. What seemed to me to be the same medium (although each medium supposedly is possessed by only one supernatural) became possessed again by the White Tiger General. Leaping on all fours, snarling and pawing the ground he rushed down the steps among the worshippers wildly firing off firecrackers. He continued leaping and attacking evil forces in all directions until about six men finally were able to subdue him, allowing the spirit of the Tiger General to leave his body. With a last horrible cat-like snarl the Tiger broke free. The medium shook himself, put on his shirt while his two little children who had been watching all this burst into loud laughter and ran up to hug their daddy. After receiving blessings from Ji Gong we walked back to our crumbling farm house under glittering stars, huge in the tropical night.
Westwards over the Alashan Gobi

In late August, 1949, I prepared to ride westward. Sechin Jagchid confided how much he too would like to ride west with me, but he had a wife and children. I saw him off as he headed to Shanghai and then Taiwan. I did not see him again until 1964 when I looked up him and his wife, Onogyl, in Taipei. He was desperate to get away from Taiwan. I was too recent at the University of Montana to arrange for him to come there, but remembered Paul Heyer at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Jagchid received an appointment and pursued a successful career there. I last saw him at an Asia Society conference where he had come especially to see me after my accident with the horse. He laughed, “Just think, we translated your Chinese name, Bai Jiren, as Mergen Sang, ‘Fountain of Wisdom,’ back there in Mongolia!”

I could of course have followed Jagchid’s example and caught a plane out of China to return to the United States. But I still had some of my Fulbright grant money left. I also knew that this was probably my last chance for that “desert road to Turkestan” and a glimpse of the ancient ways of the rulers of the Steppe. I might be totally blind by the time relations between the U.S., China, and the Soviet Union allowed freer travel again. When Owen Lattimore traveled this route in the 1920s and ‘30s there had been civil war between warlords, ordinary bandits, and others. He made it through. I had started corresponding with him in Dingyuanying. By 1949 he was no longer in government, but was back teaching at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore.

The princely family of Alashan Banner had once been honored by receiving an imperial princess from the Qing Emperor. The Banner had gradually become sinicized in the Beijing manner. This influence could be seen in the Alashan Banner temple in Dingyuanying (I do not know if it still exists), an ornate structure resembling the Lama Temple, Zhong He Gong, in Beijing rather than the more austere prayer halls of the great Lamaist monastery of Kumbum, Taerse, near Xining in Qinghai. There was tension between Damzana, the Banner Prince living within the walls of Dingyuanying, and the Mongol nomads living outside the wall on the grasslands. So when Damzana gave me a letter of introduction and lent me a string of camels he asked me to say the camels were from the Alashan Banner government, and not from him.

Don Kemp, one of the teachers at Rewi Alley’s experimental agricultural station and school in Shandan, Gansu, also happened to be in Dingyuanying. With the Prince’s camels he and I set out across the Alashan Desert together with two young Mongol students who wanted to attend the school at Shandan. Rewi Alley was a New Zealand socialist/communist (I do not know if he was ever a card-carrying member of the Communist Party) who remained in China through thick and
The Dilowa Gegen

In 1951, when I was already a student of anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, Owen Lattimore together with the Dilowa Gegen looked me up and asked me to come and study at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore with him. By then it was difficult for me to pull up stakes and move to another university. I had a chance to show the Dilowa around Berkeley. We even had our picture taken together. It was printed in the Berkeley Gazette.

The Dilowa visited me again in Berkeley, this time together with Ferdinand Lessing. By then our oldest, Barbara, was a toddler. She came into the room where the Dilowa was sitting on one of the few chairs we had, climbed on his lap and reached for his rosary. The Dilowa was overwhelmed. He lifted her up and placed her on the chair as he went down on his knees before her. Tears were streaming down his face. She had recognized him as the reincarnation he knew he was. After that he lived with us for several summers, a wonderful grandfatherly friend to us and our children, drawing pictures of tigers for them as he fed them delicacies sent him by his Kalmuk parishioners in New Jersey. The older brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Taktser Rimpoche (Thubten Norbu), lived nearby. We ate many mo-mos (Tibetan stuffed dumplings) with him, his monk assistant and the Dilowa carefully nipping off a piece to count who had eaten the most.

"The hierarchy of my religion consists of the Incarnations of Saints who, because they have freed themselves of sin and material illusion, could have entered Nirvana, but have elected to remain in the material world in order to help others who are struggling to free themselves of sin and material illusion. The human body of such an Incarnation is merely a temporary vehicle. When the vehicle is worn out the body dies. The Incarnation then reappears in a new vehicle."

The Dilowa Gegen traced his Incarnation back fourteen generations to one of the companions and disciples of Gotama Buddha, Mangala. At a later time this essence was reincarnated as Dilowa, or "the Pounder of Sesame Seed," who later appeared as Milarapa in Tibet. Under the Kan Xi Emperor (Qing Dynasty) 1662-1722, the reincarnation was recognized as Dilowa Hutukhtu.

"My present incarnation is the fifth under this designation and the third to appear in Outer Mongolia. While I was in the Ordos, under the designation of Erhe Bogda Lama, Narobanchin was my disciple. Later he was reincarnated in Outer Mongolia and built the Narobanchin Monastery. When in a later reincarnation I myself appeared in the same region of Outer Mongolia the Narobanchin Hutukhtu invited me to share his monastery with him and thus it has been ever since."

The Dilowa was born to a poor Mongol herding family in 1884 and recognized as a reincarnation when he was five years old. Accompanied by his parents he was taken to Narobanchin Monastery some 150 miles south of Uliastai in what is now the Republic of Mongolia. Here, like the Dalai Lama of Tibet, he was mostly raised by lamas to become a sort of spiritual Siamese twin to the other Narobanchin reincarnation. Tried for treason by the new Soviet-inspired rulers he was found guilty and then released in 1932. He fled the country and met Owen Lattimore in Beijing. At the end of World War II he traveled to Lhasa and became close to the family of the Dalai Lama. In 1949 Owen Lattimore invited him to the United States. He summed up:

"Of myself in this incarnation I will say only this I am not a man of great learning. On this journey through life my course has been in the main one of religion manifested in action, rather than in learning; and moreover the time in which this journey has been made has been one of great wars and much violence and evil."
thin, enshrined as “Friend of the Revolution” and given an official funeral when he died. When I last heard from Don Kemp he was still in China living in Beijing in 1984.⁴⁷

We traveled for almost a month over some 200 miles, riding from encampment to encampment, from well to well, exchanging our camels for fresh mounts along the way. Although rocky, the land afforded ample forage in summer. The gers we visited were bright with Chinese trade rugs (Mongols are not the rug weavers Kazakh nomads are). Many fat sheep (fat-rumped sheep as distinct from fat-tailed sheep common in Iran and Tibet) grazed around them. Even though it was still summer when Mongols subsist almost entirely on milk and milk products, the first family whose yurt we approached slaughtered a sheep in our honor. They did this in the time-honored manner. The animal was forced to the ground, a quick incision in the animal’s chest allowed the butcher to reach into the cavity and squeeze the heart to stop beating. A small piece of skin cut from the forehead was dedicated to Genghiz Khan. As a mark of respect I was offered the great delicacy, the stomach containing all the partially-digested greens the animal had eaten. Each encampment where we stopped would then direct us to the next encampment where we could exchange our mounts. The Mongols and their flocks slowly moved in a great circle to join other nomads at the winter grazing grounds.

The Mongols I met in the Alashan were Torgut Mongols. Their ancestors had been part of the great Jungarian revolt against the Kang-xi, Manchu Emperor (1654-1722). Using cannons, built for them by Jesuit priests, the Manchu armies were able to route the rebellious Mongols in 1696. Defeated they fled westward to join the remnants of the Golden Horde, the Mongol rulers of Russia. The area their ancestors originally fled from, Jungaria, became the grazing lands of other nomads gradually seeping in from north and west. The Kazakh groups I was to meet later had moved out of the Soviet Union in the late 1920s-early 30s, into this area.

Some Torgut Mongols who reached the Crimean Peninsula became known as Kalmuks. The name has something to do with not getting across the river in time before the winter ice break up. They were left behind in the Crimea when the rest of these Mongols tried to return to their old grazing lands in Mongolia. Those who made it across the river became the ancestors of my Torgut Mongol hosts. Some of the Kalmuks in the Crimea later sided with the Germans during World War II. After the war they ended up in displaced persons camps and were finally invited to settle in the United States. They were asked what it was they most wanted to do. Naturally, their unanimous response was: “Herd sheep.” They were brought to New Mexico and assigned shepherd’s duties. It took them about a day to figure out that watching the sheep of others provided miserable pay and no future. They took off to New Jersey where they found work in chicken factories. Once settled there they converted an old garage into a Buddhist temple and invited the Dilowa Gegen or Hutukhtu to preside (personal information from the Dilowa Gegen). There are still Kalmuks living in the Crimea. As Buddhists, they have invited His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama to visit them this year (2004).

From Shandan I caught the mail truck to Hami (Qumul). Traveling on top of the mailbags was considered rather exposed, not simply to the elements, but more dangerously, to the unpredictable company to be met among fellow travelers and at the inns along the way. Chinese jokingly called those who took the mail truck “Yellow River Fish,” so stupid they jump right into the boat of the fisherman! There were some rough characters. One man spent the time trying to abduct one of the women. Other travelers were trying to prevent this. There were no authorities to call for help.

The route in part followed the “Silk Road” which ran through the Gansu Corridor, past the terminus of the Great Wall and out through the “Jade Gate” into Chinese Turkestan, and ultimately to the Middle East and to Rome. Now one branch of the highway turns north towards Hami (Qumul), Turfan and up to Urumqi (Tihwa), the other branching south along the Altun Tagh, or the
Gold Mountains, and then along the southern edge of the Tarim Basin. The mail truck did not stop to allow us to visit the famous Buddhist caves of Dunhuang. They lay off to the side of the motor road. The caves, painted and elaborated since about the 3rd century AD, were neglected once Buddhism lost its pre-eminence at the end of the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD).

The man squatting on a mail bag next to me asked where this da bi zi from America was going. I told him how I hoped to travel through Chinese Turkestan to Urumqi and then west to some Torgut Mongol settlements in the Tian Shan (Heavenly Mountains, Bogdo Ula), ultimately finding my way over the Pamirs or Karakorums to Afghanistan or Kashmir.

“So you want to be Xuan Zang?” he asked in disbelief. I laughed. As everybody in China knows, Xuan Zang was a Buddhist monk and pilgrim who set out in 629 AD from Chang'an (Xian) to bring back Buddhist sutras from the source of Buddhism in Kashmir/Afghanistan. In time, this true story became entwined with marvelous myths, finally written down by Wu Chengen, in the 16th century, as The Journey to the West.\textsuperscript{44} In this rewrite of history Xuan Zang has been directed to undertake this hazardous journey by the Bodhisattva Guan Yin, “Godess of Mercy.” To assist him she compelled Monkey, the celestial trickster, Sun Wukong, “Monkey awakened to Emptiness,” to help and guide him on his holy mission. After many hardships, and many encounters with the dread Bai Gu Jing, “White-Boned Demon,” Monkey and his two questionable assistants, Zhu Wuneng, “Piggy,” (a glutton) and Sha Wujing, “Sandy,” (a dragon), led the timid but steadfast monk along the southern branch of the Silk Road, over the Gilgit Pass into Afghanistan, to Balkh and on to Gandhara (modern Jalalabad), source of Buddhist enlightenment. These stories have been performed in countless operas, street dramas, painted on decorative panels and on kites. Today it is the basis of animated shorts and comic books including a movie with Sesame Street characters, Big Bird in China.

Mao Zedong called himself “the Monkey king who brought chaos to heaven.” Maybe, by thinking of himself as a god he was justifying his own gross disregard of all morality. In this way he could mask the danger the regime he had helped to power was in of losing “the mandate of Heaven.” Even now, Mao’s image retains an aura of the dangerous, unrequited ghost that can nevertheless be called upon by such ordinary people as Beijing taxi drivers for protection. As for his wife, Jiang Qing, people recognize in her the terrible “White-Boned Demon” ever reinventing herself into new forms of evil.\textsuperscript{9} In the Taoist universe Monkey’s opposite is Di Ye, “Emperor of the Dark Heavens,” “the Lord of Ghosts.”

“So where is Monkey?” the man sitting next to me continued. “You’d better watch out for that White-Boned Demon. She takes many shapes so you don’t know when she is ready to destroy you. Light a joss stick to the Bodhisattva Guan Yin.” On second thought, I’ll also light a joss stick for you. You will need it.”

We reached Hami without mishap. I thanked my fellow traveler for his advice, said a silent prayer just in case and took the dilapidated Sino-Soviet Friendship plane which amazingly was still flying to Urumqi. Xinjiang or Chinese Turkestan was still under Chinese Nationalist control and promised to remain that way for a while as Chinese Communist troops were busy far to the east. I was the only passenger. The door of the plane flew open, as though asking if I would like to try my parachute skills. The pilot took it in his stride, came back and banged it shut. We flew over miles of undulating steppe until I saw the incredible snow-covered Heavenly Mountains (the Tian Shan or the Bogdo Ula) sparkle below. The plane banked and rolled to a stop outside the city gates of Urumqi.

\textsuperscript{44} The Bodhisattva Guan Yin is also manifested in Chenrezig, the Lord of Compassion, the karma deity of the Land of Snow, and reincarnated as His Holiness the Dalai Lama.
Plate IX: Ordos Region of Mongolia in summer
Above: Mongols goat herding
Center Left: Building a wall
Center Right: Horse beside Yurt
Left: Mongol man by shelter
Below: Carving the framework for a saddle
Plate X:
Dingyuanying, capital of Alashan Banner, 1949
Plate XI: Crossing the Alashan

Above: Friends gather in front of Frank’s tent for a noodle feast, a great delicacy for nomads in summer, when they live almost entirely on milk products.

Left: Frank’s camel

Bottom: Frank walking next to the camels lent by the Prince of Alashan, while crossing the Alashan Gobi in 1949.
Plate XII: Kazaks
Above Left: Kazakh girls
Above Right and Right: Kazakh with golden eagle, by Owen Lattimore, "Desert Road to Turkestan." National Geographic Magazine, June 1929
Below: Kazakh family
Plate XIII:

Right: One of the “Terrible Gods of Tibet” from the older Bon religion, portrayed by masked Buddhist monk, Yong He Gong, Beijing, 1946 (photo, Bob West)

Below: Tibetan Border Patrol awaiting punishment, 1950
Plate XIV: The Potala
Approaching the Potala, Lhasa, 1950
Right: Potala rooftops
Plate XV: People of Lhasa

Above and Below Left: Dr. Lahsunyarpil and Family

Top Right: Tibetan cleric on horseback

Right and Lower Right: Along the “Holy Walk,” nun with pet goat and beggar dog
Plate XVI: Lhasa
Above Left: Dragon Eyes of Drepung Monastery
Above Right: Roof of Sera Monastery
Below Left: Temple of Nenchung Oracle indicating the continuity of the Bon religion in 1950
Below: Chokpuri Hill crowned by the medical college
Meeting Douglas Seymour Mackiernan

September, 1949

Great was my surprise when I arrived in Urumqi (Urumchi, Tihwa) to be met by a car flying "the Stars and Stripes." The chauffeur stepped outside the car and came over to me, "Please come see Vice Consul Douglas S. Mackiernan. I'll drive you." What was this? I thought I was the only U.S. citizen within a thousand miles. There had been no one else on that decrepit piece of flying junk. I had heard that the Consulate was closed. Why was the Vice Consul still here? And how, for heaven's sake, would he have known I was on that plane?

The Consul, John Hall Paxton, his wife, Vincoe, his Czech driver, Erwin Kontescheny, and his family, a Turki interpreter and children and White (anti-Soviet) Russian consulate assistants plus Vice Consul Dreesen had left August 13th after they received a cable from the U.S. government, ordering the consulate to evacuate. In order not to give the impression that the U.S. was abandoning its Turkish and White Russian friends, Douglas Mackiernan was left behind for, "...a short while maintaining rear-guard operations." Cash and assets had been handed over to him when all the others left. They got as far as Kashgar when they learned that the road ahead was too dangerous. They finally managed to reach Ladakh over the Karakoram pass with their large entourage, and were back in New York by November 19, 1949.

At the Consulate inside the city walls I was met by a man of athletic build, with brown hair, about two or three inches shorter than I, and about ten years older — to be exact, nine years my senior. Over a pleasant lunch in the deserted Consulate, furnished as much like an American home back in the States as possible, he asked me if I could help drive a truck of Consulate documents westward for him, and then get the stuff over the Gilgit Pass into India. What an intriguing idea. This should not be an insurmountable task especially with an assistant. Did Mackiernan know of the Paxtons' troubles in getting over the Gilgit Pass and their change of plans? In those days communications were so much slower and uncertain that he may well not have known. Besides, knowing of their difficulties would not have fazed me overly much. Although the passes over the Karakorum are high (over 15,000 ft), I felt quite sure that the venture was manageable. The government of Chiang Kaishek seemed firmly in control in Chinese Turkestan.

The more I thought about this proposition, the more I liked it. Having my own transportation would be ideal. I did not really know how I was going to proceed from Urumqi. Maybe there was a bus that went to Kashgar. Or maybe, I could rent a couple of camels or a mule, but a truck with a gas allowance promised to provide great possibilities. A truck with good gears can drive over the open steppe and if I hired an assistant who knew how to look under the hood and to help fix flat tires I would be in fine shape.

I had surreptitiously converted the Fulbright grant money I had received into gold bars back in Shanghai which I had sewn into my belt. With escalating inflation in China at the time the authorities had placed a ban on gold transfers. I had to get the money changed through connections, guanxi. I nipped off pieces as need presented. I had also stipulated with the Fulbright committee that my ticket back to the United States would be guaranteed regardless of where I should finally need it. Driving along the southern slopes of the Tian Shan in my own truck I could...

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a According to a conversation Thomas Laird had with Erwin in 1999 (Into Tibet, 2003, p. 32), his family came originally from Mueglitz. He drive Mackiernan in 1947 to Beidaishan from Urumqi to meet with Osman Bator whose large yurt was pitched in the mountains above. Osman was battling with Outer Mongolian forces and Mackiernan went along on a raid.

b I believe I met Paxton when he came to Tehran during WWII. He spent an afternoon teaching my sister, Dorothee, and me Chinese characters. This shows how readily Westerners were part of a network, a kind of bubble, in the Asia of the 1940s when the British Raj still held sway. SLB
visit some other Torgut Mongols as planned. I agreed to wait until Mackiernan had the truck packed.

I did not ask what Doug Mackiernan himself planned to do once the truck was packed and I had set off westward with it. He did not offer any information. The question did not come up. There was too much else to talk about before Doug showed me to a guest room and offered me a hot bath. Since then, reading the material sent me from the National Archives, it seems that he had been in touch with the National Geographic Society (although a request to prepare a piece was sent to Doug only by February 6, 1950). I am assuming that he was interested in revisiting parts of the Tarim Basin that had interested Sir Aurel Stein. He owned a fine Leica camera ($200 — which was quite a lot of money in those days) and was probably ready to go as soon as he had tied up loose ends at the consulate.

According to Tsering Shakya, in his study of Tibeto-Chinese relations, "The rapid Communist advances in China prompted Ambassador Henderson to write to the Secretary of State, on 2 July 1949, suggesting a reconsideration of the Tibet policy. He recommended sending an American mission to Lhasa, a proposal endorsed by the American Embassies in Nanjing and Moscow."

Could Doug have been the man designated for that mission? He could have combined researching an article for National Geographic at the same time as he headed south to establish a U.S. presence in Lhasa. Much later in Hawaii, Vasili told me that Doug had told him in Urumqi of plans to go to Tibet and that Vasili was to go with him. Shakya goes on to say that the mission never took place.

President Truman announced September 23, 1949, that the Soviets had tested an atomic bomb in Kazakhstan to the northwest of Urumqi. The bomb had been detonated on August 29th. A U2 spy plane collected samples of the nuclear cloud on September 3rd. Many feared that the Third World War was about to break out. Doug must have known. Maybe he told me. In the reports I later wrote in New Delhi for State Department I talk of World War III and how Tibetans can become our allies in that war. I wrote those reports after riding across Chinese Turkestan and Tibet, almost a full year later and, of course, after North Korean troops with Soviet and Chinese Communist backing had marched into South Korea — the United States decided to intervene, June 27, 1950. The Korean War had begun.

While Doug was getting the truck ready I looked around Urumqi. Urumqi was very different from the Chinese cities I had visited. Its buildings were adobe with flat roofs laid on top of poplar poles in the Middle Eastern manner, not the post and beam construction common in the Chinese areas to the east. There was at least one prominent mosque with minarets. It did not have the curving roofs of Chinese temples which mosques in places like Lanzhou and Xining further east have adopted. But even more surprising, the people did not look like East Asians. To me they looked like southern Mediterraneans, Greeks maybe, with large, round eyes, curly hair, prominent noses, and olive complexions. The men had long beards and wore turbans with their colorful kaftans of ikat patterned silks. Women wore scarves but left their faces uncovered. I found the post office and sent a postcard home to my folks back in California, which actually arrived there months later!

A few days later, September 26, 1949, while walking back to the Consulate I noticed that people were looking at me strangely. A group of street urchins ran by shouting in Mandarin, "Mei Guo Ren, Mei Guo Ren," ("American, American"), in an unfriendly manner. "Long Live Mao Zedong," they continued and pointed their thumbs down as they laughed at me. The Nationalist garrison of Urumqi had changed sides over night. Urumqi and all of Chinese Turkestan was now in the Communist camp.
At the Consulate I found Doug busy burning documents with the help of Vasili Zvanzov, a White Russian. Taking a break Doug sat me down and suddenly asked the beginning of my old CIA code, similar to a password. He casually said, “Oregon.” It took me a moment to realize what he was doing. Should I let it pass and not complete the code? How tight a spot were we in? I knew that if I completed the code to him he would assume that I was willing to cooperate with him and of course, I now knew that he was not simply a Vice Consul, but an undercover CIA agent. Was I still connected to the CIA? I believed I no longer was. I was not receiving pay from them. I did not have radio access which I expected was an essential accoutrement for a CIA agent, and I had not been asked to carry out a “mission.” I was just traveling that way to continue my studies. But, I had continued my friendship with old OSS comrades back in the Shanghai office and I had written Owen Lattimore of my plans. Someone had alerted Doug about my coming to Urumqi. After wondering if I should respond I finally said, “Dee.” I had made up this password because I had cousins living in a tiny place by that name up in Oregon. It had happy connotations for me and so I thought I would remember it. The password was not something I was asked every day.

There are essentially two different kinds of CIA personnel. The case officers are an elite corps entrusted with the most sensitive secrets of the U.S. government. They are carefully vetted to be first and foremost loyal to the United States government. They receive cover, like Doug, as vice consuls or other official diplomatic positions. The case officer then recruits agents or assets, to gather information or perform specific tasks. The CIA case officer is not like the old OSS officer who often navigated by the seat of his pants nor the romantic British officer traveling in disguise with fierce tribesmen helping to organize resistance fighters. He is part of the establishment. The agent he recruits performs a specific task. If Doug was recruiting me as an agent for the CIA, asking me to take on a mission, he should have outlined the task, the conditions of employment, and then asked me if I wanted to accept this job. Becoming a CIA agent is regular United States government employment, with payroll taxes and a pension, the whole bit. Even then it was not some elite, wildly romantic, lifelong vocation as some characterized the OSS during wartime. I now know that Doug had contacted the CIA and confirmed that I had worked for the organization and that he had received my password from them back in Washington (personal information from the CIA). My source says that this is the only message concerning me that they received from Doug. This I doubt.

Doug just asked, “Do you want to join Osman Bator (the great nomadic Kazakh leader of Chinese Turkestan) with me? Maybe we can be of assistance to him.” That was all, but enough for me. The impassioned rhetoric and despair of Prince De and his Mongols still rang in my ears. I expected Doug would explain more over time of how we could “be of assistance” to the Kazakhs.

The situation in Urumqi under Chinese Communists did not seem dangerous to me in itself. Although I remembered how well I had been received by the Commander of the Eighth Route of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), I doubted that the Chinese Communists with Soviets looking over their shoulder would allow me to continue my travels across Chinese Turkestan. In all likelihood, they would put me on the next plane back to Shanghai and suggest quite convincingly that I leave the country. I was not ready to terminate my travels just yet.

I did not know Doug’s situation. I felt that I needed to reassure him that I could be trusted, that I had not committed myself to the Communist camp. I had just been to see Rewi Ally, a man loudly proclaiming his support of the Chinese Communists. Doug might well have supposed that I, like many a fellow student in Beijing, was committed to assuring a Communist victory. I did not agree to join Doug because I was terrified, fearing what would happen to me. Quite the reverse.

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a When I got back to the States I asked Lattimore to send me back my letters. He was in the midst of being grilled by the House Un-American Activities and could not find them.
I thought it would be very interesting to spend time in a Kazakh encampment while trying to leverage a better deal for them with the Chinese Communists or help them escape to Tibet.

By 1949, I had become very suspicious of the Soviets, but I still believed the Chinese Communists were their own masters, not puppets of the Soviet Union. I had spent a lot of time discussing the pros and cons of Marxism/Communism with Chinese friends. I read Das Kapital in Beijing. I kept coming back to the fact that despite Marxism's concern for social welfare, declared with moral high-mindedness, there was also "the dictatorship of the proletariat" maintained by military force. Communists believed that it is morally alright to carry out reforms by coercion and violence if necessary. One of the basic assumptions of Marxism is that nurture can triumph over nature. It is the environment, the social conditions, which are the cause of human aggression and war. Thus, it follows that with, "to each according to his needs, from each according to his abilities," a new man — a thoroughly good and altruistic human being — can be created. Then the state will wither away. All mankind will achieve peace, justice and happiness. Such "faith-based" predictions align Marxist/Leninist/Maoism with other dangerous, fundamentalist millenarian cults.

The Soviet Union had borne the brunt of World War II's devastation. Millions of her citizens had been killed, displaced, left homeless. Lend Lease shipments by the United States through (Allied-) occupied Iran had allowed Soviet troops to defeat Nazi troops at Stalingrad (Volgograd), thereby not just preventing Nazi troops from reaching the oil fields around Baku on the Caspian Sea, but decisively crippling the Nazi war machine. We American GIs assumed that the Soviet Union must be utterly destitute and in disarray. We, together with many others, underestimated Stalin's drive and organizational ability to mobilize Soviet resources, utilize Nazi scientists, and reassemble dismantled German factories to pursue the "world liberation of the working classes."

The Mackiernan and Bessac Families

I assume that Mackiernan is a Scottish name. All the brothers have (I think several are still alive) good Scottish names: Douglas, Duncan, Malcolm, Stuart, Angus. According to Gup, Doug's father had run away from boarding school to become a sailor on a whaling ship to see the world. As a sailor on a doomed arctic expedition he had spent two years awaiting the arrival of a relief vessel under very trying conditions. After living in many places, the family settled down in Massachusetts on some wooded acres and ran a service station, "The Green Lantern." Doug was born in Mexico City in 1913.

My father, Henry "Harry" William Bessac, a sometime superintendent of schools in San Joaquin County, California, was a teacher and school principal into his seventies. As a high dignitary in the Order of Masons he worked closely with Earl Warren, later Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. He voted for Hoover in 1932, admired Teddy Roosevelt and John Dewey. In time, he voted for FDR. Out of what now seems wild romanticism — my father made a good living running his own business college — my father and mother (Helen "Nell" Stebbins California Hurd) packed up their belongings, put them on horse drawn wagons and headed north to Goose Lake to become homesteaders, Jefferson's ideal yeoman farmers. They planted an apple orchard, but the frost settled on the low-lying ground. They would have done better raising sheep. So they returned to Lodi, California, poorer and wiser.

As a school teacher my father had summers free to camp in the Sierra Nevada which he knew well. He had spent years of his youth exploring the Sierras. He knew John Muir. Each summer my parents packed up the old Buick, tied the grub box on the running board and loaded up children, cousins (Cont. on page 54)
of course under his guidance. I was unaware that with Mao’s victory over Chiang the Chinese Communists had turned to Stalin for guidance and had received massive aid. This was not because the United States had been unwilling to help, but ideology trumped realpolitik. For a few years there really did exist a Communist Bloc, armed with atomic weapons, working on a hydrogen bomb which Oppenheimer, the director of the laboratory at Los Alamos, New Mexico, feared to explore.

Conditions for many in East Asia were terrible — starvation, disease, boundless inflation, lawlessness. There had to be a better way to manage human affairs than what I saw around me. Until “the Anti-Rightist Campaign” in 1954, I, too, thought that Chinese Communists were at heart rural reformers, pushing through land reform which I thought was an excellent thing for Chinese farmers. In fact I knew little about the complex land ownership patterns that existed in different parts of that vast country. Some land, especially near the eastern seaboard, was owned by absentee landlords. Some land was owned by the patri-clan communally, but under an (at times) dictatorial clan leadership. As I discovered later on Taiwan, blood ties do not prevent cousins from renting land to poorer members of the surname group at extortionist rates. In the far southwest there were cases of serfdom reflecting conditions in Tibet itself, but for the most part serfdom had ended with the conquests of Qin Shi Huangdi in the third century BC I felt at the time that most “Chinese” like most “Americans” of the day saw themselves as free citizens. This was not a caste society like India, nor one dominated by hereditary class like much of Europe. There was abuse and exploitation by strong men. Many people were tenant farmers, trying to eke out a living on too-small a plot of land. But a form of serfdom was not reinstituted until the commune system established by the Chinese Communists in the twentieth century.

When the Chinese Communists defeated Chiang Kaishek and his Nationalist government in October, 1949, Mao Zedong declared the People’s Republic of China while standing on the “Gates of Heavenly Peace,” Tian An Men, in Beijing. Americans then found themselves suddenly rejected in the lands which for over a hundred years had been the destination of so many American missionaries. These missionaries, supported by their congregations back home, were dedicated to bringing salvation and Western know-how to the peoples of China. As one Inland Missionary lady described it to me in Taiwan in 1964, “In the terrible days of Communist ‘reform’ I was protected by a simple farm family who hid me as the Communists rounded up Westerners.” She went on to tell of corpses mounting higher and higher at the killing fields once she got to town. America’s efforts fighting the Japanese alongside Chinese during World War II were forgotten. Mission schools, hospitals, churches, and stations were now in the hands of the new, ruthless, fanatical, anti-religious state.

Doug was a U.S. government official who was known and watched by Soviet and Chinese Communist agents. How threatened did he personally feel by the sudden turn of events? How eager were the Communists, Soviet, Chinese, even Tibetan, to lay hands on him? Why had members of the CIA given him my password when they knew that as a Fulbright scholar I was not to be involved in U.S. government affairs? How did they justify entrapping me in Doug’s affairs when they knew the rules of the Fulbright program? Given the network of gossip among Westerners in Asia at the time, Doug may simply have heard of my coming from some one back in Shanghai or Shandan and not by the CIA back in Washington. There are telegrams back in CIA headquarters that might shed light on what and how Doug knew about me, but I have so far been unable to get a look at these.

Until I read Ted Gup’s The Book of Honor, in which he dedicates the first chapter to Douglas Mackiernan, I knew very little about Doug. He told me next to nothing about himself or what had kept him in Urumqi. I knew that he was Vice Consul, spoke Russian, and had connections to the CIA. Doug and I, with very different talents, came from families deriving originally from New
and friends to spend weeks trout-fishing up the Mekolumne. I hate to admit it: Dad did not fly fish, preferring the more reliable if less intellectually-satisfying salmon egg.

Dad was a very loving, gentle father. He did not believe in spanking or speaking harshly to a child. Once my mother left him to look after my brother, Arthur. Dad was delighted with how quiet and well-behaved Arthur was until my mother discovered that Arthur had taken scissors and cut out the padding in back of the chair my father was sitting in all the while reading a book. He never noticed. I once burned down an old shed, and then lied about it. He just looked at me and said, "If you say you did not do it, I will believe you." I am still ashamed. Growing up in a strict Methodist home, my father longed to ride his new bicycle on Sundays. That was not allowed. So we children were not overly burdened with church-going. I attended sometimes the Congregational, sometimes the Methodist Sunday school and church, but not often. When I did go my good shoes were always too tight.

I grew up in and around the rambling, two-story, green, clapboard farm house in the fertile sandy loam country of the Sacramento/San Joaquin Valley owned by my maternal grandparents (Charles Edwin Hurd and Emma California Kerr). The original two rooms had gradually been built onto until it became a fairly large house. Shaded by walnut trees, surrounded by roses with peaches and figs in the orchard and in spring blooming almond trees, there were no grape vines (this is excellent Tokay grape wine country). Grandmother had the grape vines that grew there pulled up and the land put into alfalfa when she moved there in the late 1800s. The land had belonged to her brother, Benjamin Kerr, a graphic artist.

Grandmother was born soon after her parents (Dr. William Reed and Frances Brown Kerr) set out from Pennsylvania to reach California in 1849. The family speculates that the purpose of the trip was to assure that California remained a Free State before the Civil War. Like her parents, Grandmother (we called her "Munner") was a Methodist, a prohibitionist (my grandfather remained a Congregationalist and allowed himself a drink now and then, especially in his old age), for civil rights, of course, and a great believer in public education. She studied to become a school teacher at the precursor of the College of the Pacific when it was still in Santa Clara.

Grandfather Hurd was a veteran of the Civil War. As a small boy I was allowed to walk alongside my grandfather, dressed in his hot, woolen, blue Union Army uniform, at the head of the Memorial Day Parade through downtown Stockton or along Lodi Avenue in Lodi. My grandfather was a veteran of the Maine Volunteers, a part of the Union Army that turned the tide at the Battle of Gettysburg. I loved to listen to him tell of battles where it was his job to bring water to the soldiers as the guns roared. He was only sixteen, too young to be allowed to fight himself. Others in the family say he caught pneumonia and became a medic.

My mother and her siblings, all eight of them, inherited the place we knew as "Rosewild." Mother lived in the house until she passed away at the age of one hundred and three. She was the ideal, lovable matriarch. As Dad said when he lay dying, "Your mother is so beautiful because she is so good." As long as she lived the old house was the center of family, aunts, uncles, cousins. For Christmas and Thanksgiving it was not unusual for twenty-six people or more to sit around the dining room table eating prodigious amounts of homegrown turkey. My border collie and all her pups slept next to me under the walnut tree in summer. And there were cats, also a horse or two, my cow and another that I milked when my brother, Arthur, developed a convenient allergy, and sheep in the back (Cont. on page 56)
England. I met his parents later back in the U.S. It was a difficult time for them. I did not want to intrude with too many questions. After that I lost touch with all the members of the Mackiernan family. After so many years I do not now feel comfortable with reestablishing contact. We should have resolved questions back in 1950 when I returned to the States.

Although ancestry was not much talked about in my family, some of the expectations of how to behave did percolate down to my generation. It was not so much a sense of entitlement, as a deep feeling that I did not have to apologize to anyone for being me. Later, especially after Pearl Harbor, I did think of myself as something of a knight, making the world safe for freedom and democracy, as I am sure did many other American soldiers.

I wonder to what extent Doug Mackiernan was inspired by such idealism, or if by the time I met him, a grimmer realism had taken over. I was certain at the time that he shared my belief in the right of self-determination especially for the peoples living on the borders of Zhongguo — the Mongols, Turkish speakers (sedentary and nomadic), and Tibetans. But just how he saw matters I do not know. Doug was not given to talking about what he thought, nor was I given to asking. To get a sense of his taciturn nature it is only necessary to look at his extremely terse log entries from our travels together. These, I have been assured, are not what is left after a thorough scrubbing by the CIA, but the way he really wrote them. Was he a ruthless, arrogant CIA operative in the manner of Kermit Roosevelt who ousted the popular prime minister, Mossadegh, and helped reinstate the Shah as an absolute monarch in Iran (1953)? More likely, he was working with the CIA because of his knowledge of physics and his technical competence.

Here is what retired U.S. ambassador Edwin W. Martin had to say about his ...

"... vivid memories of the 2,400 mile overland trip I took with [Douglas Mackiernan] in the spring of 1947 from Nanking to Urumchi. Mac had just joined the Foreign Service and was on his way to his first (and unhappily, his last) post. Why overland? Because we had an Army 6'x 6' truck, a one-ton trailer, a well-used jeep, and more than four tons of miscellaneous supplies to deliver to our consulate in Tihwa. Mac drove the truck with trailer attached while I preceded him in the jeep to scout the road. As far as I know, we are the only Americans to have personally driven vehicles every foot of the way from Xian to Urumchi. Thanks to Mac's resourcefulness, we came through in good shape." "

Douglas Mackiernan was the oldest of five brothers, I am the youngest of three brothers with one younger sister: Marion, ten years older; Arthur, six years my senior — a tall blond of striking good looks, a bit of a Scott Fitzgerald hero, who died in a freak accident when hiking in the Sierra Nevada when I was fifteen; and Virginia, three and one half years younger than I. (Ginny is also a striking natural blond with brown eyes.) Doug attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for a while, where he showed a keen interest in physics. He was impatient, flunked out and would not take the necessary remedial courses, preferring to work in a hands-on style in the physics labs of that university. He did research on the nature of storms. In the military as an Army Air Corps officer in Alaska and in the western reaches of China including Urumqi, he specialized in meteorology. By the end of his military career he had reached the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Air Force National Reserves. I never became more than a tech sergeant, but then I was in the OSS where rank was downplayed. Doug was not in the OSS. There was a difference. Appointed a consular clerk in Nanjing in May 1947, he became Vice Consul in Urumqi in May 1948.

After President Truman announced on September 23, 1949 that the Soviets had tested an atomic bomb at Semipalatinsk, northern Kazakhstan, it seems probable that Doug had been keeping an eye on Soviet atomic activity, especially on the uranium mines in the vicinity of Urumqi. He may have enlisted the help of the great Kazakh leader, Osman Bator, and his nomadic Kazakhs to assist him in this. Osman Bator at this time made an about-face, abandoned previous alliances, and joined the
pasture. Inside the house were lots of books. My paternal grandfather, Henry William Bessac, was
a newspaper publisher. My paternal grandmother, Virginia Bagnall Bessac, had attended a finishing
school attached to the University of Chicago.

On my mother's side, her grandfather Kerr, some six feet four inches tall, came from a Scot\'ish
shipbuilding family in Glasgow, but he grew up in the States and received his medical education
at William and Mary College. He met my great grandmother in Philadelphia. Her family were of
Huguenot descent taken in by Plain Folk, Amish, in Maytown, Pennsylvania. There are many Hurs
in New Hampshire and Maine; probably all of them are relatives. I think they trace descent from the
"strangers" not the "saints" on the passenger list of the Mayflower, or at least some do as by now
descent lines have become hopelessly mixed.

In my family exploring ancestry was not encouraged. "Who wants to nose around the past? You'll
just find a horse thief soon enough," my father warned. But I doubt that that was the reason he
discouraged us from tracing our family's past. There was principle involved. In my parent's strict sense
of democratic rectitude descent was not supposed to be destiny. That was the "American Dream." Anybody
could come to these shores and begin over unfettered by the past. Boasting about ancestors
and implied class superiority was definitely not acceptable. Nor, of course, was the East Asian belief
that the shades of ancestors influence the affairs of the living.

Times have changed. Ethnic identity is quite the thing these days, especially for an anthropologist
and for an anthropologist armed with David Hackett Fischer's wonderful study of British folkways
brought to America by the immigrants from old Albion. With George W. Bush in the White House
there is even unabashed talk these days of ancestral legacy and dynasty!

The first Bessac in America, Jean Guilliaume Bessac, a French nobleman from the Dordogne area
(there is still a cave painted by Paleolithic hunters in the area that belongs to a Bessac), had come to
fight and trade during the Revolutionary War. The family had intended him for the priesthood, but he
avoided this by becoming a royal guard at the court of the King of Spain. After fighting a successful
duel it was best he leave. Joining his brother in trade he later became a surgeon on a privateer running
the British blockade. After the Revolutionary War he acquired land in the Hudson Valley, New York, and
married blond, blue-eyed Protestant Anah Nichols, great-granddaughter of Thomas Wells, first governor
of Connecticut (1662). His family in France found her being a Protestant went too far. After his
mother died Jean Guilliaume lost contact with his family in France.

My dark complexion does not come from Jean Guilliaume Bessac. On an old picture he has light
eyes. I look more like my grandfather Bessac's mother, Amanda Mosier, with her large, brown eyes. Her
ancestry is somewhat obscure. Little is known of her grandfather. Some in the family have speculated
that she was part Native American. Or could there have been some Gypsy connection? This could
explain my wide-angle juvenile (onset in early twenties) glaucoma which was apparently a mutation
among Gypsies of the Balkan region. I do not know of other cases of juvenile glaucoma in the family.
Maybe my case is a spontaneous mutation. At any rate, it is rare.

My father, as I pointed out, was little interested in all this and so it was not until the other
day when my son, Bret, informed me that several of our ancestors on the distaff side were direct
Maybe my father, who was well-read, accepted Shakespeare's Tudor-biased view of Richard III, begging
"a kingdom for a horse" on Bosworth Field. The Plantagenets lost the crown. The Tudors, though
related to the royal clan, but of lesser branch, usurped the throne and quite probably spread unkind
propaganda about the Plantagenets. The true Puritans came to these shores with the assistance of the
Duchess of Lincoln during the eleven years, 1629-1640, when Charles I (a Catholic) was on the throne
of England. He was executed when Oliver Cromwell was in power.
Chinese Nationalists. The White Russians were also involved in these activities. Vasili told me of helping Doug bury detection devices in the Urumqi countryside. Those must have been part of the heavy cargo Doug and Ambassador Martin drove to Urumqi. By the time I met him, Mackieman was a professional CIA case officer using his position as Vice Consul as cover.

What Doug thought of me remained a mystery to me for the extent of our travels together. We were mostly wary of each other and kept our distance from each other. He clearly expected to be in command, a role that he believed came naturally to him. From the little I know from his brothers, he felt this way toward them as well. He was organized, resourceful and knowledgeable. He could be fun, telling jokes and singing as he rode, and at other times withdrawn and forbidding. One thing he was definitely not was self-indulgent. He did not get drunk, moan about his health or shirk his part of the duties. Had he been ordered to take me with him, or did he feel he had an obligation to make sure I came to no harm as a U.S. citizen? Was asking me to take the truck out over the Gilgit Pass for him a delaying tactic, a ruse?

I am torn between thinking he wanted a companion on his travels and thinking that he was ordered to ask me along. Vasili and the two other White Russians, Stephan and Leofka, considered themselves servants, not partners. This, at any rate, is what Vasili told me. They thought I was another U.S. secret agent. As he makes clear in his book about Prince De, even my friend Jagchid, the Mongol aide-de-camp of Prince De, believed that I was still in the CIA when in Dingyuanying. He could not conceive that I was a U.S. government agent one day and then walked away from it the next. It was difficult for others to believe this as well, among them the Communist authorities. But I knew I no longer was an employee of the United States government in any capacity.

I have tried to find out from the CIA what was going on at the time. I received a phone call, letters, later also emails from Nicholas Dujmovic, a historian associated with the CIA who says that he has been researching Doug’s relationship with Osman Bator. More recently he implied that he actually cannot find some relevant documents himself. As Thomas Laird’s major source for his book, Into Tibet, Dujmovic believes that Mackieman was assuring that Osman Bator and his Kazakhs would provide the first line of defense should the Third World War break out. In my experience, the United States had not played the “Great Game” in Central Asia and the Middle East during the Second World War. The British certainly had tried to recruit the assistance of some nomadic tribes in Iran during World War II and so had the Germans.

I have not received any of the telegrams that passed to and from Mackieman and the U.S. government. As mentioned, I now have a rewrite, not a facsimile, of the log Mackieman and, later, I kept. As I remember it, this log was a regular diary, about nine inches by six, not as large as a standard school notebook. Kenneth Knaus indicates that he saw the log in possession of the British Foreign office, FO371/84450. The copy the British sent to me is the same rewrite I received from the National Archives. I am unclear just what happened to the original log when I got to India. It was a mess after what it had been through. I may have sent it on with Doug’s things. The British were more interested in my trip when I was back in New Delhi than the people at the American Embassy were. The British even suggested that I visit Oxford and Cambridge and lecture on my experiences.

After so many years it should be easy through the Freedom of Information Act and a perusal of the National Archives to lay hands on pertinent documents. It has not been, but the situation is changing. With the help of both Montana Senators, Baucus and Burns, I have been receiving documents I requested. The reason for some of that secrecy may itself have shifted. I recently read:

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\textsuperscript{a} The National Archives has guaranteed that it has not been censored or doctored.
“In August, 2002, the Bush Administration added a Uighur group, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, to a terrorism watch list that subjected it to financial controls ... a favor to China, which is waging a vigorous campaign to quash Uighur independence movements in Xinjiang.”

One of the prisoners kept at Guantanamo is a Uighur captured in Afghanistan (NPR radio program).

These “terrorists” could be remnants of Turkish speakers and White Russians who worked with Mackiernan. If this is true, Dujmovic’s research work for the CIA on Doug and Osman Bator may continue to be unavailable. There is ongoing turmoil in Chinese Turkestan. Vasili Zvanzov told me recently that the story of his earlier life that a relative had planned to write up was by now too dangerous to touch. The present government of the PRC is terrified of losing control.

**Osman Bator, Kazakh Leader**

Doug and I returned to burning documents and were determined to leave early the next morning, September 28, 1949. Other matters were turned over to the British Consul, Fox-Holm, who did not leave Urumqi for another year. The British, unlike the U.S., did not break, or were not forced to break, diplomatic relations with the Chinese Communists until later. U.S. Ambassador Leighton Stuart tried desperately to establish contacts with the new government, but was rebuffed.

The three White Russians — Vasili Zvanzov, Stephan Yanuishkin, and Leonid Shutov — who all spoke fluent Kazakh and some Mandarin Chinese besides Russian, planned to lower themselves over the formidable city wall that same night. They did not wish to be asked for papers. All three had escaped from Soviet-controlled areas after terrible experiences. Leofka, the youngest of us, barely twenty, was the only survivor of his family after a massacre in the Ili Valley. I never heard Stephan’s story, nor could Vasili enlighten me when I asked him years later. Stephan was about forty years old and spoke fluent Mandarin. Vasili said that he recruited them hurriedly from among the White Russian community of Urumqi when Doug decided to join the Kazakhs. This is a bit disingenuous. Stephan had been Vice Consul Dreesen’s assistant at the Consulate while Leonid had worked in the garage under the official Consulate Chauffeur, Erwin Konetschney. (Erwin’s father had died in a Xinjiang prison when the authorities were cooperating with the Soviets, and Erwin’s German wife and children had left Urumqi with the Hall Paxtons.) Is Erwin the same chauffeur who supposedly drove Owen Lattimore to Communist headquarters in Yen’an, a trip Owen Lattimore was accused of lying about to the House Un-American Activities Committee? Maybe it was Leofka who met me at the airport.

Vasili Zvanzov’s family had been declared kulaks (rich, exploiting peasants) by the Soviets and turned out into the snow of a Siberian winter to survive as best they might. He told me how he grew up near Lake Zajsan playing with Kazakh children. They made their own skis from wood, then stretched freshly butchered hides over them, and let them dry, in order to create “furs” to give the skis traction going up hill. His father had come to Siberia as a fur trader, but remained to farm with Kazakh labor. He was an “Old Believer” — those who refused to accept Peter the Great’s changes in the traditional Greek Orthodox liturgy. They became permanent dissidents and made few concessions to the thoughts of the larger community and to ideas coming from the West. Vasili’s father built a grand loghouse on the banks of the lake which Vasili says is still standing although he has not seen it again. Vasili, a year younger than I, is a man of many skills. He was drawn into the fighting in Kazakhstan at an early age, left to join his father in Chinese Turkestan, and got entangled in more fighting. One of his brothers remained behind, joined the Communist Party and became a commissar. A sister lives in the Baltic States. Both have since moved to Belarus, the last Stalinist hold out. At one time Vasili was a gold miner, a balalaika player.
in a Cossack band, a watch-maker, a carpenter, and always a great fisherman. There were times when he helped his mother keep the family alive with the fish he caught. Now he likes to stand on the rocks off Kona, Hawaii with his fishing pole. He gives his catch to Hawaiian youngsters living near his house.

Doug spoke Russian and I communicated with Mandarin, especially with Stephan. Although Doug had spent many of the past six years in China, mostly in Turkestan, I do not remember him speaking Mandarin. This is not surprising as in Turkestan Turkish was the language of daily use. But this meant that our little group could not speak to each other as a group. When Doug and I spoke English the others could not understand us. I could not understand what Doug said to the other three in Russian nor what they then interpreted for Doug from Kazakh using Russian. None of us spoke Tibetan. It made for a strange expedition as we headed out to join the Kazakhs.

As I said earlier, Vasili told me in 1997 that Doug told him in Urumqi that our real plan was to go to Tibet, although Doug told me nothing about this until we left Osman Bator on the shores of Lake Barkol. But how to define Tibet? After all, present Qinghai province (named for Lake Kokonor, a Mongolian name for the big, blue lake) is called Amdo by Tibetans and is the birthplace of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. (The Dalai Lama was discovered in a house with strangely-shaped wooden roof drains, born to a family that “spoke Chinese as a first language”; by the hastily-appointed young Reting Regent after the previous regent suddenly died.) Just what is meant by “Chinese” in this case is not clear either. Tibetan is after all a Sino-Tibetan language spoken in many dialects. Xi Kang, the Khampa border area, also known as Kham, is now a part of Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, but for many of the Tibetan speaking inhabitants it is part of “Greater Tibet.” When he talked to Vasili was Doug thinking of Lhasa or simply of areas inhabited by Tibetan speakers?

Brooke Dolan was an explorer and naturalist who had studied pandas, birds and apparently anything he could shoot and stuff under the auspices of the Philadelphia Natural History Museum. Independently wealthy he already showed signs of alcoholism when he asked a very young Ernst Schaefer to become his partner on two expeditions in the Tashilupec/Amni Machen area of west China. He took his own life on August 19, 1945. I heard rumors of this at the time.

As for Ernst Schaefer, he went on to bigger things. He joined the SS and enlisted the help of Heinrich Himmler for his own expedition to Lhasa accompanied by other members of the dread Nazi elite corps including the physical anthropologist, Bruno Beger. Their mission was two-fold: to search for physical traces of the “Aryan Master Race” among the peoples of Tibet using anthropological measurements. DNA had not yet been discovered. He also tried to initiate a spy organization for Nazi Germany with the mission of destabilizing the British Raj in India. He ingratiated himself with the Reting Regent who remained the de facto power in the Tibetan government during the minority of the Dalai Lama. He may have promised to supply arms to the regent. Restless, modernizing Tibetans, including the young regent, found the British unhelpful. They waffled, favoring Tibetan independence one day, Guomindang interests the next. In India independence movements were growing. To Schaefer there appeared to be rich possibilities for pro-Nazi infiltration especially as the war became more of a reality in the summer of 1939. Later, back in Germany as Himmler’s protégé, Schaefer became implicated in horrendous war crimes in Dachau, Auschwitz, Sachsenhausen concentration camps, and so maybe was Bruno Beger.

Ilya Tolstoy (grandson of Leo Tolstoy, author of War and Peace) and Brooke Dolan III, another odd couple of men, had been sent on a mission to Lhasa in 1942-43 under the auspices of the OSS. Their trip took them from Sikkim to Lhasa and then, more or less clandestinely, over the 16,400 ft.
Tsangne La Pass, northeastward across the Yangzi River and the Yellow River to the shores of Lake Kokonor and thus to Lanzhou in Gansu. Part of their mission was to persuade Tibetan rulers to allow war material to cross Tibet to be given to the beleaguered Chinese Nationalist government in Chongqing because the Burma Road was controlled by the Japanese. The Nationalist government meanwhile was claiming that Lhasa had become a hotbed of Japanese spies. Chiang wanted to use some of his troops to "liberate" Tibet right then and there.

The Tibetan government was adamantly opposed to allowing their land to be used for furthering the Chinese war effort. No Japanese spies were apparent to Tolstoy and Dolan in Lhasa — which does not mean that there were none. The Japanese government had sent Jinzo Nomoto, disguised as a Mongolian monk, to cross Tibet. It is likely that there were also some German spies. The Tolstoy/Dolan expedition did not accomplish its main task of opening another route for supplies to reach Chiang Kaishek, but Tolstoy and Dolan took good black and white photographs. They had timed their trip carefully so as to witness the elaborate New Year celebrations in Lhasa.

Later, in 1945, Tolstoy was sent to western China to investigate uranium mines. He may have met Doug then. Doug knew of the earlier expedition. It was widely discussed in U.S. military circles. I knew about it. Did Doug wish to complete Tolstoy and Dolan's exploration? Doug might have hoped that I would be a Brooke Dolan to his Tolstoy. Dolan spoke some Tibetan. I spoke Mandarin and some Mongolian.

We drove the jeep through the towering north city gate of Urumqi with the United States flag fluttering on the masthead. We headed some miles out of town to meet the three White Russians and then rendezvous with Kazakhs from Osman Bator's camp. As we waited I climbed a tall cottonwood tree that grew near a small stream. To the north the land sloped in grassy swells towards the Jungarian Depression. The grass had already turned brown. It was late September. Behind me rose the peaks of the Bogdo Ula. I looked up and up. The mountains rose some 20,000 ft. directly above me, and above the clouds. As I gazed up at these immense mountains it hit me that by accepting Douglas Mackiernan's invitation to join the great nomadic Kazakh leader, Osman Bator, the Communist Chinese would view this as a hostile act. So far, I had always been on the right side of the government in power. With a shiver I remembered the bullets whistling past my ears on my first mission into the Ji-zhong in 1946 to investigate ceasefire transgressions. I had no ideological axe to grind. I was not a Marxist nor was I impressed with the Chinese Nationalists. I was certainly not at the time an ardent anti-communist, just skeptical. All of East Asia was seething with change, with desire for more responsible and just government, for an end to old-fashioned hereditary leadership, and fired by nationalism and materialism.

As I looked out from my perch in the cottonwood tree I saw the dust cloud stirred up by the approaching horsemen. The horsemen, a contingent of White Russian soldiers, some who had fled the Soviet Union recently, others who had drifted eastward much earlier to escape the Tsars, had joined Osman Bator and his nomadic followers. We abandoned the jeep. We took rocks and smashed the glass, knocked out the lights, trying to make it look as though we had been ambushed. Then we swung into the saddle.

That night after we had joined the horsemen on the way to meeting Osman Bator I took my turn to stand guard duty. One of the Russians noticed how tense I was. Glaucoma makes one night-blind, hardly an advantage for a night watchman. He came over to reassure me. I spoke no Russian; he spoke no Chinese or other language I could understand, so he gentled me as one would a horse, just saying "brr, brr."

The next day we caught up with Osman Bator and the main group of nomads as they traveled eastward, herding their animals across the foothills and steppe north of the Bogdo Ula. The land looked much like eastern Montana along the Rocky Mountain Front: endless grasslands with here
and there a clear stream, bordered by willows and poplars, flowing down from the snowy peaks above. As this was the northern side of the mountains there were conifer forests higher up the slope, but not where we rode among the flocks. When we reached the resting place for the night we were welcomed by Osman Bator and introduced to all so they would know that we were there under his personal protection.

We were then assigned a place within the circle reserved for Osman Bator and his wives and children and the religious leader trained at the Muslim madrasse, “religious school,” in Kazan, who provided Osman counsel. Next morning the temporary tents (made from the roof felts of the yurts) were packed up and the migration continued. Each evening we returned to Osman’s hearth. This gave me a ringside view of the great leader’s affairs. I observed who came to see him, what happened in his domestic life, and I got a sense of his troubles. His several wives were not in accord about how to proceed and expressed their thoughts forcefully. His first wife, Kaini, could read and write while he probably could not. She was often busy with her sewing machine (one of those Singer sewing machines where you crank the wheel with your right hand as the left guides the cloth). Other women were busy with embroidery, spinning wool and knotting rugs. Osman valued Kaini’s counsel. Another wife, after letting all know what she thought, left the camp in anger with her supporters and relatives.

The nomadic Kazakhs we were with were in a difficult position. Since the Bolshevik Revolution many nomadic Kazakhs living in the USSR (in the now-independent state of Kazakhstan) had migrated to East Turkestan where conditions seemed less oppressive. Here they found themselves enmeshed in the intrigues between Soviet Russians, Chinese Nationalists, pan-Turkish nationalists, Chinese warlords and ultimately Chinese Communists. The short-lived Second East Turkestan Republic (ETR) had begun as an Islamic state in 1944 based in the Ili Valley, headed by Uighurs (Turkish speaking oasis dwellers) and Kazakhs, both settled and nomadic. Osman Bator had been a member of the ETR and had been assigned the governorship of the Ashan district near his group’s traditional grazing lands in the Altai. Due to growing influence from Soviet agents, Osman soon felt threatened. He broke with the ETR and allied his group with the Chinese Nationalists. The leaders of the ETR, Turkish speakers and Moslems, were not comfortable with any Chinese governments. The Kazakhs at Timurlik told me later on that a plane had been sent by the leaders of the victorious Communist Chinese inviting the leaders of the ETR to a conference in Beijing. The plane supposedly crashed en route and all aboard were killed. The Kazakhs did not believe this story. Some claimed that the plane had not crashed at all, but that they had seen it safely return to Urumqi. What became of the ETR leaders?

Osman Bator was a Kerey Kazakh of the Molqi lineage. This means that his family belonged to the Middle Horde. By the 17th century, the Middle Horde nomadized from the Aral Sea to Omsk in the north, the Altai Mountains in the east, and the Syr Darya, “Father of Waters,” to the south.
**Indo-European Speakers in Inner Asia**

The explorer Sir Aurel Stein found manuscripts written in an unknown Tokharian language at Dunhuang. Tokharian languages branched off from Indo-European somewhat before the Germanic languages. One group of Tokharian speakers (Yue-zhi in Chinese) were chased out of what is now Xinjiang and later, became the rulers of the Kushana dynasty in the Indian Subcontinent.

The recent documentary on Public Broadcasting (PBS): “Secrets of the Dead: Amazon Warrior Women,” attempts to prove through DNA analysis that a woman shaman/warrior buried in a kurgan near the Black Sea dating some 2,500 years ago is the direct ancestress of some Kazakhs today. Himmler and fellow Nazis would have loved to have known this. The skeleton was probably a Scythian or Saka, the Indo-European speakers described by the Greek geographer and traveler, Herodotus. They farmed and grazed their animals across the steppes from the Black Sea to the Altai Mountains. The Kazakhs I knew showed genetic mixing, Caucasian and Mongoloid. Though also Sunni Muslims and speaking mutually understandable Turkish dialects, they did not look like the oasis dwellers of Urumqi, the Uighurs.

People of Mongoloid physical appearance apparently derive from the taiga region of north eastern Siberia and moved south and west from there. In the taiga their ancestors became reindeer herders. It was reindeer herders who developed the art of riding animals which they then transferred to horseback riding. They intermarried with the farmers and herders whom they found on the grasslands.

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Sir Aurel Stein, a Hungarian, later a British citizen, explored the ancient settlements along the Silk Road now buried in sand. He discovered texts written in Kharoshthi script of northern India. He was instrumental in identifying Tokharian, a now-extinct Indo-European language close to Celtic languages, spoken by early Buddhists in Afghanistan and Central Asia. He continued his research into the lost cities along the Silk Road, dying in Afghanistan during the war, 1943, at the U.S. legation in Kabul under Callista Old’s care, as she told us when she visited years later in Missoula. Callista Olds had been my teacher in Community School in Tehran, Iran, but she then went to Kabul to tutor the daughter of the U.S. Charge d’Affair, Cornelius Engert, before he became director of UNRRA (United Nations Refugee Relief Agency). Judging by the list of books Douglas MacKierman left behind in Urumqi, he was especially interested in Sir Aurel Stein’s explorations. SLB

The Kerey, the oldest of the constituent groups, was associated with the Naiman and the Kipchak. Osman was of medium height with a thoughtful and caring face. He and the nomads who traveled with him had slant eyes. Their hair and that of the women was generally covered so I do not really know how black their hair was. I remember it as generally straight, not curly as the beards of the men in the Urumqi bazaar.

As I rode among the Kazakhs I thought of them as “Bronze Age” warriors of whom Homer sang, the heroes of the Iliad and Odyssey who lived 3,500 years ago. Osman Bator was a military leader who held his followers together by the power of his personality, his skill, and very importantly, his success — not his illustrious ancestry. Prince De, the Mongol leader I last saw in Dingyuyaning, was a hereditary ruler as were some Kazakhs who also recognized their descent from Genghiz Khan. The title Bator (or Batir) was reserved for a self-made leader.

Along with the White Russian troops there were contingents of other Kazakh groups traveling with Osman Bator, as well as Naiman, Turkish-speaking Mongols who generally nomadized well to the east near the shores of the Aral Sea. The different groups set themselves apart by the shape and color of the hats the men wore. The Naiman wore stocking hats or Phrygian hats, resembling those of the Jacobins in the French Revolution. Osman had called his allies together at Lake Barkol to counsel.

We rode with the Kazakhs slowly to allow the huge flocks, mostly of sheep, to graze as we moved along. I spent my time riding among the young men, who challenged me to compete with them, but I knew better. My riding skills were no match to theirs. Racing their horses they swung down almost under their mount’s belly, grabbed a rock or tuft of grass, righted themselves and kept on racing. For meals we were the guests of Osman Bator or
some other Kazakhs. The food was mutton and bread. All sorts of additional ingredients could be bought from sedentary Turks (Uighurs) and Tajiks (all Muslims were also known as Sarts) in nearby oases. Kazakhs could easily ride over to a village, hear the latest news, and return to camp.

Osman was leading his followers eastward to winter quarters north of Hami. This was unusual. These Kazakhs had traditionally nomadized in the Altai Mountains and practiced “transhumance,” moving up or down the slope in winter and summer for pasture. Like Mongols the Kazakhs considered the pasture common property. Livestock was owned by individual families. Osman was leading his followers to find new lands where they could graze their flocks untrammelled by the state and its regulations.

Progress was slow. After a few weeks we arrived at Barkol, a lake across the mountains north of the city of Hami. It began to snow heavily. The nomads put up their yurts and prepared for the winter. I and the three Russians became uneasy. What did Mackiernan hope to accomplish by remaining with Osman Bator? Wasn’t our very presence endangering him and his Kazakh allies? When Mackiernan had asked me to join the Kazakhs with him he said something about helping them. When I brought this up again he said despairingly that all they were asking from him were weapons and he did not have the means to get weapons to them. Osman had allied himself to the Chinese Nationalists, maybe at Doug’s urging. Osman’s son fled with Chiang Kaishek in 1949 to become a delegate to the symbolic all-China legislature in Taiwan. Osman, originally allied with the leaders of the Ili Rebellion and the East Turkestan Republic, had distanced himself from them because of growing Soviet influence. He was on compromised terms with the Mongolian People’s Republic (MPR) after fighting had broken out in June, 1947, at Beidaishan where Doug Mackiernan may have been present. Of course, Chinese Communists knew where we were.

We stayed on at Osman’s encampment. The snow continued to fall. Doug turned to me, “Frank, now here is your chance to study Mongols and Mongolian. Just go to the Mongolian People’s Republic with some of the Kazakhs, and I’ll continue on with my plans on my own!”

There was much talk of the Kazakhs finding asylum in the MPR, then strongly under Soviet influence, but still an independent nation. Osman may have been on uneasy terms with the MPR, but when we were with him the possibility of escape to Outer Mongolia was widely discussed. Outer Mongolia held few attractions for me. I remembered uncomfortably the Soviet tanks I had seen in Manchuria, close to the Mongolian border. They had not left. If anything, more had moved in, threatening stability in the Korean Peninsula. I feared the Soviets and refused to take Doug up on this offer.

I kept asking Doug, “Why are we staying? We are not helping Osman Bator.” He just shook his head, “All Osman wants are guns and I do not know how to get any for him.” Did Doug plan to remain with Osman, at his side come what may? I became more insistent. We did not have an open fight, but bad blood was seething, barely under control. Finally, sneeringly calling me and the three Russians, “Cowards, afraid of a bit of snow,” Doug agreed to ask Osman Bator for mounts and guides to help us travel south to Timurlik above a lake the Mongols call Gazkol (Ghaz Kol, that the Chinese call Geze Hu, “Goose Lake”), and ultimately out of Chinese controlled areas into Tibet. It was now the end of October, 1949.

I still think that Doug had become closely identified on a personal level, not simply to carry out official United States’ policy objectives, with Osman Bator. According to an article in a German paper, Freies Volk, published in Düsseldorf, February 1950, three of the White Russian guards traveling with Osman Bator had later been caught by the Chinese Communists. The paper said, “Douglas Mackiernan disappeared suddenly on September 28th last year when the Kuomintang forces in Sinkiang revolted against the Kuomintang government. He traveled secretly to the Sichensi (sic) district of eastern Sinkiang, which is known to be a hiding place of robber gangs.
Mackiernan exhorted the leaders of the gangs to resist the People's Government in Sinkiang Province. After he gave them a very large sum of money, he traveled to India. What makes this article interesting is that it was kept in the National Archives and only recently released to me.

As stated, Nicholas Dujmovic believes Doug was trying to enlist the Kazakhs as first line of defense for the next World War. The more I think about this, the more I think Doug was purchasing protection and assistance from Osman Bator rather than recruiting him. When we left Urumqi to join the Kazakhs this may have been the most ready escape for Doug. He knew that the route via Kashgar and the Gilgit Pass was too dangerous. To travel as Hall Paxton and his party had traveled was now too exposed without the protection of a group of fighters. This changes the equation of who was helping whom. It may not have been Mackiernan leveraging affairs for the Kazakhs with the CCP, but the Kazakhs helping Mackiernan hide and escape.

Doug was close to some of the Russian refugee factions that were massing in Chinese Turkestan. Whom did the troops traveling with Osman Bator fear most, the Soviets or the Chinese Communists, or both equally? With his knowledge of Russian, Doug may have believed that he could explain the situation to the Mongolian Communists guiding affairs in Outer Mongolia. For many years subsequently the leaders of the MPR managed to thrive pitting the Soviets against the Chinese Communists, receiving aid from both.

Douglas Mackiernan may have wanted to stay only until spring when Osman could lead his people and their flocks to Timurlik and escape to Tibet himself with his immediate family. This is, in fact, what Osman later tried and failed to do. By the time I insisted that we leave, it had become quite clear that we held no bargaining chips (other than gold) that would benefit the Kazakhs in negotiations with the Communists, Chinese or Soviet. Doug could not arrange an airlift to spirit Osman out of Xinjiang. Osman may not have wished to cut and run leaving his supporters and family behind.

Linda Benson (student of Owen Lattimore at Leeds University in Britain where he taught after retiring from Johns Hopkins) discussed Osman Bator with Kazakhs who had found a new home in Istanbul, Turkey. She presents Osman Bator as a sort of Robin Hood, a social bandit, a haiduk, stealing from the rich to give to the poor. When I met Osman he was an acclaimed leader instead of being a hereditary leader, who hoped to achieve autonomy for Kazakhs and other Turkish speakers in Chinese Turkestan, and to safeguard their grazing lands from both Soviet and Chinese settlement. He probably wished he could emulate someone like Timurlane, son of a minister of Chagatai, the son of Genghiz Khan, who through intelligence and ruthlessness was able to establish a new empire from Samarkand to the Mediterranean Sea in the 14th -15th centuries. He may have looked to Yakub Beg who had tried to establish a state in Chinese Turkestan in the nineteenth century, but thinking himself another Robin Hood seems unlikely.

Hmong Airlift

Even for General Vang Pao this became a ticklish problem in Laos, 1975. Vang Pao who lived up the Bitterroot Valley from us in the late Seventies and early Eighties, had led Hmong fighters in Laos, protecting U.S. pilots shot down by North Vietnam and guarding radio installations. At the end of the war when U.S. forces left Vietnam, they abandoned the Hmong, leaving the fighters and their families vulnerable to Communist reprisals. Toby Lyfong, the secular leader, died in "re-education camp." Unlike Doug, who apparently was backed up by no U.S. forces in neighboring countries, Jerry Daniels and other members of special forces were able to organize an airlift which flew General Vang Pao and many of his troops out of Long Cheng, his wartime capital in Laos, to safety in Thailand and later to the U.S. Jerry Daniels, a local Missoula boy, organized this airlift mostly without waiting for orders from higher-ups."
The role of social bandit fits better into the self-delusion of Mao Zedong. Mao, among other analogies, suggested that he and his movement recalled the popular novel, Tales of the Water Margirls (Shui-hu-chuan), or All Men Are Brothers, written down during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1662) by several authors (and translated into English by Pearl Buck). The stories are about Sung Jiang, literati, and his band of thirty-six "merry men" during the Northern Sung period (1022-1126 AD). Mao, I believe, had the ending of this classic Chinese novel rewritten to show that Sung Jiang finally became emperor of a newly-united Zhongguo. Osman Bator was no Sung Jiang. I think Osman Bator might better be compared to Chiefs Red Cloud and Sitting Bull of the Lakota Sioux, fighting for their people's right to the sacred Black Hills of South Dakota against white settlers. Like the great Sioux, Crow, and Cheyenne warriors of the 19th century, Osman Bator was caught in an impossible fight for survival against modern weapons, modern organization, and a relentless human tide of settlers onto the grasslands of the pastoral nomads.

Mackiernan's Log: Crossing the Kara Gobi

As I tell about the rest of the trip, I will follow the log Doug kept and of which I have finally received a copy, or at least a rewrite. As I mentioned before, it is not a facsimile of the actual journal. I managed to retrieve the original from the disaster on the Chang Tang and then to keep it up-to-date myself as opportunity existed until Vasili and I reached Lhasa. Remembering back to when I had retrieved the log from the chaos of our encounter with the Tibetan patrol, it seemed more fulsome, maybe even aggressive, than the version I now have. Be that as it may be, Loyd V. Steer, Counselor of U.S. Embassy, New Delhi, wrote in transmitting the log to the Department of State, September 21, 1950 that, it is "... a verbatim copy of the log with very little editing or correction." I have tried to augment the log with my recollections.

It seemed to take forever until all was ready for our trip south. The snow had stopped. The ground was muddy underfoot. Finally, horses were brought for us and our gear and weapons packed on them. We did not each have our own horse, but just used whichever horse came to hand. As horseback riders know, to ride well one must know one's mount and have developed a personal relationship with it. Riding out of Barkol was more like riding pack animals with the Kazakhs as guides and wranglers. It was not cold. Children were playing around the yurts. Women were getting ready to milk when we set out over the low hills that rose south of the lake.

Left Urumchi on September 27, 1949 and arrived in Barkul about two weeks later in company of Osman Bator, Kazak Hordes.

October 30 - Camp #2: Left camp on S.W. shore Lake Barkul at 1500 October 29. Marched 3 hours - camped on (#1) plain at foot of Barkul Tagh [range]. Left early morning and marched 5 hrs due south. Crossed range 9200 feet and camped at 8100 feet during day. Talilham came to say good-bye. Our party was now 9 men. Expect to cross Hami-Turfan road tonight or tomorrow. We are marching at night to avoid being seen.

I do not know who Talilham is. Could this be another name for Osman? We set out with a string of horses (Vasili remembers maybe as many as twenty-five), riding one and leading the other by a rope, accompanied by two Kazakh guides from Barkol. At least I only remember two while Doug talks of four. The Kazakhs looked after us, setting up camp. I do not remember if there was a tent.

October 31 - Camp #3: Left #2 at 11002 (Greenwich Time - 1700 local time) [5:00 p.m.] - marched south down very rocky gorge. Passed one aul [nomad encampment; also "awl"] and two zaimkas [mud brick houses].

**October 31 - #4:** Left camp #3 at 0600Z — marched due south 4 1/2 hrs, arrived at point about 6 km north of Hami-Turfan road — small well. Large lone poplar distant 3 km, bearing S 7° mag. is conspicuous landmark. Turki name this place "Chidyeh" (means "berry"). Alt. 3,900'.

**October 31-November 1 - Camp #5:** Left camp #4 at 1400Z — route SSE until across Hami-Turfan road (about 6 km) then S for about 8 km and SE for 3 more hours (total time 5 hrs.) till 1900Z (2 a.m. L.T. [local time]) when we camped for night in dry desert. (stony)

Before it became light we crossed the motor road out of Hami. It runs to Turfan and by a northerly branch to Urumqi. We knew that this road was patrolled. I rode one of those short-legged, fat-bellied Central Asian ponies and led another by a rope. There is a trick to saddling these animals. They hate being tightly cinched so they inhale as much air as possible as the cinch is tightened. The trick is to jab them with the knee so they have to exhale and then quickly tighten the cinch. I had not quite mastered this art. In the U.S. Cavalry kicking a horse in the stomach was considered simply beneath contempt so I did not kick the pony with enough conviction. The horse I was leading suddenly balked just after crossing the road. My saddle started to slip. I held on frantically to the guide rope for the other horse. My saddle kept on slipping. I felt myself fall with a hard thump onto the sub-machine gun I was carrying on my back. I passed out for a short while. My companions soon realized that something had gone wrong and came back to rescue me. Unknown to me at the time I had broken a vertebra. Maybe out of necessity I was able to continue riding with my sore back. Sleeping on the hard ground probably helped also. I did not discover the break until after many years of suffering spastic back pains, when a doctor finally X-rayed my back.

**November 1 - Camp #6:** Left #5 at 0030Z and traveled due south about 10 km (1 1/2 hours) to rim where desert drops about 500 ft. Ruins of old watch tower in rim. Camped in draw facing south — small spring and good forage. Altitude 2200 feet. Took P1 facing SE from beside old watch tower mentioned. P2 (of camp) NW from a little below same spot. Camp appears to be due south of main portion Barkul Tagh. Kara Doba visible to SE (E45°S) from watch tower.

This watch tower may suggest that we were following the old Silk Road, the route in use during Han/Roman times when traders traveled across the desert northwest from Dunhuang (Tun Hwang) to Lou-lan, the trading center at the easternmost reaches of the Tarim River and since abandoned after the collapse of the silk trade with Rome. I wish we had taken the time to dig around the tower to see if we could get some information on its antiquity.

**November 1-2 Camp #7:** Left #6 at 0900Z — traveled SE for about 15 km — passed through Kara Doba at night (about 12:30Z) and continued SW until 1330Z, then due south until 1800 when we reached tamarisk jungle on North bank Kuruk Gol. On way followed a cart road most of time until just before reaching Kuruk Gol — (road not shown on map). Spent night.
November 2 - Camp #8: Left #7 at 7:30 a.m. (L.T.) and traveled E about 10 km to Kuruk Gol. River about 2 meters wide 40 cm deep—flow at 0500Z November 2, 85 m/s [meters per second]. Alt. 800 feet. Fed and watered horses—left about 2 p.m. local. Traveled east until about 3:30 p.m. L.T., when camped for the night on N. bank of Kuruk Gol. — Camp #9.

November 3 - Camp #10: Left #9 at 8:30 a.m. local—traveled S50°E until 3 p.m. local, crossing stony and sandy desert. At 3 p.m. turned East, travelling until about 5:30—then NE till dried up river bed to camp #10—no water.

We were now on the dry, lifeless plateau separating us from the Turfan (Turpan) Depression, the Death Valley of Xinjiang; although with irrigation it is a warm, windless refuge in the icy winters. In summer when it is blistering hot the nearby alpine reaches of the Bogdo Ula provide relief. The Turfan Depression lies at 427 feet below sea level, the Bogdo Ula rise to 21,365 feet above. Before Genghiz Khan and the Mongols, Turfan was the capital of the Uighur Khanate, comprised of Turkish speakers who had been converted to Islam. As is common in Iran and Afghanistan, underground channels guide melt waters from catchments high up the mountain to fields below thereby irrigating fruit trees and the famous Hami melons.

November 4 - Camp #11: Left #10 at 7:00 a.m. L.T. travelling East or S80°E until 2 p.m. when crossed horse tracks leading SE. Followed these tracks S and SE until lost in darkness about 9 p.m. Just before losing tracks saw remains of old wagon road leading same way as tracks. Camped for night where tracks petered out—no water.

I remember this landscape as incredibly bleak. Some days I could look around and see not a single sign of man, nor that man had ever been there. The landscape is much more desolate than Death Valley, but there were signs of game. Our guides claimed to have seen wild camel foot prints. These camels, only a few remain today, can survive by drinking salt water.

We were crossing the northern edge of the Kara or Black Gobi, looking for the old route of the Silk Road. Our third day out we stopped at a village inhabited by friendly Turks, filled our water

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**The Qizilchoqa Mummies**

Somewhat further east in a place called Qizilchoqa ("Red Hillock"), archaeologists have discovered a number of distinctive mummies dating to some three thousand years ago or more. They suggest a tall, blondish population. Very distinctive are their woolen, woven garments. The twill weave in tartan pattern closely resembles woven wool fragments from the Hallstatt culture in Austria which is associated with salt mines (hence the name, Salzburg, salt castle, in Austria). The Hallstatt people spoke a form of Celtic like the Scots while the peoples of Qizilchoqa probably spoke a Tokharian language. Some of the later mummies probably belonged to the Yue-zhi confederacy, a branch of which, under pressure from the Xiung-Nu (ancestors of Attila the Hun who gave the coup de grace to the Roman Empire in 476 AD) fled to Afghanistan to found the Kushana dynasty around the time of the birth of Christ. It seems amazing that weaving techniques and decoration retain such intimate connection to descent groups over thousands of years. I would like to claim that the tartan kilt of my Kerr ancestors from Scotland shows a direct connection to these early weavers, but the Jedburgh Kerrs apparently were Vikings who invaded Scotland and set themselves up as lairds in the Borderlands. Nobody has checked my mitochondrial DNA to see to what extent mothers were related to "purer" Celtic ("Aryan super-race?") ancestry. Besides, the different clan tartans were made up in the 18th/19th century as regalia for military regiments, another "invention of tradition."
bottles and watered our horses. That night we found no water. It took our guides a couple of days to orient themselves and continue on south. We did not have enough water with us and became very thirsty. Stephan decided to drink pure melted grease and became awfully sick.

**November 5 - Camp #12:** Left #11 at 7:15 a.m. - picked up trail which led generally south and SSE. Followed this trail towards low mountain range SSE [Bei Shan, “northern mountains”]. At 1 p.m. arrived at well - water slightly brackish. Name of well in Kazak is “Kiegan Kuduk” - meaning “wooden well” i.e., well with wood sides. Watered horses which were about all in - spent night - Alt. 3500’. This well is not on map (AAF 331) but is about 6 miles north of Hung-mu-ch’uan-Tzu well. This latter is marked by dead stump and trunk of cedar on top of small hill. Two wells - water brackish.

**November 6-7 - Camp #13:** Left #12 at 11:15 L.T. - passed Hung-mu-Ch’uan Tzu. 25 miles S passed Shu-ku-tzu, wide valley with small tamarisk mounds. No well. 16 miles further came to Tieh-Shu. Good water and plenty of graze for horses. Spent Nov.7 here, resting and feeding horses. Altitude 4400’. Many gazelle seen - also tracks of wild camels. Saw one wolf. About 5 km west is another water hole - found by following animal tracks.

In those days there were huge herds of gazelle grazing from Manchuria to Tibet. I saw lots of them back in Manchuria and shot one in Chengde (Rehe, the summer palace of the Manchu Emperors), the only large game animal I have ever shot. When we were in Chengde in 1984 people told us that there were none left. They had all been killed during the terrible years of famine and chaos of the Great Leap Forward/Cultural Revolution.

**November 8 - Camp #14:** Left #13 at 7:00 a.m. L.T., taking trail south. Passed through gravel flats and small hills. At 12:00 noon reached Ma-Lien-Chuan - good water (best so far) and some graze for horses. Ruined Sarai and pill box on hill. Left #14 at 6:00 p.m. L.T.

**November 8-9 - Camp #15:** After leaving #14 traveled south and southeast until 9 p.m. (1400Z) when we lost trail - so spent night in valley - no water or food for horses.

**November 9 - Camp #16:** Left #15 at 7:40 a.m. - traveled South and then Southwest, reaching a well about 7 km west of Min-Shu at 10:00 a.m. Water not too good. Not much food for horses. Rode over to Min-Shu. Plenty of graze and good water. Watch tower on hill and ruins of Serai - saw one big horn sheep - jemak. Alt. of #16 - 5500’.

**November 10 - Camp #17:** Left #16 at 6:30 a.m. L.T. Rode south across low mountain range. Crossed Su-Lu-Ho (no water in river) [Shule river] and camped on South bank for night near pond of good water. Plenty of food for horses.

**November 11 - Camp #18:** Left #17 at 7:00 a.m. and rode due south until 3:00 p.m. 45 km - to point on North bank of Nan-Hu [tributary to Shule coming from the south] about 15 km due north of village of Nan-Hu. Good water in river and plenty of food for horse. Alt. 3800’. 
We are west of Dunhuang (the famous Buddhist painted caves that I had missed exploring going to Hami and missed again now) which is on the other side of the Nan-Hu river, a tributary of the Shule flowing north out of the Qilian Shan (Humbolt range). We looked out from where we were over the vast desert stretching westward to Lop Nor. The “Jade Gates,” of which there seem to be several, mark the beginning of the Silk Road. During Han and Roman times when there was much trade moving between China and Rome, the main road led directly west of Dunhuang to Lou-Lan at the northern end of Lop Nor. This road had long been abandoned when Xuan Zang, the pious monk, traveled from Changan, Xian, to India to bring back Buddhist scriptures. He described traveling along the southern edge of the Takla Makan Desert from oasis to oasis, many with Buddhist temples and stupas since abandoned to the ubiquitous sand. The road we later traveled followed Xuan Zang’s route partway.

The truck route to Lhasa now begins at Hongliuyuan passing to the east of the road we followed. The truck route crosses the Tsaidam (Qaidam) Depression to Germu (Golmud) and then over the eastern ridges of the Kunluns. Ghaz Kol lies at the western end of the Tsaidam Depression.

**November 12 - Camp #19:** Left #18 at 7:00 L.T. rode S.W. over large sand dunes and hills covered with sand. Rode 10 hours to Somotu, a river valley. Good water and food for horses. Two or three zaimkas and 4 or 5 Chinese living there. Bought flour and potatoes.

We passed a group of mud houses on the flanks of the Altyn Tak/Altun Shan/Altin Tagh where enough moisture seeped from the peaks above to allow some agriculture. These were inhabited by Chinese Muslims (known as Dungans, suggesting origins in Central Asia rather than the Hui-Hui of Ningxia further east who were converts and looked more Mongoloid) who were on friendly terms with the Kazakh guides. I assume some kind of symbiotic relationship where the Kazakhs supplied security, and the farmers supplied grain. We rested here to allow our mounts time to recover before climbing the mountains to Ghaz Kol.

**November 13 - Camp #20:** Left Somoto at 8 a.m. - rode up river valley for 8 hours (SW) to Khulyastay [Khalastai] - a camp ground with excellent water and food for horses. Alt. 7750’. No one living there. Many kekelik.

The kekelik, chiru or jorgen, have been classified in the order of caprids together with sheep and goats. They resemble antelopes. The males have long scimitar-like horns. They are highly sought after because of their very fine under-wool which can only be retrieved by killing the animal. Many have been slaughtered to make shahtoosh, “shawls,” illegally in Kashmir — a trade that involves all sorts of people along the border of Tibet — Tibetan refugees, Kashmiri weavers, Chinese soldiers.

**November 14 - Camp #21:** Left #20 at 8:05 a.m. L.T. - rode Southwest until 4:00 p.m. L.T. to Yam-Bulak. People very hospitable. Nice and warm and first shelter since start of trip. Alt. 9850’. Spent night and ate like pigs - mutton, tea etc., etc. People appear rich and have plenty of livestock - especially camels.

**November 15 - Camp #22:** Left #21 at 9:30. Rode to next awl - 3 km - where we stopped for the day and night. People here will supply us with horses and camels for Gas-Kul trip. Four Tungan traders from Tun Huang here. They buy opium from the Kazaks - who grow the poppies. 1 oz. gold = 6 oz. opium. (1 oz. = 35 grams) according to traders Kazaks do not use opium themselves. Will spend night here - more mutton and lots of tea - very good. Alt. 9900’.
The tea we drank was brick tea. The tea leaves are stamped into a hard rectangular slab from which pieces can be knocked off.

November 16 - Camp #22: Stayed over at the same awl. Spent day getting camels - tent - which we bought from Tungan trader. Also cookstove and kettle and cloth for trading. Ended up with 8 camels (5 ours, 2 loan, 1 for Kazaks who are with us) and 5 horses. More meat tonight. I have had bad case of G.I.'s - will take sulfa tomorrow.

The tent was about 12 feet in diameter, made of white canvas with flooring, held up by central pole and guy ropes. A flap at the top let out some of the smoke. The cook stove had no chimney. We slept with feet toward the fire roughly in a circle. Doug always seemed to end up sleeping behind the fire far from the draughty door. This is the place of honor in a nomadic tent. I generally slept to his left, the Russians to the right. We naturally fell into this pattern which is also the usual ranking found in a nomad yurt. We had U.S. Army sleeping bags, sheepskin coats, and other pieces of felt and wool to keep warm. I do not remember where or how our Kazakh guides slept. They were a very rugged bunch.

November 17 - Camp #23: Left #22 at 11:00 a.m. - rode to where awl was supposed to be (6 hours), but no awl! Spent night where they had been. Cold but o.k. in tent. Alt. about 10,000!

November 18 - Camp #24: Left #23 at 9:00 a.m. Rode until 3 p.m. to awl of Kabaim Bastik. Everything fixed up for us. Yurt and best bursak [Kazakh hard tack] so far. Also big horn sheep meat - fried - very good. Alt. 9600’. Will probably stay here 4 or 5 days - getting ready for trip to Gas Kul. Need mittens, more camels - and make up bursak and cooked meat. Yurt at this instant is full of young Kazaks - most of whom have never seen foreigners before. They are interested in my writing -

November 23 - Camp #25: Left #24 at 10:20 a.m. L.T. on November 23, with 12 camels, 2 horses, and 2 mules and 10 men in all. Marched west up valley till noon, when stopped for ice - last water. Went on up to head of pass which we reached about 5:30 p.m. Made camp - grass but no water. Alt. 10,600’.

November 24 Camp #26: Left #25 at 7:30 a.m. L.T. went over pass, then west down valley, over another pass. Hit Tunhuang-Chauklik [Charkhliq, Ruoqiang] road (truck road) at 453 km. Followed this road, which is in good condition to km 498, where we made camp in dry river bed. Cold as hell - no water, no grass, no fuel. We picked fuel about 10 a.m. as we crossed second pass.

November 25 - Camp #27: Left #26 at 6:30 a.m. L.T., followed road till about km 501 - then took well defined trail which led to SW of mountain - road continuing north of mountain. Followed this trail over series of passes - generally heading WSW. Country absolutely barren. Many skeletons of men, horses and camels. About 1:00 p.m. crossed last pass and emerged on wide plain or basin which stretched away to south and southwest, with conspicuous snow-covered range visible above rim of basin to SW. After marching West across this plain, following trail, until 8:30 p.m. (14 hours total) we came to Donbas Tau springs, good

We had been following the road along the Altyn Tak, leading to Qara Qoshun (Qaraburan Kol), the lake south of Lop Nor. These lakebeds are now quite dry. All water in the Tarim basin is now used for agriculture (personal information from Richard Harris). The 1952 National Geographic map shows such a road further north than the road I believe we were following. The road we were following seems much closer to a road shown on the 1991 map.

Some of the best preserved early mummies have been found along this route further on at Cherchen (Qarqan). These mummies are wrapped in flat-weave woolen garments and colorful pants and have physical characteristics that suggest early, blond Indo-European speakers. Some woven pieces are decorated with spiral and lightning designs common on Turkoman *kelsims* and Kazakh felts. Many of the mummies were buried with bunches of ephedra, the performance-enhancing herb surreptitiously used by some of our athletes or cooked up into methamphetamines. Our Indo-European speaking ancestors have long been associated with drugs: hashish/marijuana for the Scythians, opium, and of course alcohol when available.

We thought at the time that the skeletons we stumbled upon had been left unburied. I thought they may have died from thirst or in a sand storm. We did not stop to collect evidence. They could, of course, also have been massacred. Caravans used this southern route because it was safer. Nomadic raiders had better access to travelers along the northern banks of the Tarim River. The nomadic raiders pastured their animals north of the Bogdo Ula, and could then swoop down on caravans heading for Turfan and beyond to Kashgar. This was more difficult for raiders along the southern route where the Kunlun Mountains and the Chang Tang beyond provided no safe area for them.

November 27 - Camp #28: Left #27 at 3:00 a.m. L.T. on 27th. Marched along old motor road, generally west. Crossed high pass about 8:00 a.m. alt. about 12,000’. Very cold at night but warmed up after sunrise. At top of pass Gas Kul Lake visible to SW. Proceeded down old river valley, still following road (which badly washed out) and finally came out on steppe of Gas Kul basin. At 3:00 p.m. reached spring (Yulgundam) where we camped for night. Alt. about 9200’.

Gas Kul Lake is also known as Gazkol, Ghaz Kol, Gas Hu, and Gashyn Nor.

November 28 - Camp #29: Left #28 about 8:30 a.m. L.T. – travelled towards west end of lake across salt flats. Many Kulam [wild ass] seen and hundreds of tracks. About 2 p.m. reached end of lake. Local Kazak informed us Kussain Tadji [Hussein Taiji] was camped at Timerlik [Timurlik] Bulak towards which we proceeded. Camped at dark near spring. Weather very warm.

November 29 - Camp #30: Up at 8:30 and reached Timerlik Bulak at 10:00 a.m. Royal welcome by Kussaim Tadji who had yurt all ready for us. This outfit is most wealthy so far – Kussaim has largest yurt I have ever seen. Will stay here until we find out about getting to India. May have to winter here.

Stayed at Timerlik Bulak from November 29 [1949] until March 20 [1950].

Here ends the first part of Doug’s journal. Since leaving Osman at Barkol October 29, 1949, we had traveled roughly 500 miles.
Winter at Timurlik

Timurlik is a wide, grassy, fairly level area about twenty miles long with high mountains to the south and lower mountains leading down to the Lop Nor depression to the north. The yurts of the Kazakhs under Hussein Taiji were widely scattered along a marshy, year-round stream which flowed into the alkaline lake of Ghaz Kol. Willow bushes grew along its edge. Some of this area was farmed by Kazakhs who remained behind when the main group moved to summer pasture at Ayakkum Kol (lake) to the west. Or, a crop of barley, maybe opium, might be planted in spring and then left to fend for itself until the Kazakhs returned to their winter encampment.

Fat-rumped sheep, but not goats, were the mainstay of the Kazakhs here. They also kept some cattle and milked the cows. Horses, though highly prized, were both eaten and milked. Their milk, but not that of camels, could be made into kumiss, a mildly alcoholic drink. Of course, alcohol is prohibited by the Koran, "But surely kumiss is not alcohol?" the Kazakhs said. "It just makes one feel warm and happy inside and that must be good." They kept Bactrian camels (two-humped as distinct from the dromedaries of Arabia), but not yaks. Some Kazakhs in the Altai Mountains were said to keep yaks.

At the southeast end of Timurlik a cluster of yurts were pitched fairly close together around the impressive yurt of Hussein Taiji, the leader of the awl-uru, "lineage encampment" (what Doug calls a Bulak). The mastiffs sounded as our guides rode ahead. When we approached, Hussein Taiji walked out to meet us, honoring us with the double handshake, and bade us pitch our tent near his yurt. His senior wife served us hot tea with sugar. The correct way to drink is by putting a lump of sugar in one's mouth and then sucking the tea through it in the Central Asian manner. Mongols and Tibetans brew their tea, churning it with milk or butter and adding salt and/or soda and millet. I can see the Dilowa Gegen now in our kitchen at Berkeley. He would take a cooking pot full of water, add black tea leaves, bring it to a boil and then add milk and soda. He would smack his lips with pleasure as he poured some into his wood and silver tea bowl to take his first drink. When he had finished, he carefully licked his bowl and stowed it away in his sash.

Many sheep were slaughtered in our honor for a welcoming banquet. The Kazakhs, who are Muslims, slit the throat of the animals and let the blood flow, unlike the Buddhist Mongols, who hope that by their method of slaughter, making an incision and stilling the heart, the soul of the animal will be eased into its next reincarnation.

We remained in Timurlik for over three months as guests of Hussein Taiji. He presided over some fifty to one hundred yurts (I never was able to visit them all) irregularly scattered over about a 5 square-mile area. Other Kazakh awl-uru encamped nearer Ghaz Kol. One of these was under the leadership of a fairly close relative of Hussein Taiji. Another, further east nearer the Qaidam Depression, was not. The yurts belonged to different awl-uru and did not intermingle. Each had its own territory and head man. Some Khoshot Mongols (or Deed Mongols) grazed their animals further east.a

For me the months at Timurlik afforded a wonderful opportunity to participate in the life of pastoral nomads. With our tent so close to Hussein Taiji's yurt we were at the center of all that was happening. The "white beards," the lineage elders, met freely at the great man's tent to discuss their concerns. A Dungan trader also pitched his tent close by. He understood my Mandarin. Not far away was the yurt of a religious teacher, referred to as "Kara Mullah." "Kara" means black, suggesting that his credentials were somewhat in question.

Stephan acted as my interpreter when I visited Kazakh yurts and tried to figure out how the different families related to each other. Visiting and banqueting were how people spent their

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a The Khoshot tribe of the Otrad Mongols eventually migrated into the Kokonor area and Tibet, i.e., Qinghai.
time. It is amazing how quickly a sheep can be slaughtered and prepared for serving in a pilau, a wonderful entée made of steamed rice mixed with boiled mutton and raisins. In theory all were welcome “to touch their teeth,” as Kazakhs said. No one should be denied hospitality.

Young men and boys soon discovered that we had bought a large amount of raisins at one of the nearby oasis towns. They dropped by our tent freely, eager to “touch teeth” to the raisins. This quickly turned into general merriment, with much drinking of brick tea. When the company tired of joking and horsing around someone brought out his dombra, a stringed instrument resembling a balalaika, and they sang epics reliving the brave deeds of great heroes of the past and the present. I became the subject of an epic, but nobody would translate the words so I do not know how gloriously I came off in this.

In the evenings I returned to our tent and wrote up notes. These, however, did not survive the trip. When Tibetans pilfered our little caravan, my things were scattered over the wide Chang Tang. My notes, like “sky horses” or prayer flags, were swept away by the wind. I did not try to recreate these notes until many years later. I did not wish to jeopardize the lives of people who had helped us by telling too much about them. After so many years my recollections have, of course, become contaminated by reading widely on Central Asia and Tibet.

In 1991, I was promised by the Chinese government that I could revisit Timurlik once more. The offer was cancelled in the last moment apparently because all Kazakhs in the area were right then being rounded up and forcibly relocated to the Altai region by the Chinese government. I was able to send a copy of my notes, “Winter in Timurlik,” through some of the wildlife biologists associated with the University of Montana to members of the Dungan community who had sheltered us on the approach to Ghaz Kol. I have not heard what they thought of them.

At the time of their new year’s celebration in early January, Hussein Taiji invited me to ride with him as he visited the outlying yurts of his awl-uru. We were welcomed at every yurt and offered delicacies, including lumps of pure white mutton. It takes bravado to get this down. We stopped at the yurt of an impoverished widow who was hard put to take care of her flocks without a man around. She had been widowed soon after giving birth. She developed mastitis. In her agony she thrust a knife into her engorged breast. Medicine was rudimentary and brutal.

I attended a wedding. The bride came from within the group encamped under Hussein Taiji. Not all the members of his “lineage-encampment” were related to each other, although marriage within the awl-uru was decidedly unusual. Kazakhs generally practice lineage exogamy unlike nomads in the Middle East who reinforce their patrilineages by encouraging parallel cousin marriage. As at Osman Bator’s camp here too members of different affiliations had come together and were in the process of becoming a political unit. Traditionally, the groom should pretend to capture the bride in a wild raid, stealing her from her parental group. Under the circumstances, this did not happen.

As part of her wedding finery the bride wore a red veil down her back to which owl feathers had been attached to assure the birth of many sons and heroes. Heroes and other important personages may wear bouquets of owl feathers on their bonnets, their tomaks, like medals. Kazakhs told me that the owl feathers should be presented to the warrior by either his sweetheart or a daughter. But why owl feathers? I think owl feathers are a badge of wisdom, but I may have made that up. The owl is sacred to the goddess Athena. Did Alexander the Great introduce the idea back in the 4th century BC? He reached the shores of the Oxus and beyond where descendants of the people he conquered and culturally co-opted, still live. (The Oxus is also known as Amu Darya, “the mother of waters”).

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a The Kazakh New Year probably followed the Russian dating custom since Chinese New Year and Tibetan Losar fall later in early spring while the Muslim calendar is lunar.
Hussein, upholding ideal culture, explained that parents choose the bride for their sons. His senior wife snickered. I asked what happened when the young lady refused as she loved another. Hussein's wife patted her stomach, "She can always get pregnant with her lover and then her parents must accept it." Kazakh nomadic women led a freer life than their sisters in town, but they drew the line at friendships with non-Muslim men.

As at Barkol, polygamous family life did not run smoothly. At Timurlik the problem concerned an older man who loved his first wife, but was pressured, so I was told, to marry a second, younger wife. His status demanded it. He did not pay enough attention to his young second wife so she took a lover, a rather insignificant-seeming young man. There was much shouting, and the woman ended up with a black eye. I did not see any drastic action taken against the young couple. Her husband lost face. She remained with him.

I was allowed to witness a shamanistic healing ceremony. While sitting in the yurt the shaman, a young man, went into trance quite spontaneously it seemed to me. The yurt with its wheel-like smoke hole and dome-shaped roof gives form to cosmological meanings which situate the shaman. He called on the spirits of fallen heroes for help and guidance. Otherwise he seemed quite an ordinary young man to me, not a smith as so often the case among nomads. As far as I could understand, he was not "possessed" by these heroes, nor did he "travel," that is fly to another level of reality searching for lost souls as Hmong told us their shamans do. Other Hmong shamans confront evil spirits in trance battles. The Kazakhs, although officially Muslims, continued some belief in shamanism as did most of the Chinese of that day. At some level shamanism appears among all peoples. When some fire and brimstone Baptist or Methodist preacher speaks in tongues and believes himself ordered by God who directly guides his knowledge and actions he too is a shaman.

The mullah dismissed the shaman simply as "illiterate." One of the mullah's important duties was to teach reading the Koran to the children of the encampment in the original Arabic using Arabic script. On Friday, the Muslim Sabbath, he drew the outlines of a mosque oriented towards Mecca in the sand and led the prayers. This mullah not only respected reading the Koran, but reading of any sort. At Shandan I was given some books to take along on my travels, among them Tolstoy's War and Peace. This long novel of how five Russian families painfully struggled through the period of the Napoleonic Wars became a great source of reassurance to me. When the mullah saw me reading War and Peace, which I read and reread when I had nothing else to do, he advised one of his students to sit beside me as I read. Even though he could not understand a word, the boy begged me to read out loud to him so that he could gain merit from the reciting of words.a

Timurlik had not been Hussein Taiji's awl-uru's winter quarters long. There were some ruins of semi-subterranean houses near the stream at Timurlik. The Mongols who had wintered at Timurlik in the past probably built or used these more permanent houses. They were Deed Mongols who "... came from Xinjiang about 300 years ago and herded the vast area of central and northwest Qinghai in the old Tayijinar Banner. Then in the year 1943, many Kazakh swept down from Xinjiang. In pitched battles, the Mongols were outnumbered and many killed. Survivors fled to such places as Tibet, Gansu, the Qinghai Lake vicinity and Dulan." When the Swedish explorer, Sven Hedin, wintered there, 1899-1900, the population was entirely Mongol. The Kazakhs proudly pointed out that they lived in yurts the year round and needed no permanent houses.

The Kazakhs had taken in, maybe kidnapped, some of the Mongol children and adopted them. Considering the availability of medical help child mortality was high and so children were highly

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a As a child I was allowed to join village children, boys and girls, at their Koran studies north of Tehran, Iran. We sat around the teacher, an older woman healer, each on our own sheepskin and recited sections of the Koran aloud, not the same section, but different sections. I do not think the others actually understood what they were reciting. There was merit in just reciting. SLB
The Kazakhs said the kidnapped children were simply included among their own brood. I could not tell if this was true or not. They seemed to be treated neither as slaves nor as servants, but then I was not there long enough to catch the nuances that indicate differences in status and respect. Some of the members of the encampment pointed to other children, about six to thirteen years old, and told me that they were originally Tibetans. So there had been raiding parties deep into Tibetan territory not too long ago.

One day I walked over to a yurt of Kazakhs by myself. I think they understood some Mandarin. This was an especially cozy place. The central smoke hole was securely latched, and few drafts seeped in from the outside. The wooden door closed tightly. Generally, a piece of felt or a wolf hide was all the door there was. Characteristic Kazakh felts with horn designs decorated wall and floor. I settled down for a long chat over a bowl of tea. It got so warm that I took off my warm inner coat and untied my sash, which had the gold bar I exchanged the Fulbright money for back in Shanghai, sewn inside. When I felt I had accepted their hospitality long enough I said my farewells and set off to our own much less cozy tent. But I forgot to check if I had re-knotted my sash. When I got to our tent I discovered that I must have forgotten my sash at the yurt. I ran back, but my hosts, most solicitous, assured me that, "No, I certainly had not left it there." Our position in the encampment was tenuous enough so I simply cut my losses and left it at that. I had no need for money while on the trip. What I would do later would have to take care of itself.

Another morning we found a sheep tied to our tent peg. Against the express orders of the "white beards" the young men of the encampment had grown restive. In order to get married a young man must amass a kalim, the "bride price." The most admired and daring way to do so is to go on a raid. Our Kazakh youths, many of whom lived together at the edges of the settlement herding the flocks, had done just that. They had attacked the closest Mongol encampment, killing a few men, and driving off some sheep. Their elders were not pleased as they were quite aware of the precarious position all nomads were in. They had hoped to make common cause with other nomads and present a unified front to the Chinese Communists. There was much noisy discussion, but I did not see any of the young men punished.

While Stephan and I visited with different Kazakhs, my other companions, when not out hunting, spent most days glumly feeding the fire. To me the Kazakhs were glorious ancient warriors as they rode by splendidly, an eagle perched on a special stand on the pommel of a saddle. Like the Crow Indians who had moved away from the more settled peoples on the Upper Missouri to take advantage of the open range and the buffalo herds of the Great Plains, our Kazakhs had separated from the more settled Uzbek nation to pursue a nomadic life. They may share genes, but they did not retain many culture traits with the horsemen buried in the frozen tombs at Pazyryk, in the Altai Mountains, not far from these Kazakhs' former grazing grounds. The people buried at Pazyryk, dated to 500 BC, were Massegetai and Indo-European speakers. They raised crops alongside their sheep and horses, traveling by horse- or ox-drawn wagons, which resembled gypsy caravans or motor homes more than the yurts of the Kazakhs and Mongols. Their chieftains, heavily tattooed, were buried in elaborate timber-lined tombs surrounded by horse sacrifices. Kazakh dead were buried in simple graves marked by field stones or cairns. No one died while we were at Timurlik, so I did not attend a funeral.

To Vasili the Kazakhs we lived with were just a bunch of bandits. This story which they told me shows how they liked to think of themselves:

"For the devout Moslems Paradise is of course a perfect abode, but the Prophet Mohammed had been hearing some murmurings in Paradise that though perfect it lacked some of the delights of life on earth. It was suggested if some of these could be added Paradise would truly be the most desirable abode. The Prophet dutifully reported these complaints to Allah who listened carefully.
Paradise should be incomparably better than anything on earth. So, if he could add to the delights of Paradise he was eager to do so.

"After long thought Allah decided to go to earth and find out by asking the people. He decided to visit the Agrarian Turks in order to discover what they liked to do best. Coming from Chinese Turkestan the Agrarian Turks represented the majority of the souls of the blessed. Allah put on a turban, mounted a small donkey so his feet almost dragged in the oasis dust as is fitting for a man of status and set out to find a group of Agrarian Turks. He had not traveled far when he noticed a group of men squatting close together, animatedly throwing small pieces of bone in the dust. He pushed his way into the circle and asked, 'Is this what you like to do best?' The Turks answered, 'Of course, gambling with sheep's knuckles is the best of all pastimes.' But gambling is forbidden in Paradise. Allah rode on to seek out another ethnic group.

"Allah then decided that perhaps he should talk to the group who sent the least souls to Paradise, the White Russians. Allah dressed in a cast-off military uniform and went to a town where he soon met a White Russian whom he asked, 'What can we do for a good time?' The White Russian took him to a friend's house where a party was in full swing. 'What is the occasion for this merriment?' Allah asked. 'Why? Drinking vodka of course. Drinking is the greatest pleasure' his guide replied. Allah left quickly. Alcohol is forbidden in Paradise.

"Allah then decided to seek out the most educated group. He donned a black skullcap, cloth shoes and long robe and went up to a shop owned by a Dungan. 'What is the most blissful of pastimes?' he asked. The Dungan beckoned, led him to the back entrance of the shop. Inside lay men on the kang, the raised earthen bed heated by flues from the kitchen fire, blissfully smoking opium. Opium is not permitted in Paradise.

"Finally, Allah decided to seek out the most uneducated, the simplest, the most natural of people, and perhaps the most honest. Maybe at last, their pleasure could easily perfect Paradise. He put on a Kazakh hat, a Tomak with a bunch of owl feathers attached to the top to show that he was a true hero. He leapt on a fine stallion and galloped to a Kazakh encampment. He rode with great panache, almost falling off his mount. He was truly cool, he was a friend. Allah reached the yurt of the leader who rushed out to usher this imposing fellow into his yurt. After the necessary polite phrases had been exchanged, Allah got down to business. 'What is the greatest pleasure for a true Kazakh?' His host was surprised he needed to ask. 'Why, sheep stealing of course.' Allah sadly excused himself and returned to Heaven. Next time the Prophet Mohammed told him that the souls in Paradise were complaining he leant back wearily and said, 'Tell them, they can take Paradise the way it is or leave it.'"

Doug, a highly intelligent man, had brought along nothing to read. At MIT, too much in a hurry and too focused, he had avoided the liberal arts. His entries in the log are not weighted down with descriptions and literary allusions. He had rigged an antenna for our radio so we could listen to the news. To transmit reports was much more laborious. Each letter had first to be put into code and then transmitted by Morse Code with Vasili cranking the radio like an old-fashioned wind-up gramophone. In the log Doug mentioned a number of times when he had to make radio contact. As I remember it, he made contact almost every day using different frequencies. One of the men who monitored his messages was Clarence Wendell, geologist at the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, Turkey (a Montana native from Butte). He looked me up, but when I was ready to check into the past, he had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Whom else was Doug reporting to?

I knew by then that the plan was to rest for the winter with Hussein Taiji, but come spring we intended to climb over the Kunlun Mountains onto the Tibetan plateau, the Chang Tang, and to find
our way to Lhasa. I was too much of a dreamer to comprehend how dangerous an undertaking this was. It was Doug who worried about the logistics of the trip. Doug and Vasili went hunting together for our meat when we did not rely on the Kazakhs for mutton and salted some of it down to eat later. Vasili was the better shot.

Out hunting one day, Vasili told me later, he missed a clear shot. Doug became disgusted. He rode off with both their horses. Vasili found himself up there on the flanks of the Kunlun Mountains with no human habitation in sight. He did not know in which direction he should walk to find a yurt where he could take shelter for the night. It was bitterly cold. It was winter and the altitude was over 10,000 feet. He stumbled around for a good many hours until he was lucky enough to find a yurt. The inhabitants were fortunately friendly. The owners, roused by the fierce barking of their dogs, recognized Vasili, invited him in. Next day he found his way back to our tent. There was an odd streak in Doug and all four of the rest of us were noticing signs of tension.

At Timurlik Doug was a troubled man. Here was this man of action, becalmed on the cold approaches to the Kunlun Mountains. The Kunlun Mountains have special resonance in Taoist-Chinese thought and myth. They mark the boundary between the material, the “real” world, and the unseen: the realm of the Queen of the Western Paradise; the source of the “Yellow Springs” of Death and Reincarnation.

Once when I came in from visiting Kazakhs alone Doug turned to me, “It is time we had a talk, about women and things.” The Russians had dropped a few hints. He had been married young and fathered a daughter. With years of war and separation these ties had worn thin. Without gaining a divorce he had married a White Russian woman quite publicly in Urumqi. The British Consul apparently attended the wedding. Are there children from this relationship? She later came to live in the United States, Vasili suggested, but I never met her. Doug was obviously quite enmeshed with the Russian refugee community of Xinjiang.

Then there was Pegge Lyon. She had waltzed into his life in Urumqi. She was a journalist attached to a U.S. military paper in Shanghai or Nanjing, doing a piece on the East Turkestan Republic (ETR) in the Ili Valley, a most sensitive area. A romance resulted in the birth of twins, a girl and a boy. He married her before their birth after his divorce decree came through. This divorce decree was among Doug’s things which I brought out with me to India.

Doug had a house in town; the Consulate rooms where he met me were not his only abode. His other house was apparently quite grand, ten rooms and a stable with horses. Pegge Mackiernan visited this house and thought Doug was getting it ready for her to live there with him after the twins were born. She had a vivid memory of the house and all it contained as becomes clear from the claim for lost personal property she filed for reimbursement from the U.S. government on February 27, 1951. She included oriental carpets, curtains, clothes, dishes and books, such as Sir M. Aurel Stein’s Archeological Reconnaissances and Old Routes of W. Iran; Serindia - 5 volumes; Ruins of Desert Cathey; The Thousand Buddhas; Innermost Asia - 4 volumes with maps; Owen Lattimore’s Inner Asian Frontiers; Sven Hedin’s Silk Road; and others.69

Had Doug’s Russian wife lived in this house before? Vasili told me that he had been taking care of the horses there. Pegge could not join Doug in Urumqi after the twins were born. She was evacuated with the babies tucked into a large laundry basket to live in a small place in Fairfax, California, alone.

There was another woman, very young and “so pretty,” the Russians said, left behind in Urumqi when we had joined Osman Bator. I do not know what became of her. All in all, Doug was a man who played with many mirrors: juggling his official diplomatic role, checking uranium mines, maybe organizing Kazakh resistance, living like a pasha and not making adequate arrangements for his dependents.
I did not wish to hear about his women troubles. But how about other affairs? I could at this point have asked him again to tell me if there was an official purpose to this trip. I had asked him back at Lake Barkol. Instead of an answer he had called me a weakling and a coward. He was apparently ready to talk now.

"I hear that you lost all your Fulbright money back there at that Kazakh's yurt. You'll need money once we get off these damned mountains. What are your plans then? Why don't you rejoin the CIA and help me carry out my mission?"

Social Organization

The type of society I was allowed to be a part of at Timurlik has been described as a segmentary lineage (Evans-Pritchard) or as patrilateral personal kindred (Fox). The principle is simple. As groups expand into what appears to be unlimited land they recreate copies of themselves by a process of fission. To keep track of relationships they keep genealogical records. People knew the names of grandparents, but became hazy after that and turned to the more mythical family trees connecting them to the glorious past of the Kazakh nation and to Genghis Khan and the federation of nomads he led back in the 13th century. Once the space in which the nomads can nomadize becomes limited another process comes into play: fusion. For the Kazakh awl-uru, and a thousand years earlier, for the Mongol ail-ulus, those who travel close to each other gradually come to think of each other as relatives, as members of one family, one awl-uru. In this manner the uru, the encampment and the awl, or patrilineage, becomes one exogamous unit. At first the different origins of families are remembered as they apparently still were on occasion at Timurlik (allowing that marriage within the encampment), but as Kazakhs explained, with time the prohibition will be extended to these families as well. The mechanism is in place that allows outsiders to be adopted into the group. Kazakhs had pointed out Mongols and Tibetans who had been adopted. They also subtly indicated other people who were being absorbed into the awl-uru. As far as I could tell these people were not set apart, but it was preferred that their origins be quickly forgotten. The process of fusion depends on the willful forgetting of the heterogenous origin of outsiders who have joined the group. The importance of this form of political organization is that it implies an incipient state. The Kazakhs in Chinese Turkestan were setting themselves up as a nation-state.

Among the Mongols I had visited the Banner structure of organization established by the Manchu Dynasty precluded the development of segmentary lineages even in the tentative form I observed at Timurlik. The Mongol Banners, ruled by hereditary princes under the administration of the Manchu Government, allowed no place for self-proclaimed leaders like Osman Bator. Prince De relied on loyal retainers to establish the Inner Mongolian Independent government in Dingyuanying.

Hussein Taiji (probably from the Chinese tai zi, "prince") was a hereditary leader. He told me that he was the youngest son of the youngest son for three generations in this leadership position. Ultimo geniture makes sense as older sons, as they marry are given part of the flocks and move to provide for their own families. The youngest is left with the aging parents. It is interesting that Hmong who have settled in Missoula, Montana after the Vietnam War say they too practice ultimo-geniture in contrast to so much of Western Europe that recognizes the overwhelming rights of the first born, but not Susanne's farm relatives in Saxony, Germany. These too practiced ultimo-geniture in the past. The youngest son inherited the home farm.

While I was at Timurlik there was no apparent tension between Osman, the self-made hero, and Hussein Taiji, the hereditary leader. They were allies. The conflict now was between fundamentally different concepts of political organization. The symbolic suzerainty favored by the Manchu court had allowed pastoral nomads a great deal of freedom of action. The new concept of the centralized, planned state represented by the PRC and the Soviet Union did not countenance such lack of control.
My Fulbright year was up, but I was not sure that my obligations to the program had ended until I returned to the States. I was not simply required to fulfill my personal commitments, but as one of the first Fulbright grant recipients I also had an obligation to the program as a whole. Recipients of Fulbright grants were explicitly warned not to use their research as cover for intelligence work for the CIA. Since then other recipients have assured me that I had been overly scrupulous and idealistic. "Of course, the CIA was all over us when we were in Burma, trying to get us to work for them." (Personal communication, Valerie Clubb.)

Listening to Doug I hesitated: "Let me think about this." With that I went out of the tent to wrestle with my doubts and priorities. I walked out into the snow, dirty by now with last year's grayish yellow grass here and there. A leaden sky hung overhead. An icy wind blew down from the forested slopes above. Some dogs were yapping at each other near a yurt. So, Doug had a mission in traveling to Tibet. We both agreed with Owen Lattimore's concern for the peoples of Inner Asia. We had often discussed this. What did Doug have in mind for me if I agreed to rejoin the CIA? Was this as his underling or as a full partner? He obviously did not feel free to, or did not wish to, tell me anything until I committed myself. I was a younger brother well versed in the overbearing qualities of older brothers. He was not my buddy with whom I readily shared experiences concerning women. Mentioning money also made me uncomfortable. Money should not be the reason I rejoined the "Outfit."

After an hour, or so, I returned to our tent. Doug was still sitting alone feeding the fire. He looked up quizzically. I looked at him and said "No." He was resigned. I let the matter drop and so did he. He never mentioned the matter again.

Now, some fifty years later I am amazed at both of us. Not only was I stubborn considering the dangerous situation we were in, but so was he. He needed to make me a partner, someone to mull over options. The question of translator into Tibetan might have come up. We could have asked to take one of those Tibetan children kidnapped by our Kazakh hosts back with us, maybe using some of that gold to sweeten the deal. If a Tibetan child had ridden along with us (which for rugged nomad children was not the ordeal we came to think of it), then when we saw our first Tibetan tents the child could have run ahead of Doug and me, shouting, "I'm back, I'm home. These men are friends. They come to help His Holiness, the Dalai Lama."

It is always a tense situation when another Kazakh leader and his followers come to move in with resident Kazakhs herders. Hussein Taiji had explained to me that in such a case the arriving party was at great pains to seem harmless. The lead rider should ride up clowning around. He should almost fall from his horse as he approaches his hosts to assure that he is not up to any tricks. I do not know if Qali Beg, another hereditary Kazakh leader, handled this in the customary manner when he arrived at Timurlik at the end of our stay. We had already moved to a more distant location from Hussein Taiji's reception yurt. At any rate, Qali Beg was ignored by Hussein Taiji. He arrived wearing a magnificent coat of snow leopard skins. One camel was reserved solely for carrying his big bed frame. He hated to sleep on the hard ground. Other Kazakhs laughed. He had earlier nomadized well to the west in the Tian Shan where Doug had dealings with him. Arriving with sheep, camels, and even some cattle must have presented ample sources for conflict. His relationship with Hussein Taiji was strained. Qali Beg had not been a member of the Ili Rebellion. There was also a question of who outranked whom. He later escaped together with Hussein Taiji, both of them arriving in Kashmir quite destitute having lost all their flocks.\(^\text{a}\) Doug and I rode out together to visit Qali Beg once he had settled in. Qali Beg spoke some Mandarin.

Toward the end of our stay at Timurlik we were asked to move our tent away from Hussein Taiji's yurt because some official Chinese were expected. They drove up in a truck on the motor

\(^{a}\) Beg is a Turkish title.
road. Inadvertently I met a member of this delegation, a woman. I did not know how many
Chinese officials had come to negotiate with Hussein Taiji. I was walking along the trail leading
to the stream when I met this Chinese woman wearing heavy padded clothes. She looked startled
and not sure of what to make of me. I was swaddled in sheep skins, and wore a fur hat made by a
Kazakh woman. I hoped that she did not recognize me as a foreigner. The Kazakhs were, after all,
a racially mixed group although tending towards the Mongoloid. I think I could have passed as
a Tajik, an Afghan. Were the Chinese looking for us? To what extent had our presence increased
problems for the Kazakhs?

How important was it to Doug not to fall into Communist (Soviet or Chinese) hands because of
his earlier activities? I simply did not know, nor do I now. Fighting between the Kazakhs under
Osman Bator at Barkol and Chinese Communist forces had heated up. After we left Timurlik in
early spring, 1950, Osman tried to escape to Timurlik. He could have made it himself, but stayed
behind to care for the wounded. Osman Bator was captured by the Chinese Communists. The
English consul was still resident in Urumqi:

"I watched with pain as Osman Batur was led through the streets and lanes and as he was later
shot. His hair and beard and mustache were matted and terrible. His clothes were also in a terrible
condition. It was understood that he had been tortured. He had bare feet and his hands were
tied; even so his head was straight up. On his face was no fear. He had not lost his nobility or his
courage at all. His behavior and his walk showed this clearly. Even though his appearance was
like this, he did not seem to be going to his death, but was like a young man, going to a wedding
ceremony."92

He was paraded through the streets of Urumqi as a common criminal and executed in 1951.

After we left Timurlik, Hussein Taiji and his followers managed to escape to Kashmir.93 Why
did they feel they had to flee? Were they all marked men because they had harbored us? Or, like
Prince De, as the leaders of an old order, were they all marked men, "exploiters of the masses" to
be destroyed, reeducated, stripped of position and wealth by the Chinese Communists? Some of
the Kazakh survivors and their descendants now live in Istanbul where Linda Benson visited them.
They sing to the strumming of the dymbra of Osman Bator, "the golden legend," their hero, as they
sit around the fire.94

Finally, Doug decided that it was time for us to leave and set out over the Chang Tang to reach
inhabited parts of Tibet far to the south. Doug bargained for enough horses and camels to get us
there. These needed to be specially trained stock that would eat meat when no other fodder was
available. On the high Chang Tang it was inevitable that there would not be enough grass and
other foliage to keep livestock going. Camels are not native to the area. Tibetan nomads depended
on yaks that can lick lichen off the rocks for nourishment. They move even slower than camels do.

On the morning that Hussein Taiji had promised to deliver the animals Doug was very tense.
He set out from our tent early with Vasili over the dreary remnants of last winter's snow to Hussein
Taiji's tent. I stayed behind with Leofka and Stephan. Suddenly, the tent flap was torn open and
Doug returned, very distraught. The animals Hussein Taiji had produced were a spavined, sad lot.
They would never get us across the Chang Tang. What were we to do now? Doug threw himself
on his sleeping mat in despair. He felt tricked and betrayed. What is worse, he let the Kazakhs
know how he felt. He had left Hussein Taiji's yurt in anger without observing the necessary
formalities. The white beards sitting about the fire witnessed Hussein Taiji being insulted and
loosing face. The next day the mullah came to our tent. I should have stepped forward, ignored
Doug, and used the occasion to ask the mullah to intercede for us. Had I asked him I think this

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92 This is not the road shown on the 1952 National Geographic map, but clearly marked on later maps.
would have quickly diffused the tense situation. Instead, after the customary courtesies I looked
over to Doug and touched the side of my face — loss of face. The mullah understood this to mean,
as in fact I had intended, that Hussein Taiji had lost face by providing the poor animals for us. With
that the mullah left abruptly.

Shortly, we were “requested” to appear for an audience with Hussein Taiji. Doug was in shock
and refused to go. I got up and left the tent. Stephan followed. By now the sun had melted the
snow into muddy puddles. Bleached fuzz and dry grass rattled in the wind. The sun was weak
in the sky and nearing the horizon. I wrapped my coat close around me and pulled my torflnk
down over my ears. It was about a mile’s walk over to Hussein Taiji’s yurt. When I arrived I lifted
the wolf skin that hung over the entrance. Hussein Taiji was alone. We entered. He bade me sit
down across from him by the fire. His eyes were blazing with anger. He said
nothing. After some
minutes he spoke. “When Chinese Communist spies came asking about you we Kazakhs protected
you and got them to leave without looking for you. We Kazakhs made you welcome, killed many
sheep in your honor. Our yurts were like your yurts. Our women sewed mittens and hats for you.
And what then is your thanks? You insult me.” I was stunned. If the
Kazakhs refused
to have anything more to do with us we would be left with this sad lot of animals to stumble
about on the icy Chang Tang. Or the Kazakhs could just hand us over to the Chinese Communists
leveraging some advantage for themselves. Or their young men could simply murder us and
appropriate our stuff. What was there to stop them? We were completely at their mercy. I looked
at him and lowered my eyes. I remained silent.

After what seemed an interminable length of time he looked up and suddenly a smile spread
over his face, “Enough of this, let’s get on with it.” With that we began discussing in earnest what
we needed in the way of animals and how he could procure these for us. The animals that were
first produced did not necessarily belong to him. He had simply been the middle man. Doug had
not understood the finesse of bargaining, but charged ahead in a straightforward, business-like
manner: “I’ll give you so much gold; you get me so and so many animals.” But to the Kazakhs
as to many Central Asians, bargaining is an art form. For these Kazakhs it was an intricate game
involving carefully hidden finger signals and ultimately, a show of virtuosity. The bargaining
session was also a display to
impress fellow tribesmen who were watching. Doug had been deaf
to all these nuances. I returned to our tent with Stephan. Exactly what negotiations followed I
do not know. Doug did not make me a part of them. It probably cost more gold, but finally Hussein
Taiji produced an exceptionally fine group of horses and camels to take us over the Chang Tang to
Lhasa.

The Chang Tang

The grass was beginning to turn green. Lambing season was in full swing and some camels
were giving birth — always an anxious time for pastoralists. We were ready to move on, to set
out south from Timurlik, our home for over three months. We did not want to wait for warmer
weather because then the tundra-like Chang Tang would be almost impassable, full of muskeg and
puddles. Today all kinds of people are driving around on the high Chang Tang plateau in trucks,
even bicycles. They are still becoming hopelessly stuck in the muck. We also needed to cross a
fair-sized river to reach Ayakkum Kol, the lake to the west. This lake is near the summer pasture of
Hussein Taiji and his group. The easiest way to cross such a river is when it is frozen.

It was bone-chilling cold when we set out early in the morning riding the camels and leading
the horses. Few were about, but I remember seeing a young Kazakh woman whose eyes had met
mine on several occasions standing by our path with a smile to wish us Be Isme Illah, "in the name of God," as blessing for the road.

While still teen-aged my friend, Jobby (Wilber) Gundert, and I decided to walk from Kit Carson to Abbot's Pass in the Sierra Nevada in November. We bush whacked a trail through timber and cliffs. It took longer than we had anticipated. After a night huddled around a fire in the open, we finally reached a road. I remember the adventure with intense pleasure. And now riding away from Timurlik I knew I was embarking on the real thing. I thought that crossing the Chang Tang, using the route we were planning to take, had never been done by Westerners before. I was happy and eager to get started. Fear and worry were out of the question. I remember thinking that this is what I have always wanted to do. How wonderful that I have this opportunity.

Here I will take up Doug's log again, keeping his spelling, and adding my comments.


Doug used a barometer to estimate altitude.


#3 - March 22: Left #2 at 8:20 L.T. Marched W and SW and crossed range between Kizil Chap and At Atkan River. Altitude of pass 14,000'. Descended to At Atkan River and made camp at 1400 L.T. Very windy but not too cold. Altitude of camp 12,500 feet. Good water, graze and feed. Tuz Bulak [another nomadic encampment] visible to SW.

#4 - March 23: Stayed at #3 until 12:50 L.T. in order to give camels a chance to eat. Then marched south to entrance to Amban Ashkan Pass. Camped at 17:10 L.T. at elevation 13,700'. No water or fuel here - we brought both from #3. Light snow falling after dark. Saw two herds of "Jorgah" - some sort of upland gazelle with long straight horns. Saw many big horn sheep skulls but not very large horns. No apparent effect from elevation. Tomorrow we will cross pass and reach lake Ayaghkum [Ayakkum Kol].

There are two ridges between Timurlik and the lake of Ayakkum. The Amban Ashkan Pass is over the second, the Chimen (Qiman) Tagh.

To keep warm I wore a large sheepskin coat over a cloth coat I had bought in Lanzhou. With this I wore thick wool pants over a union suit. Kazakh women had made sheepskin mittens for us. To ride I wore thick socks with a pair of old army boots or I stuffed dry grass into felt boots for insulation and wore those. I wrapped a scarf around my neck and ears topped by a Kazakh tovak which of course indicated to all in the know exactly with which Kazakh group we were affiliated. Were we foolish enough to wear our tomakas as we approached the first Tibetan nomad tent? I put my gun in my saddle bag, not over my shoulder as earlier. We traveled well armed.

#5 - March 24: Left #4 at 8:20 L.T. and proceeded up valley and over Amban Ashkan pass, elevation 15,450'. Wind and fine snow at summit. Thence
down valley to black plain below in which Lake Ayagh Kun lies. Fog prevented seeing lake. Stopped for night (14:00 L.T.) at first river (very small – 15 feet wide). Elevation 13,300’. Cold wind from NW but no snow. Food for camels and firewood (bush) available. Will cross to other side of valley tomorrow and stay for day or so. Saw two kulan and many yak signs.

Once we were a day’s ride beyond easy range of Kazakh hunters we saw lots and lots of game. Large herds of wild ass (kiang) circled us playfully; some circled in quite close to take a better look and then skittered away. Many antelope with scimitar horns, the chiru or jorgah, stopped to watch, quite unafraid. Hussein Taiji had told me of snow leopards living along the reedy river valley flowing into Ayakkum Kol, but as he said, “leopards see you, you don’t see them.” Crossing higher ridges we could see blue sheep, argali, at a distance. We never came close to them, but not because they were afraid of man. Like the other animals they had not learned to fear man. It was a very cold Garden of Eden, rather like the lands recently vacated by the continental glaciers of the Pleistocene. This is how I imagined the land looked that my ancestors first entered in southern France. I felt transported back thousands and thousands of years to a time when ancient artists explored and decorated the lime stone caves of Niaux, Altamira, and Lascaux with herds of reindeer, aurochs, horses and frolicking ibex, and at Chauvet glittering-eyed lions, lord’s of creation, at a time before hunting dogs joined men to subdue them. I did not see signs of bears, the special “other” for the artists of the late Pleistocene in Eurasia, which did not mean there were none. I had heard of bears roaming near Ghaz Kol.

#6 - March 25: Left #5 at 10:15 L.T. marched SE, then S, then SW to point on west bank Petelik river. Amban Ashkan bears N 13° W. Elevation of camp 13,600’. Arrived at 17:00. Many kulan and jorga, especially along bluff to east on river. View of Terme Tass mountains to south. AAF chart 333 apparently has location of Ming Bulag (which is an area about 10 sq. km.) and Samsa Bulag interchanged. Terme Tass means in Uigher [sic] “Stone Gate” which refers to entrance to pass. Petelik means in Kazak “Lousy” which refers to game – the area is “lousy” with it. Petelik river is about one mile wide – braided – with not much water now. In summer it is about one km wide and two to three feet deep. Good graze for camels and good firewood available, but food for horses scarce.

We generally rode the camels and kept the horses for speed. Bactrian camels are more comfortable to ride than horses, but also slower. The rider sits between the two humps leaning back quite comfortably. I named my camel “Sanctimonious Sam” because of his supercilious expression. Doug’s camel had been gelded late in life and was especially ill-tempered, eagerly trying to bite through our heavy sheepskin coats. He also spat foully. Riding allowed us to cover more ground, but it was awfully cold on top of a camel. We had to get off and walk to get the circulation going.

#6 - March 26: Spent day at #6, feeding camels and gathering firewood – this being best place for sometime where wood is available (or rather brush). Roots are thick and make good fuel. Brush is called in Kazak “Kara Barak” and in Uigher “Kuruk.”

#7 - March 27: Left #6 at 08:40 and rode up Petelik river until 14:15. Camped on west bank where a number of springs from Ming Bulak enter river. Elevation 13,900’. Weather cloudy and snow squalls frequent.
Kazaks returned today after taking us this far. Tomorrow we reach foot of Terme Tass pass over Su-Petelin Tau [Arkataq Shan]. Pass entrance bears S75°E. Water here but very little feed for camels or horses. Fuel scarce. Weather on trip so far pretty poor - every day but first two have been cloudy most of time - snow squalls common. Today coldest day so far.

Most of the Kazaks who had accompanied us this far left us heading over to Lake Acchiq Kol and then on north to the Tarim Basin. Two Kazaks decided to accompany us further and then planned to take a westerly route along the Chang Tang to Kashmir.

We traveled up the main river flowing into Ayakkum Kol, taking a southeasterly course, and then turning abruptly southwest to find the “Stone Gateway.” This route is clearly shown on Mueller’s map of Mongolia.

#8 - March 28: Left #7 at 10:05 L.T. marched S 75°E across plain until 21:00, when camped for night on river bed (river flowing out of Terme Tass pass entrance, although at time we didn’t know it). NW winds and snow squalls all day - marched entirely by compass. After camping weather cleared and violent, cold wind blew all night down river valley. Water here but no feed or fuel.

#9 - March 29: Left #8 at 10:00, marched west until 14:00, towards what appeared to be pass entrance. Crossed end of wide valley running about SE-NW, conspicuous rocky peak at head of valley. On arriving at western end of valley obvious that pass entrance not there. Since feed for camels (very little) was available, decided to stay here one day and scout for pass. Fuel (dung) available, water at spring about 3km south.

#9 - March 30: Spent part of day at #9. I scouted up valley to foot of rock peak; no pass. Saw one Yak, and got slight case snow blindness in right eye. Vasili went back to river (#8) entrance and found signs of route (tracks, fire places) and grave of Kazak. Left #9 at 17:00 and arrived at #10 at 21:00.

Doug had maps and sketches which the Kazaks back in Timurlik had made with him plus a National Geographic map and Air Force maps. He was aware of maps from earlier explorers, but these mostly showed the parts we were traveling through as white, that is, unexplored. We sighted our trail using Kazakh graves several times. Vasili still remembers the names of some of those who died, apparently not long before we journeyed past. Kazaks had told him they died of “gas,” maybe altitude sickness?

#10 - March 30: Spent night at pass entrance, water, some dung for fuel, no feed. Weather since March 29 has been fair during day, with strong NW to W winds; some clouds forming towards evening when wind dies.

#11 - March 31: Left #10 at 09:00, marched due south up river valley and at 12:00 arrived at summit of pass. Elevation 15,800’. Stone marker at top. At summit instead of view to south we saw only wide snow-filled plain, a few hundred feet below, with mountains on all sides. Large rock peak (estimated height 17,000 ft) which was visible from #9, was conspicuous to right. Acting on principle that rivers eventually get out of mountains, we followed largest first south, then SE, and finally
stopped when river ended in lake, elevation 15,400'. Spent night here.

Water, fuel (dung) and very little feed.

We had climbed onto the Arka Tagh, the ridge between the two mountain massifs of the Kunlun escarpment: Bokalik Tagh (Bukadaban) to the east and Ulugh Muztagh to the west. Before us lay the Chang Tang — a great white ocean with low, island hills scattered here and there; high peaks sparkled on the horizon. High, high above us was the huge dome of the sky, a deep blue, at night luminescent with stars.

We descended to the white vastness below. Relations were tense. Then I lost my gun. I should have carried it slung over my shoulder, but my back hurt. I laid it in front of me over the neck of the camel. Doug rode by and warned me that I might lose it that way. Then I did. I thought I knew just where it must have fallen off, but Doug did not trust my eyesight. He turned the horse he was riding, and rode back to find it. After half an hour or so he came back holding the gun. He was furious. "You idiot. Can't you do anything right. You can't saddle a pony properly without falling off, you lose all your money. I am utterly fed up!" What could I say? I let his words pour over me. Then we remounted and rode on.

Next day Doug suddenly stopped our little caravan, ordering all to dismount. He made us form a circle around him. "I have decided that you, Frank, have no business over me. Then we remounted and rode on.

We called it quits early for the day and made camp. I went inside the tent after finishing tethering animals, unloading, getting snow to melt, and helping bring in our bedding. It was my turn that day to start the fire. Leofka and I had been taking turns. I sat down in my usual spot. Soon darkness fell. I waited what would happen next. All was quiet inside the tent, but the heavy breathing of five, weary men. The wind clawed at the thin canvas. Would it hold up or would the wind shred this meager protection from the icy world outside? The fire died down. It grew colder. I shrank back into my sheep skins. I was so tired. Finally I fell into a fitful sleep.

Where exactly were we? It is difficult to tell from Doug’s log. My guess is that we were at the point where our trail, which is probably the same one Hussein Taiji and other Kazakhs used to flee westward to Kashmir later, crosses another trail which skirts the massive peak of Ulugh Mustag’s western flank. Crossing this trail is another trail that leads straight north over the Karmiran pass to the Takla Makan Desert, and south to Shegarkhung Lung and Ziling Tso (Qilinhu), a large salt lake. If this is correct then it should have been later than March 31. On the other hand, our staying an extra day as Doug notes in his log, makes sense as we took up a lot of time sorting ourselves out and saying goodbye to the two Kazakhs. This was a serious break. Doug did not want have me along. He had business that I had declined to be a part of by not rejoining the CIA. It was not simply that he did not like me, or I him. Our feelings were more complicated.

Once on the Chang Tang, Doug cheered up. He interested himself in the geology, flora and fauna and sent reports back by short wave radio in code. I think he had a Geiger counter with him. He may well have been prospecting for uranium and other minerals, hardly the first Western "gate crasher" to have looked for Tibet’s riches. He could have been prospecting without my being aware of it as we did not ride in a tight group. Doug had a camera, a Leica. I do not know what became of it. Maybe in the chaos of our lethal encounter with Tibetan border patrols it got tossed away, or,
of course, it may have been in one of Mackiernan's duffle bags and has been hidden away all these years as "top secret" in the shadowy vaults of the State Department or at Langley, headquarters of the CIA. I had a camera but the film froze. When I had it processed in Lhasa the film was a blank.

I was not knowledgeable enough in wildlife biology to make adequate observations of forage and game to be of help now to George Schaller and those who are establishing game preserves on the Chang Tang. As of 2003, there now are several: Arjin Shan in the northeast (1983); Mid-Kunlun (2001); on the Chang Tang plateau proper, 1993 reserve; to the east, the Kekexli reserve (1995). Other areas are under study.95

#12 - April 1: Left #11 at 08:00. Retraced route to where river started, then headed SW across another valley. At far SW end river flows into this valley from SW. Went up river valley to point where river makes about turn to NW. Here turned south up small stream and crossed over pass – elevation 16,300’. Marker at top (pile of stones) and stone slab set up on hill-side to right of route. After crossing pass went due south down little valley and camped for night to right of valley (W) entrance. Elevation 16,000’. From top of pass the Kara Tau hills visible to south, with pass over them bearing due south. Fuel (dung) and fair feed but no water except snow.

#13 - April 2: Left #12 at 11:05 and marched due south until 15:25, when we arrived at small hill (about 40 feet high) on north bank of river flowing W to E (no water now). Stone pile on hill top, also signs of other travellers long ago. Volcanic cone (Kara Tau) to SW and much red and black scoria in riverbed. Dung fuel, fair feed, but no water except snow. Day fair, strong WNW winds all day, stopping at night. Will spend tomorrow here feeding camels.

Could these other travelers have been Sven Hedin and his party? Sven Hedin, a loner, had been the sole Westerner on his expeditions. No questions of chain of command, partnership there. After spending a winter in Timurlik, he explored lake Ayyakum Kol with his collapsible boat, then climbed onto the Kunlun escarpment and entered Tibet accompanied by a Buriat Mongol monk who spoke fluent Tibetan as he had spent years in Lhasa. He knew that the Tibetan government tried to block Western gatecrashers from reaching Lhasa and would find his behavior a betrayal.

Once we made camp, and as long as there was some light, I read War and Peace. I would escape into the warm, human world of Prince Andre standing in a summer garden at night listening as Natasha, unaware of his presence, pours out her heart to the moon. Finally, I would crawl into my sleeping bag with all my clothes on, snuggle under my heavy sheep skin and listened to the night noises as the icy wind blew over our frozen world. Sometimes a wolf howled. Or was that sound a snow leopard? A camel snorted on the other side of the thin canvas wall. By morning the wind had died down. The icy world lay still and hostile before us.

#13 - April 3: Spent day at #13, made radio contact. Tomorrow will leave for foot of pass over Kara Tau. Weather fair and windy.

#14 - April 4: Left #13 at 11:00 L.T. marched four hours due south to foot of pass over Kara Tau. Camped in river bed (dry). Snow squall as we arrived. No fuel, water (except snow) or feed.

#15 - April 5: Left #14 at 09:00L.T. - up river and over Kara Tau (elevation 16,500’) then down river valley which turned to SE and entered lake. We left valley and proceeded due south to grassy plain.
intersected by various small, dry river beds. Camped for night. Fair
feed for camels, no water except snow, fuel scarce. Weather fair,
strong wind all day, night calm. Elevation 16,200'. Shot yak near dry
lake about four miles WSW of camp.

A big bull yak planted himself in our path, challenging our way. He was over six feet tall at the
shoulders with long sharp horns. Tibetan nomads hold wild, old bulls in great awe and believe that
they are protected as the special property of the Gods. Without much thought Doug fired at the
magnificent beast. It was so large we could not turn him over. We cut off some slabs of meat, then
left the rest for the vultures that had already spotted the kill. They hovered close with piercing,
gimlet eyes. Early in spring after a hard winter the bull had not an ounce of fat on him. The meat
was too tough to cook at that altitude. We fed the meat to our camels. To see a camel, with wild
frenzied eyes devour a large chunk of bloody flesh is a horrible sight. A cold wind whipped by.
I felt uneasy. Had we broken some powerful taboo? To kill so magnificent an animal for shoe
leather was a wasteful, desperate act. We were so small, so insignificant in the vast landscape.
Would our animals survive with the inadequate fodder? There was still so much frozen land for us
to cross until we returned to the land of men. Wolves followed our little caravan expectantly. As in
the Northern Rockies, pica whistled eerily under rocks.

We did not need to hunt yak for meat. While still at Timurlik, Doug and Vasili had shot plenty
of wild ass and gazelle which Kazakhs helped them salt down. Unfortunately they used natural
salt that contained Epsom salt and we all suffered from the side effects. Leaving the tent at night
was a rather gruesome experience. If there was no other feed our stock would eat meat, even dried,
salted meat. We had large quantities of Kazakh biscuits, bursak, for our main food. These were
not simply biscuits, but cooked and cured meat, somewhat like jerky, wrapped in dough and then
fried and frozen. As long as the cold weather held it was easily kept in large sacks. Leonid was the
cook. As soon as we stopped to prepare our campsite for the night Leonid or I started the animal
dung fire with some dry fuzz and lichen we had collected, put on the tea kettle and tossed in some
of these frozen jiao zi, to give them their Mandarin Chinese name, making a hot soup. At that
altitude it took a long time to get food cooked. But we had time, lots of time. Doug would make
radio contact with Vasili turning the handle to power the primitive field radio and Doug tapping
out the Morse code. What he was reporting, I do not know.

#16 - April 6: Left #15 at 10:00 L.T., followed old trail generally S or
SSW, arriving at east end of Sabun Kul lake at 14:30 L.T. Lake frozen,
water very alkaline. Made camp on NE shore. Elevation 16,300'.
Weather fair, windy with strong W winds during day. Feed fair, dung
fuel very plentiful, water (from melted snow in river beds) available
but takes looking for. Will spend tomorrow here feeding camels. Saw
two yaks.

Sabun Lake is not marked on the maps I have available now.

#16 - April 7: Spent day feeding Camels at #16.

#17 - April 8: Left #16 at 09:00 L.T. followed old trail up pass at SE
corner of Sabun Kol. After crossing pass trail (occasionally marked
by stone pile) led generally SW, across many dry water courses and
over small hills running East and West. After crossing last hill saw
Ungurlik Tau (Ulugh Muztag) to south with big snow-covered peak to SW
and curious dome-shaped peak to S. In foreground the Kizil Uzun (Red
river) runs (dry) from SE to NW. Crossed this river and camped for
night about 5 km SW of river among grass-covered little hillocks. No water, fair feed for camels and dung fuel. Elevation 16,300’.

#18 - April 9: Left #17 at 0855, marched SW across another river (dry), then S along west bank, then SE (re-crossing river) and gradually upwards through small hills towards dome-shaped peak. Re-cross Kizil Uzun and at 1800 camped next to peak (volcanic cone). Elevation 17,100’. Dung fuel, snow for water, no feed.

#19 - April 10: Left #18 at 900 L.T. crossed small ridge between cone and cliff to W (elevation 17,300’) and descended into valley, (E to W) in which are many small red hills, grass covered red dunes, lake to SE. At south side valley closed by range low hills and sand dunes. Peaks of Boka Dawan Tau (Kum Sun) visible to SSW. Camped at 1300 in hollow due south of cone. Water (salty), fuel and fair grass.

If Boka Dawan Tau is the Bokalik or Bukadaban mountain range, then we must have circled around this mountain range far to the east and then turned westward following a string of lakes. Perhaps Doug really meant SSE, not SSW. There is a Buka Manga Range on the 1952 map which rises to the south and west of Ulugh Muztagh. Is that what he saw?

#20 - April 11: Left #19 at 0900 L.T., marching SW to get around sand dunes, then S up river valley in hills south of main valley, then down another valley until 1700, when arrived at water flowing W to E between two lakes, with Buka Dawan visible across wide valley to S. Elevation 16,300’. Good water, excellent Grass and plenty of dung. Will stay here two days feeding camels.

#20 - April 12 and 13: Stayed in camp feeding camels, also tried to pick out valley leading to pass.

#21 - April 14: Left #20 at 0900, marched SE across valley and then up river valley, generally south. Crossed pass at top (17,300’) then down about 200 feet to valley. Hills all around. Camped for night - ice for water but no fuel or food.

#22 - April 15: Left at 0845, marched SW down river valley then finally S over hills (17,700’) to another valley. Small hills in center of valley - many Yaks grazing and good grass, also dung fuel plentiful – snow for water. Shot some Yaks for hide, etc. Camped at small hills where Yaks grazed (elevation 17,100’).

#23 - April 16: Left #22 at 0700, marched SSW to end of valley and then down river valley (Bizan Kalzar – lost calf) generally SW, until river emptied into lake; turned SE about 2 miles from lake and proceeded until 1800, when arrived at area of very good grass. Snow for water and dung fuel available. Elevation 16,600’.

#24 - April 17: Left #23 at 0830, marched SE to go around large hill to south, then due S all day across one range of small hills after another. Finally 1800 crossed series of hills and arrived near N bank of large lake running E and W (salt). Camped for night in valley leading to lake. Water (slightly salt) in valley, some grass, dung and brush for fuel. One of our best camels stampeded during the night.
When we made camp we hobbled our animals and went about our house-keeping chores. Camels give milk for a year before coming in fresh. I think that was a she camel that stampeded. We had not been milking her. Was she looking for a mate or did a snow leopard spook her? There were some heated words at the time questioning if the animals had been adequately hobbled.

Everything took a lot of time because of the altitude. With passes above 17,000 feet, even though we had been spending half a year above 10,000 feet, it was still difficult to breath. It was especially tricky to duck under the smoke from our dung fire into the tent without choking, although dung smoke is not as acrid as wood smoke. In the morning, we had to catch our animals and untie the hobbles that were often frozen. The animals had wandered into marshy ground that had melted a bit under the midday sun and then frozen solid during the night. Doug and my hands turned black and then peeled from frost bite. The Russians were more careful. Their hands did not freeze. Despite the raisins we were soon showing signs of scurvy, nasty boils full of pus. Old fillings were falling out of our teeth. Vasili, ever a most resourceful man (unfortunately he did not bring his balalaika along on the Chang Tang to cheer us up) carved a handsome tooth pick for me. Riding along we relished our hand-rolled cigarettes, although getting them lighted in the wind while riding was a real accomplishment. To light a cigarette for another became the ultimate act of kindness.

#25 - April 18:  Spent most of morning looking for camel, which we did not find. Finally left #24 at about 1100. Went round W end of lake, then SW, and finally S toward what looked like lowest part of range of small hills running E and W. Arrived at base of hills about 1830. Good water from spring, plenty of dung fuel, but no grass.

#26 - April 19:  Left #25 at 1000, marched S up river valley, making detour slightly to W to avoid salt spring basin; finally over top of hills S across valley to entrance to another valley, arriving there about 1330. Camped (since needed make radio contact) just inside valley. Some grass and dung, snow for water. Will continue up valley tomorrow.

#27 - April 20:  Left #26 at 0900, proceeded up valley to S. After marching all day until 1800 reached SE bank of salt lake ringed with hills to S, W, NW. Camped near base of small hill to keep out of violent W wind. Water from snow, some grass and dung.

#28 - April 21:  Left #27 at 0830. Marched south over many small hills – about 1800 crossed last hill and descended SW via river valley to large salt lake. Went around this lake to E and camped on E bank. No water, no fuel, some grass.

#29 - April 22:  Left #28 at 0930 – marched SE up wide valley. At foot of valley went S up river to W of red peak, finally crossing pass (17,800′) about 1630. Camped in dry river bed at 17,300′. Snow, no fuel, no grass.

#30 - April 23:  Left #29 at 0800, marched SW towards low spot in hills to south. After crossing several small hills arrived at river valley leading S. Marched down this and camped at 1400 since radio contact needed. Some grass, dung plentiful, water. Many signs of Kazak camps.

#31 - April 24:  Left #30 at 0900. Marched SW to West end of hill blocking view to S from river valley. At west end found wide valley lead up and
due S. Went up this valley to head, then over several small hills and finally reached head of pass (17,300'). Followed river down S side of hills — very steep and rocky (granite). Many Tibetan sheep folds (made of stone), main stores, etc. From signs believe people left about one month ago. About 2 miles down valley camped beside good spring. Tibetan sheep fold and enormous quantities of Yak dung, but no grass. Elevation 16,600'.

#32 - April 25: Left #31 at 0900. Marched about 2 miles S down valley to where grass excellent. Stopped to feed camels. Brook from spring at Camp 31 runs by here. Plenty of fuel. Best camp since Ming Bulak. Large salt lake to S and SW about 7 miles distant. Wind light today and weather mild.
My Log

Here end Doug Mackiernan’s entries. I continued the log when I had retrieved it, after Tibetans had looted our things. I tried to continue Doug’s record as best I could, adding to it at intervals. I wrote much of it at Shen Tsa (Xainza, Senja) Dzong. I did not have a watch. Later Doug’s watch was returned and I wore that. The log was the only calendar I had and even when Doug kept it some of the dates are confusing.

Vasili did not help me bring the log up-to-date as his Mandarin was not good enough and of course, I knew no Russian or Kazakh. We communicated mostly by pointing.

The following [sic; should be “foregoing“] is as far as the road log was kept. The following (although kept up to date, is historical) will be given in chronological order. Not having Mac’s notes on altitude, direction and time, altitude will mostly be left out and time and direction approximated.

#33 - April 26: Left #32 at 0700 and marched SW down stream bed and then S across end of lake and SE up valley over small ridge and 2nd ridge. After descending ridge into stream bed made camp at 1730. One camel could barely make it down and it was decided to abandon it in the morning. Dung fuel, ice in stream, moderate graze.

#34 - April 27: Left camp #33 at 0730 and marched five hours SE toward W side red cone-shaped peak and over pass (17,800’) and then S down stream bed (water) to EW valley with lake, 4k x 4k in West end Valley. Upon reaching valley marched 3k W to camp on NE corner lake. Very high snow-covered peaks to E of red cone. Also snow-covered peaks to W of lake. Dung fuel, water about 1.5 km west of camp. Good graze.

#35 - April 28: Left #34 at 0800 and marched SE and SW 5 hrs around end of lake and over hills. Then SW up valley to head 3 hr and then 1 hr SE down valley to spring. Should have gone S over hills rather than SW up valley. At spring old Tibetan quarters. Water good. Plenty of dung fuel, but no graze for camels and but little for horses. However, there was very good graze in valley we had just left. (The correct way to travel in this area is to carry cooking and drinking water and fuel with you and pitch camp upon reaching good graze or dark.) Since camp
#24 We have run into the strange phenomenon of whenever there is water there is no graze for the camels although or perhaps because the water holes are Tibetan camp grounds. Camels are naturally a browsing, not grazing, animal. Thus, they can't graze as close as either Yak or sheep and if Yak and/or sheep have grazed an area beforehand. This is especially true since graze near springs is moss rather than grass.

#36 - April 28: [date the same as above in log] Left #35 at 0700 and traveled SE down stream to wide SSE to WNW and then N to S valley then left stream and traveled S over slope of long hills. Valley enclosed by hills all but to exact S. Camped at 1630 at stream NW end of valley. Far to south clouds of salt can be seen arising in the strong wind from large lake or lake bed running W. To our SE is another small salt lake. Grass and water good. Dung fuel. (Dung fuel all the way to Shen Tsa Dzong).

#37 - April 29: Mac's birthday.

I have this wrong. Doug's birthday was on the 25th, the last day he wrote in his log. The first four entries in my log, which I wrote up as time permitted, seem to overlap Doug's last four entries! I did not notice the Kazakh campsites Doug mentions for April 23 #30.

Finally, the land began sloping down towards Central Tibet. It was becoming warmer. Things cheered up. We were following a stream bed which began to gurgle with running water. Everybody was eager to meet Tibetans and end this adventure. Vasili pointed out a dark spot he saw through binoculars on the horizon. It grew and soon we saw what looked like small dark beetles nestled in a draw before us — yak-hair Tibetan tents! These are quite different from the yurts or gers of Kazakhs and Mongols. Like the tents of nomads of southwest Iran, they are more like windbreaks not the solid, cozy dwellings of northern nomads. To make them livable on the Chang Tang they are generally pitched inside enclosures built of rocks. Doug and I walked ahead to meet our first Tibetan nomads. We put earlier problems aside. We were joking and feeling light-hearted. Looking back now, Doug's blowing up about the gun had cleared the air and we had finally become friends. Our adventures were surely coming to an end.

Left #36 at 0800. Traveled straight South down valley to west of small lake, crossed stream which must run into small lake. Another stream to W which comes from NW to W of ridge bordering stream at which we camped. Stream runs S upon entering valley. At 1100 Tibetan tents on hillside to SSE seen through glasses. Mac and I (armed) proceeded ahead of main party which was to follow slowly. After about one hour Tibetans saw us. Mac proceeded about 1/4 mile ahead of me waving white flag. Tibetans sent delegate (girl) to meet Mac. They grinned at each other and tried to speak to each other. Then girl left with us following slowly behind. The girl met a man at the top of the hill and talked for a few minutes. The man unlimbered gun and both disappeared over hill. We followed slowly. Upon reaching top of hill Tibetans were seen reinforcing a small family fortification with rocks and with guns ready for use. I went 1/2 way to them waving white flag until Mac stopped me and told me to come back.

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a According to the article in the New York Times, July 29, 1950, Mac's birthday was on April 25.
The young girl came out to greet us in the Tibetan manner of respect: sticking her tongue out at us and sharply drawing in her breath. We greeted her by waving and then went back to where we had left the others and our animals. We began setting up camp about 50 yards up the draw from the Tibetan's fortified tent site. We chose a fine spot to make camp. It was a place where water, fodder, yak chips were all conveniently together, but we did not have a clear view of the surrounding countryside. We put up our tent, began unloading the animals, stowing our gear and weapons, and lighting a fire.

Mac's idea was to put up camp, make a fire and act as peacefully as possible hoping thus to convince the Tibetans that we could not be Kazaks because Kazaks wouldn't act in such a fashion and that in any case we were friendly and not after sheep or property. At about this time the rest of party appeared and we pitched camp at E bank of above-mentioned stream. Immediately after pitching camp six men on horseback were seen approaching us from W or NW. In this general direction was a Tibetan tent and two men with a flock of sheep.

As I explain in the official report which I wrote in New Delhi for the U.S. State Department the horsemen wore some kind of uniform. They were a Tibetan government patrol embedded with the nomads. In our heavy sheepskin coats we probably looked no different than other nomads, maybe Kazakh nomads, maybe Kazakh nomad raiders. According to Heinrich Harrer, local boempos, "officials," could call on the national military for help with bandits, however defined. This was a popular assignment as the soldiers received the loot as compensation.

It was decided that I, unarmed and with a small gift of raisins, tobacco and cloth, waving white cloth would go to two men and try and make friends. Mac then changed his mind and told me to go see people in rock fortification. (Two of which were now on top of slight hill between fort and camp watching our activity). Upon my approach the two men made for their fort with Bessac and flag close behind. I made certain that they understood that I was not armed and stopped about 50 yards from fort. Tibetans waved me on but kept guns pointed at what seemed to me to be the middle of my abdomen. Upon arriving at fort I saw what appeared to be a biological family of about 7 people including women and children. They had three old but fancy muzzle-loaders. I made my presentation, convinced them I was an American and a friend, and started to return to camp. They also left their fort and started on their way to their tent. Just before reaching top of rise, before [our] tent could be seen, shots were heard to my immediate front. I assumed that the six men had fired on tent. I returned to Tibetans to try to persuade one of them to go with me to area of conflict and establish peace. However none would go. They all returned to their fort. I therefore proceeded alone to area of [our] tent from where frequent shots were heard. Waving my white flag I reached top of rise and was about to approach Tibetans firing on [our] tent who were behind slight embankment about 75 yards from tent and 100 yards from me in attempt to stop this nonsense. Just then Tibetans rose from behind embankment and beckoned to someone to come to them (not me).

Here is how I remember the situation now. Suddenly, while getting a fire going we heard gun shots. We were not sure from which direction they came. I think these may have been warning shots, but do not really know. I offered to go alone to the Tibetans, whom Mac and I had already
visited together, in order to find out from them what was going on. I reached the tent we had already visited. The Tibetans did not invite me in, but otherwise did not seem hostile. They offered me a bowl of hot tea (no doubt with butter and some yak hair inadvertently mixed in) and then pointed over to a small hill to indicate from where the gunshots had come. I motioned that they should let the others know who we were and that we were friendly. They were afraid. I walked back by myself.

Four men with hands above head left [our] tent (one slightly behind the rest) and approached the Tibetans who also approached our men. Just before the two groups met two shots, Mac's shout, "Don't shoot," and another shot were heard. Three men fell to the ground. The fourth was running to the tent. A fusillade of shots was heard and when about 1/2 of the way to the tent the left leg of the person running doubled under him, but he managed to make it to the tent.

As I came to the crest of the hill I heard shots and assumed the horsemen had attacked our tent I saw all four of my comrades emerge from our tent together, arms raised and with a white flag. Four Tibetans dismounted and approached with guns leveled. Suddenly, one pulled the trigger and then the others followed suit. I do not remember feeling afraid, just very focused on my next move.

Here is what Vasili remembered when we reminisced together years later at his house in Hawaii:

"Douglas knew I was five years in turmoil with Kazakhs, fighting against communists and so on. I well knew the warlike quality of the Kazakhs and their belligerence towards all Asians. Generally, Doug trusted me and would follow my advice, listen to me. We were like brothers. But all that ended when we saw our first Tibetan teepees. I told Doug that we should put our camp up on the plateau, look around and not let them see us first. Then we could send one of us to them with a white flag. But Doug refused, 'This time we do it my way!' That brotherhood ended when we put up the binoculars and see the Tibetan teepee the first time.

"I said to Douglas, 'Let's go up there, on that high plateau above without them seeing us. We go around that way. We get the camels to lie down and make camp up there and we watch these Tibetans. Then we send someone to contact them with a white flag, one man and then later we can walk slowly up to their tent.' Doug would hear none of that.

"As soon as our tent was up, Frank volunteered to follow the Tibetan girl. Maciernan stood in the open tent flap watching him walk towards the nomad's tent as I (Vasili) crouched beside him taking the safety off a gun. I heard him say, 'Bessac won't make it. He will die today.' Later he ordered all of us to leave the weapons inside the tent, put our hands up and walk out all together. I knew this was crazy. Maciernan stood up, and stared down at us, 'We are going to do it my way this time. No guns.' We Russians looked at him, looked at each other, and slowly rose to our feet behind him.

"It was the most dangerous thing I have ever seen. It got more dangerous with every step that we took out of the tent. We raised our hands above our heads. Leonid and Stefan spread out in a line just beside Maciernan and I walked behind him, directly towards the knot of Tibetans gathered thirty yards in front of the tent.

"The Tibetans watched closely as we walked towards them and a few of their guns sagged towards the earth. Doug continued to walk straight towards the Tibetans, with his hands above his

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\( ^1 \) Vasili and Frank reminisced, interrupting each other. Vasili had told his version so often, it was obvious, that he told it like a litany. I have approximated his remarks.
head. I began to sidle slowly off towards a few rocks on the side and held back a little. I looked over Mac's shoulders, right down the barrels of the guns pointed at us. Doug had the white flag in his hand, and held it high as he walked steadily, slowly towards the Tibetans. The scrap of cloth whipped in the wind. The Tibetan in front stepped back a pace. I felt rising panic and fear. We were now just ten yards from the line of Tibetan gunmen. "Douglas has gone crazy. He is going to get us all killed."

"When I heard the guns I was startled into instant action. Everything accelerated and slowed down at the same time. There was no more fear. Crouching low to the earth I turned sideways to the gunmen and ran. I think I heard Leonid when he screamed one word in Russian, "Momma!"

"I tried to run but my leg would not support me. I stumbled. The Tibetans stopped firing. I looked down at my leg. I saw blood. I felt no pain. Then I saw Bessac. He was walking calmly towards the Tibetans, shouting at them. None of the Tibetans were looking at me. They were staring at Bessac ...

A great deal of talk was heard and the six men retired behind the embankment. I remained standing during this time with flag in hand on top of the rise. More shots were fired and judging from the sound of bullets past my ear I assumed this inhospitable act was directed at me and accordingly hit the ground where I sprawled as if dead. Just as I was about to raise my head more shots were fired some from the tent and some from the Tibetans. I quickly dropped my head. After the passage of a certain amount of time (3-30 minutes) I again raised my head. No one shot at it. From the prone position I began to wave the flag. I also for the first time noticed that my right hand was bleeding profusely. I thought it had been cut by a rock although thought it strange that splinters of wood were lying flat across the wound — not stuck in it. The flag pole was also splintered and torn where my hand had been. How strange I thought.

This idea of waving a white piece of cloth as a flag seems odd. Why did Mackiernan and I not have a U.S. flag? As far as I remember, no one brought one along. We left the little flag on the masthead of Mac's jeep outside Urumqi when we "joined the Kazakhs."

The Tibetans were now standing and waved me forward. I approached slowly with both arms and [sic] stretched. It was impossible to not make half glances to the side — were those three grotesque shapes in the right men or sacks? Before this question had been settled I was in front of the six men who had formed a semi-circle with rifles on the ground in front of them. They appeared to be wearing a uniform of some sort. I was told to "ke-tau" [knock my head on the ground before them]. This made me angry and I told them I was an American in Chinese, Mongolian and English. The leader made as if to grab his gun. Unable to "ke-tau" I looked beseechingly, I guess, at the othersoldiers. A sympathetic face met mine and he frantically pointed to the ground. I fell to my knees and stayed there. That seemed (at that time a natural inclination) sufficient. My hands were bound behind and I was made to walk in front of the soldiers to the tent. Vasilii fell to his knees and "lao yehed" [asked for mercy from] the conquerors. I discovered that I was humming the song "Who."
WASHINGTON, July 29—Douglas S. MacKiernan, forced to flee his post as United States vice consul at Urumchi in Northwest China last September, was accidentally shot and killed by Tibetan border guards at the Tibetan border on his way out of Communist China.

Ten months after Mr. MacKiernan’s hasty departure from the capital of Sinkiang Province, now held by the Chinese Communists, the State Department announced today that the vice consul, who was 37 years of age, had been shot last April 13. The guards, according to the department, had apparently mistaken the party, at that point traveling by camel, for bandits or Communist raiders.

A native runner took twenty-seven days to carry the news of the incident to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. The messenger’s sketchy report was then relayed to United States authorities in New Delhi, India, Mr. MacKiernan’s destination.

Mr. MacKiernan was accompanied on his caravan by Frank Bessac, a scholar from Lodi, Calif., who had been studying in Northwest China. Mr. Bessac was not hurt, and is now making his way to New Delhi. Two native servants, however, were killed in the shooting and another was injured.

A State Department spokesman said that the Tibetan authorities had expressed their regrets over the incident, but details of the apology were not revealed.

Mr. MacKiernan closed down the consulate in Urumchi last Sept. 27, just before the city was turned over to the Chinese Communists.

Following the route that had been blazed a month before by John Hall Paxton, another vice consul; Mrs. Paxton, and vice consul John Dreesen, who also were

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U.S. CONSUL KILLED
IN ERROR IN TIBET

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slepting the Communists, Mr. MacKlernan and his party set out by
jeep for New Delhi, 1,200 miles, a desert and several mountain
ranges away.

As the travelers made their way southwest, across the Takla Makan
desert and into the Himalaya Mountains, they were forced to
change, first to horses and finally to camels, to push through the
rugged, isolated country.

Caught By Winter Storms

Before they had crossed the
Himalayas, winter set in and sav-
avage storms completely blocked
the mountain passes. From last fall to
early spring, the MacKlernan party
encamped in a small nameless
mountain village, waiting for the
spring thaws to open the moun-
tain trails again.

It was on the last lap of their
journey that the two Americans
and three native servants encou-
tered the Tibetan border guards
who, mistaking the identity of the
camel riders, opened fire.

While he was still believed to be
in China, Mr. MacKlernan had been
charged in Communist propaganda,
recently re-broadcast by Moscow,
with organizing bands of Chinese
for resisting the advancing Com-
munists. The State Department
has denied that the Vice Consul
had undertaken such a task and a
spokesman described the charges
today as “absolutely untrue.”

A native of Canton, Mass., Mr.
MacKlernan is survived by his
wife, Margaret, and 2-year-old
twin children, who now live in
Fairfax, Calif., and by his parents,
Mr. and Mrs. Douglas S. MacKlern-
an Sr. of Canton.

Mr. MacKlernan entered the
Foreign Service in May, 1947, after
five years of military service.
After graduating from Massachu-
setts Institute of Technology in
1936, he went to work for the
United States Weather Bureau.
He joined the Army Air Forces in
1942, served in Alaska and China,
and was discharged with the rank
of lieutenant colonel.

Brief Consular Career

The vast distances separating
westernmost China from the outer
world have made the brief consular
career of Douglas S. MacKlernan
somewhat vague and indistinct.

Foreign service records indicate
that Mr. MacKlernan, who had
been appointed a consular clerk at
Nanking, May 8, 1947, was, on
May 1, 1948, assigned as a vice
consul at Urumchi.

At that time the region, always
the scene of banditry and political
disorder, was in the throes of what
virtually amounted to civil war.
Several local factions, some of
them well armed with equipment
obtained from the Japanese after
Japan’s surrender, were fighting
with partisans of the Communist
regime.

Reunited yesterday by telephone
at his home in Canton, Mass.,
Douglas MacKlernan, Mr. Mac-
Klernan’s father, said that he and
Mrs. MacKlernan had received
their last direct word from their
son on Sept. 3, 1948. He was in
Urumchi at that time.

Mr. MacKlernan was born in
Mexico City, April 25, 1913. His
father was a merchant there.
When the junior Mr. MacKlernan
was a child his family settled in
Stoughton, Mass., where he at-
tended high school.

In 1940 Mr. MacKlernan went to
Cuba as part of an M.I.T. project
to study tropical storms, and in
the following year he made a sim-
ilar survey at San Juan, Puerto
Rico.

Mr. MacKlernan is also survived
by four brothers, Angus, Malcolm
and Stuart, who live in Canton,
and Duncan MacKlernan of
Augusta, Ga.
This song, of course, is not about "who," but about "you." I must have changed the verses or never heard it with the proper verses. It was one of those songs that GIs sang during WWII.¹

\begin{verbatim}
Du, du liegst mir am Herzen,
Du, du liegst mir im Sinn,
Du, du machst mir viel Schmerzen,
Weißt nicht wie gut ich dir bin.
\end{verbatim}

You, you are in my heart,
You, you are on my mind,
You, you bring me much sorrow,
You don't know how much I love you.

I went to the three objects on the ground. They were men all right — very dead. Mac was lying on his back with his legs crossed. He looked not uncomfortable and was smiling, perhaps slightly ironically. I had a strong emotion of envy which lasted until one of the Tibetans while going through Mac's pockets came across some barsak [sic] (dried biscuit). He offered me a piece but I refused. He laughed, put the barsak to Mac's teeth and then in his own mouth. Mac's lower jaw relaxed and his mouth fell wide open.

This was a terrible moment. What was the purpose of the Tibetan's actions? The behavior of the warrior vis-à-vis his fallen enemy can take many forms. American soldiers in the Vietnam War cut off the ears of dead Viet Cong. In ancient traditions from the Steppe, the victor might cut off the enemy's head to claim his right to the plunder, or "count coup" by taking a scalp as Native American warriors did. There is also a tradition of gaining power by drinking the blood of the vanquished or even committing some form of cannibalism. Some Chinese Communist Red Guards around Guilin are said to have committed such atrocities during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). We know from the frozen tombs found in the Altai near the old grazing grounds of Osman Bator's Kazakhs that some of the honored dead had been cannibalized after death as a sign of respect and a desire to be strengthened by their vital force.² I never found out what was in the Tibetan patrol's mind when he committed this, to me, indescribably barbarous and disgusting act. But thinking back now, I am not sure this was not just a simple act of "sharing" with Doug — not quite acknowledging the fact that Doug was dead.

According to Doug's Death Certificate issued in New Delhi, October 23, 1950, he was killed near Shegarkhung Lung approximately 88 degrees West, 33 degrees North.³

I felt a little sick in the stomach and walked away. The Tibetans realized by now that they had made a mistake and although some seemed sorry about the incident the leader and to some extent all were flushed with victory. They were also more or less interested in looting.

To Shentsa (Xainza, Senja)

The Tibetans ordered Vasili and me to follow them. I turned away from our dead, so alone, lying there unprotected from the relentless wind as it howled across the Chang Tang. As we left I could see a column of vultures rising and falling. Ice was forming on what had earlier seemed such a friendly brook. In a land lacking trees and with ground often hard with frost, Tibetans, and Mongols, generally leave their dead as "the final sacrifice," exposed in a lonely place, as an offering to the Sky and to the vultures.

My hands were unbound and somehow the Tibetans and I managed to strike camp and load the camels. One of the camels was had been killed.

¹ "Dudu" also happens to be Susanne's nickname as a child, pure serendipity.
Immediately after the camels were loaded my glasses were taken from me after my protest and at the point of a gun. For that reason the log from #35 to Shen Tsa Dzong [Xainza] will be brief. Bessac without glasses is just about blind. After a march of an hour or so much interrupted by balking camels between whom and the Tibetans a mutual fear existed, and falling loads we reached a Tibetan camp to SW of incident the Tibetan soldiers to SW across stream and at the base of hills. There was a spring at the camp which was pitched in a gully.

One of the Tibetans put my glasses on and wore them while riding around. I suppose he could see through my left lens which was clear glass. My right lens was more like the bottom of a bottle because of my extreme myopia.

After unloading the camels and settling them for the night we were invited into the leader's tent and offered warm food to eat.

Vasili remembers it as awful, but I remember it as warm and very welcome. It was probably **tsampa** (parched barley, the Tibetan staple) mixed with tea and lots of yak butter.

I helped Vasili down hill and to the tent and dressed his wound there. In the tent we met other people and were convinced by now those who had fought us were soldiers connected in at least a slight manner with the Tibetan Government. This was especially brought home when we were told we were only 20 Yak days from Lhasa. Up to then we had imagined that we were about 40 days from Lhasa and well north of the 33rd parallel where according to stateside cable there was neither law nor God but much banditry. [A yak travels between 10 to 15 miles a day.]

Twenty days instead of forty is a lot of time, almost a month's difference. Doug made radio contact presumably with the U.S. authorities on April 23rd (according to his log). If I was correct about the forty days then we must have been quite confused as to where we really were and when we would reach inhabited land. If the U.S. had asked Lhasa this late to assure us free passage there was no way for a messenger to reach us in time to prevent the attack by Tserindorji and his men. Even if the message had been relayed a part of the way by radio (British radio technicians had established radio access to as far north as Nagqu on the 31st parallel to the east) it could not have reached us in time. If the message had been sent out right after we left Timurlik (March 20th) and had been sent to all the northern outposts in anticipation of our reaching nomad camps sooner, twenty days sooner to be precise, the messenger would have arrived long before we got there (as I suggested in my account above).

I talked of La Brong, Kun Bun [Tibetan monasteries in Qinghai and Gansu], the Panchen Lama, of how the Tibetan Government knew we were coming, etc. Said how, although three men were dead, I wasn't angry, but still must get to Lhasa. I also grinned at whoever grinned at me. The situation got less tense. The Tibetan sent to me gave raisins (ours which someone had looted since this man was not one of the original soldiers) to me and Vasili. Later he stealthily passed other raisins to me making sure he was not seen. The Tibetans went through their knowledge of English for me, lor (dollar), cigarette, salaam (salute), yes, no, etc. Time came to sleep.

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\[a\] There are several outposts roughly on the same parallel shown on the 1919 map of Tibet.
We knew we would not be allowed to sleep in the tent but were not prepared for the spot they lead us to—a narrow gully just wide enough for one person to lie in but long enough so that the two of us had room to lie in it. A better spot to kill us while we slept could hardly be conceived. It was a ready made grave. I doubt that either of us slept more than a few minutes that night. Tibetans came to the site continually throughout the night and we thought each and every were our executors. Assuming that they were to kill us only because we might prove embarrassing to them and not because they did not like us, I thought they would not shoot us until we fell asleep. Therefore I let each group that approached our, as I then thought, future grave, know that I was awake. I actually tried to sleep. The image of Mac’s peaceful face Doug’s face (before the bursak episode) reappeared and my main ambition that night was to reach, without effort on my part and without preliminary fuss and fear, that state of bliss. Just on the point of sleeping some time early in the morning an explosion seemed to occur right within the gully. I thought that was it and now to die, easily I hope. Then I heard the whine of projectiles over head and knew that whatever it was it had missed. One of the Tibetans had toyed with one of our Chinese grenades, bad things to have anything to do with at any time.

I was their captive. Even though I tried to explain our situation, we didn’t speak a mutual language, so how could they understand? For all I knew they planned to make me their slave or kill us. With us dead, who could know what happened on the vast, empty Chang Tang? Vasili, gripped by the full force of the bullet in his knee, was writhing in pain. I rolled him a cigarette. I rolled one for myself. Then I tucked Vasili into his sleeping bag. He became quieter. I lay down myself. I was utterly exhausted. Against my will my eyes fell shut.

Then, “bang,” a terrific noise. I was instantly wide awake, “Was this the end? Was I dead now?” I felt no pain. Maybe death was not so bad. But, I was not dead only covered with dust. All our stuff had been left stacked willy-nilly next to the gully. One of the Tibetans busy looting our stuff had found one of our Chinese hand grenades. Intrigued, he pulled the pin and then, luckily for us, tossed it away in the other direction. It went off kicking up a mountain of dirt. This did not deter the others from continuing to work over our stuff with loud shrieks of laughter.

I was so tired. I just lay back down and tried to keep warm as the constellations wheeled endlessly overhead through the infinite, black night.

The next morning we moved from the gully into the sun. I told the Tibetans that I wished an escort on my immediate trip to Lhasa, trying to make it appear that our going was a conclusion much foregone. I also showed them an identification card with my portrait. Tibetans came asking for objects that morning and from the much more considerate manner in which we were handled, I presumed that the crisis was over, that we would live and that we would go to Lhasa. I tried to sleep. Merry laughter and excited voices were heard from the hill above the campo where the Tibetans were examining and looting our goods. I thought it best not to interfere and after the looting one of the men was sent with a letter to higher authorities concerning us.

We were informed that we were to leave in the morning. That night, although we occupied the same above-mentioned gully we slept well.
Tibetans, especially those not concerned with the affair, have proved very sympathetic, nice people.

It was still quite dark when the Tibetans were ready to move on. They gave up treating me as a captive, but they did not give back my glasses. I found my eye drops in my saddle bag and went over to our things to see what we could salvage. It was a mess. Clothes, papers, scientific instruments, boots, and cooking pots were scattered over the land. I found the radio. I packed together what I could, loaded our camels and followed the Tibetans as they traveled on to the south. I put up our tent at night and one of the Tibetans volunteered to sleep across the opening to protect us, or to keep us from fleeing. Once I felt more secure I asked him to leave. He may have meant it as kindness.

#38 - May 1: Left #37 at about 0900 and traveled S along mountain slope down valley until about 1300. Snow flurry and wind in afternoon. At this camp came across first tall (chi-chi) graze since Timerlik. This is the only sign of it between Timerlik and Shen Tsa. Ice for water.

#39 - May 2: Left #38 at approximately 0900 and traveled S 3 hrs down valley to W end of large EW lake. Lake was not frozen and Vasili could not see Eastern end. Made steep descent of 200 feet to large river bottom with 20 yards of 1 ft. deep swift water in it, river runs from W to E and must enter lake. Then made quick ascent from river bottom up and over low ridge and then slight ascent to small lake where at 1330 we made camp. Tibetan encampment, water, fuel, but no or little graze for camels. Have made friends with our escort (the leader Tserindorji, his No. 1, a soldier, and a civilian who does the dirty work of the camp.)

#40 - May 3: Left #39 at 0900, traveled 4 hrs. S up wide valley and over low range of hills to W end large lake (Vasili could not see eastern end). Tibetan encampment on NW end. Went around end of lake and then SE along S shore of lake for 1 hour and then SW over hills on S border of lake. There descended to narrow river valley running N and SE (NW and S) Followed stream up valley to 1500 when made camp at Tibetan encampment along bank of stream. Graze poor. This afternoon a messenger from Lhasa arrived. Tserindorji refused to let us see him and appeared worried when he re-entered the tent. That night he asked if I would write a letter to Lhasa absolving him of any blame in the incident. This I promised to do. He decided to make it to Shen Tsa in two rather than four days since the orders from Lhasa were to bring us as quickly as possible from point of contact to Shen Tsa.

It was today that we determined that the three round balls in the sack packed in the camel in front were the heads of our recent friends. The dead camel's head was also carried on the same camel on the other side. Heads are are going to Lhasa with us.

I got my glasses back. Everything possible was done to make us comfortable.

Some of the Tibetans had not simply looted our stuff while Vasili and I huddled in that grave-like gully, they had returned to the site of the attack to work over our dead. They tore off their clothes and checked carefully for objects of value like Mackiernan's watch, coins, and Mackiernan's divorce decree tucked in his pocket. As a final act they hacked off the heads to take back to Lhasa, as I was told in Shen Tsa, as proof. They then left the rest to the vultures.
guards who did not stop strangers had been severely punished. Absolute obedience was expected from them. Tibet may have been the heartland of Buddhist compassion, but it was also the land of terrible gods, of fear and of reprisals. Still, decapitating enemies does not fit. At least I have not heard or read about it in other sources on Tibet.

I did not know anything about the make-up of Tibetan patrols. When in New Delhi I wrote in my report that the Tibetan army was being vigorously trained and expanded. At least so I was told in Lhasa. I wonder if the military at lower ranks was drawn from specific castes in the rigid social hierarchy. The officers, I wrote, were rather feeble aristocrats. The caste I am thinking of is that of Moslem butchers and artisans. For many Tibetans living in Lhasa butchering was considered too polluting a task. Which makes me wonder if perhaps Tserindorji or whoever in the posse carried out this grizzly task was a Moslem or a member of another outcaste group whose task it was to chop up corpses to allow the vultures a ready meal, for that final sacrifice, the sky burial.

#41 - May 4: Left camp #40 at 0500 and traveled S 3 hrs up valley to base of long range where we made first contact with main body of Lhasa messengers, and our planned to be welcomers, bearing red flag. Thus it was a matter of five days too soon or too late, according to the point of view, that determined that three men should die and one should be wounded rather than all of us receiving a royal welcome. I identified myself. Here is the first of many times that I was offered an opportunity by Tibetan officials to kill Tserindorji. [The leader of the welcoming party handed me a pistol and told me to shoot Tserindorji. I refused.] We went over pass and descended half way down to EW valley which was bordered to

Tibetan Pastoralists

In the grazing areas some animal herders were attached to settled areas. They were responsible for moving the flocks to summer grazing grounds. Niyama Dolma, Tibetan refugee and friend in Missoula and now in Seattle, told us how she helped ride her estate’s horses to high pastures in summer. She comes from Dege in Xi Kang, eastern ethnographic Tibet. Some year-round nomads were under their own chiefs who in turn owed loyalty to an overlord, the estate “owners” or other entities. The nomads belonged to named tribes. I do not know how large such tribes were. The Tibetan nomads we met herded in small groups. This was their summer grazing land not their winter encampment as Hussein Taiji’s had been in Timurlik. Each “tribe” controlled its grazing land and zealously kept out other groups. The horsemen who attacked us may simply have done what came naturally when a foreign group entered their grazing lands. The pastoralists Robert Ekvall knew in the shadows of the Amni Machen were involved in many fights with rival tribes and certainly not above capturing a caravan and appropriating its contents.

Robert Ekvall, a sometime missionary, lived for five years among nomadic pastoralists traveling from summer to winter pastures in the shadows of a large lamasery, or monastery/temple complex, much like Kumbum or Labran now. Such lamaseries include shrines, prayer halls, but also houses and shops of various kinds. They act as a center of piety, also of entertainment, brokering disputes, and political intrigues. Ekvall, whom I was fortunate to know in Berkeley before he was commissioned to be chief interpreter at Panmunjom during the cease fire talks that ended the Korean War, has written two charming books about his life among these Tibetan nomads (besides professional ethnographic studies): Tibetan Skyways and The Lama Knows. I do not know to what extent the horsemen who attacked us belonged to nomadic families like those Ekvall knew. They undoubtedly shared with them the lust for plunder, but murder is something else. It extracts a very high price — blood feud without end.
According to the official explanation, the permission to enter Tibet had been sent out from the Lhasa government in the usual manner by sending a runner carrying a distinctive spear with bells, "the red arrow," from relay station to relay station, somewhat like the Pony Express. Presumably, all the border patrols were to be notified to watch out for Mackiernan’s party after the U.S. government had notified the Tibetan government and had asked for safe passage for us. The message was received by one headman and then he arranged to send it to the next. Unfortunately, one of the headmen who received the message intended for this particular outpost was busy with other things and did not see it to that the "red arrow" was sent on in time. All border patrols were ordered to keep strangers out of Tibet, but in past confrontations summarily killing the intruding Westerners has not been reported.

I thought at the time that Tserindorji and members of his border patrol were themselves pastoralists, but not necessarily from the same region. But as noted, they were wearing some kind of uniform, had received some training. Tserindorji and the other horsemen must have been a unit of the Tibetan military sent out to look for approaching strangers. Rinchen Dolma Taring, an aristocratic lady born to the Tsarong family in Lhasa, explains that each estate assigned to the gentry had to send recruits to the army. “These soldiers were paid by the government, but their special allowances had to be paid by the retainer, who gave them each a homespun outfit, a pair of boots and about 4 pounds for the year they would be away.” The retainers are the special servants or stewards of the family to whom the estate has been assigned for as long as they performed the necessary service to the government.

When Doug and I walked towards the Tibetans we first came across, we were making assumptions about Tibetan nomadism. We assumed, first of all, that nomads within the same area all belonged to the same encampment, awl-uru, as at Timurlik, and that we could ask them, to take us to their leader. We assumed these Tibetans would communicate with the other nomads in the vicinity and tell them that we were harmless. They clearly did nothing of the sort. There may not have been enough time for them to do so or it may not have been appropriate for them to do so. As the troops were embedded among nomads, the nomad family may have preferred not to get involved. Later, the members of the first tent we came to seemed afraid. As Vasili and I discovered, the members of the border patrol had their tents about a half hour’s ride away. The nomads could not see each other’s tents. Did they know about each other before we arrived? How members of the patrol lived was not clear. I thought at the time that they too were pastoral nomads. The messenger who brought the sacred arrow from the Dalai Lama did not live at the administration center at Shen Tsa. He lived somewhere else as did the members of the welcoming committee. These were probably hastily assembled local dignitaries told to welcome us. We did not see them again. Bambo Rubin however lived at Shen Tsa.

Even if the people of the first tent did not belong to the same encampment as the horsemen who killed Doug, Stephan and Leofka, I think now that we made a mistake right from the start in how we approached the first Tibetan tent. A young girl came out to meet us. We heard no mastiffs snarling, eager to sink their teeth into us. They must have been held back by the people of the tent. All nomad tents are guarded by ferocious dogs. We should have followed the girl back to the tent right away, presented a gift, laid out a silk “scarf of felicity,” placed whatever arms we carried on top of the pile within their tent, sat down cross-legged, accepted their hospitality and waited until they assigned a place for us to pitch our tent.
As Hussein Taiji had told me back in Timurlik, it is very tense when different nomad groups meet. There is a ritual manner to disperse fear of attack. The incoming group must prove its harmlessness and clearly define that they come as guests asking for protection and hospitality. The resident group then in the spirit of hospitality becomes responsible for the strangers and advises and protects them in their encounter with other nomads.

We had not followed this protocol. When I traveled across the Alashan Desert, exchanging camels from encampment to encampment, I traveled with two Mongol boys who called out to members of the encampment about our identities and that we had camels belonging to the Banner government. The encampment members then called back their mastiffs and invited us in. When Doug and I walked toward the first Tibetan tent we thought that our actions made us appear harmless, but then it is difficult to gauge how actions and facial expressions translate to members of another culture. They may well have thought us harmless, but as we had not put ourselves under their protection, they had no responsibility for us.

If we accept that the border patrol was a group of horseback riders assigned the mission of looking for raiders then the shots we heard when we had set up our tent may well have been warning shots. It is difficult to think of Tserindorji and his men spending their time just riding around looking for action like our highway patrol. I do not know if it would have helped if we had followed Vasili’s plan. He advised that we pitch camp on a rise so we could overlook the area. Even so, they or other nomads may have spotted us some time back without our knowing it. It seemed to me that they came looking for us. If Doug had taken Vasili’s advice and placed our camp on a ridge top to observe the countryside would we have seen the patrol before they saw us? Possibly, but that is a lot of land to oversee and an easy place to hide for those more familiar with the terrain. My guess is that the border patrol had its scouts out checking the trail that Kazakhs had previously used for raiding and which we had followed quite trusting.

On the 1919 map of Tibet, Shegarkhung Lung is the last settlement as seen from southern Tibet. Beyond, to the north, lies the most inhospitable part of the Chang Tang. Shegarkhung Lung lies on a trail which runs straight north to Cherchen (Qarqan) on the road to old Lou-lan, the great trading entrepot on the old Silk Road which was buried in the sands of time until Sven Hedin rediscovered it for the West. On the maps we carried, the area to the north of Shegarkhung Lung was left white, i.e. unexplored, but to the rugged native dwellers of those parts it has, of course, long been known and traversed.

To the south of Shegarkhung Lung lie a string of encampments leading up and over mountains to salt lakes. For Tibetan nomads, as probably for those Celtic/Tokharian-speaking weavers three thousand years ago near Hami (at Qizilchoqa) salt was an important commodity to mine. For Tibetan pastoralists the salt they mine and transport in sacks tied to their sheep for sale in Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim, is “... a storehouse of precious gems” somewhat like working small gold and silver mining claims used to be for early Montana ranchers.

Were the Tibetans patrolling to prevent Kazakh raiders from stealing their children? How old were those Tibetan children back at Timurlik? Some were as young as six. It cannot have been too long ago that some Kazakhs had conducted a successful raiding party against Tibetans in the exact area we traveled to.

So why was Doug so trusting? Doug expected to be welcomed by a Tibetan government delegation. He had been in radio contact almost daily. I assumed that he was in contact with people at State Department who, in turn, were in close contact with the Tibetan government. Although Thomas Laird’s book, Into Tibet, is unreliable as I am only too aware from the manner in which he has quoted me, a conversation he has recorded with Doug’s brother, Stuart, sheds some light on who received the messages Doug sent (pp. 57-60).
assumed that the Tibetan government could quickly send out a emissary to outlying regions. He had not anticipated that a messenger might be held up by any number of unforeseen circumstances. His expectations given the land and society seem naïve.

Was Doug aware of the Tibetan children at Timurlik? Kazakhs pointed them out to me. It is difficult for me to believe now that Doug had not known of this as well. If he did not know it from me, Stephan would have told him as they discussed the route to follow. By following the trail pointed out to Doug by Kazakhs at Timurlik we walked right into a trap: the site of earlier Kazakh raids. As Doug pointed out in his log, there were many signs of Kazakhs on the northern slope of the last, almost 18,000 ft. pass and Tibetan stone corals on the southern side.

The reason I left the tent alone was because of the shots that I believe, were warning shots. What then should Doug and the other three have done? We know that Doug, Stephan, Vasili and Leofka all came out of our tent with hands raised, obviously unarmed. Why did the guards shoot them? Did my companions spook them by their behavior as Vasili thinks? Is there a special etiquette that must be followed to reassure a Tibetan patrol that the intruding party is friendly? As we know from stories about our own police force, who patrol under so much more predictable conditions, in the fear of an encounter they have been known to shoot up a lone victim who they thought was pointing a pistol at them.

The Tibetan patrol got off their horses and walked toward the tent, rifles at the ready. How would they have known that even though four people emerged as a unit, there were not others hiding inside the tent with guns ready to shoot? Did they know how many of us there were? Did they see me leave for the first tent? I do not know how Kazakh raiders handle the actual raid. We only found a raided sheep tied to our tent peg back in Timurlik after the raid had occurred and the raiders were back, having to face the loud condemnations by their elders. They must have killed some people as they did not just run off some sheep by stealth. Do Kazakh raiders feign surrender in order to entrap their adversaries? I do not know. All I do know is that the Turkish-speaking nomads, Turkomans from the Caspian Sea, have long been feared slave raiders. They then sold the slaves at the great slave markets of Bokhara into the 20th century.

Doug did not come out of the tent presenting a gift in the correct manner. Who knows what bursting out as a group, hands raised, with a piece of white cloth tied to a tent peg, looked like to the members of the patrol? Why did he not carry a U.S. flag? Tolstoy and Dolan on their earlier trip to Lhasa and beyond always carried a conspicuous American flag.\textsuperscript{105}

The Tibetans fired almost at point blank (maybe a yard away) on clearly unarmed men. Maybe they feared a trap; maybe they were so eager to get their hands on all the camel-loads of stuff. Tibetan nomads do not keep camels. They do not thrive on the low grasses yaks can eat. They were probably afraid of camels. All that rich stuff we brought on our camels must have kindled their delight in plunder. Greed may have been a factor, but fear, it seems to me, would have been decisive. There is just nothing like looking possible death right in the eye. By the time I came running back they had realized that this had not been a trap. There were no other men with guns hiding in our tent. Luckily Vasili had not reached a gun and started blazing away at them.

Tibetan Drokpa, just like their Kazakh counterparts and other pastoral nomads, were, and maybe still are if they can get away with it, enthusiastic raiders. But with this tradition of raiding goes a code of honor, maybe a form of chivalry. An encounter like this one is, first of all, an encounter of man-to-man. Doug's insistence that all four of them should emerge from our tent as

\textsuperscript{105}As Laird has described vividly Doug had set up his brothers and father as subcontractors to run a radio receiving station at their father's old filling station in Stoughton, Mass., "World Weather," which transmitted information in code to the CIA and other departments of the United States government surreptitiously. Officially his brothers and father ran the station paid by contracts. In fact, Doug was the real boss who saw to it that his family members were paid, but remained unaware of what kind of messages they were transmitting through "World Weather."
a unit may have been "democratic," but then Tibet was hardly an egalitarian society. I wonder if Doug instead had projected the full power and importance of his role as an official of the United States government and had stepped out of the tent alone, exuding the air of the British ruling class in India, the posse would have hesitated.

The Tibetans who shot my comrades did not simply get rid of Vasili and me as well. With us dead all evidence of what had happened would have vanished.

I do not think they were wanton killers. Greedy thieves, maybe, but not men who took lives in cold blood. They may have hesitated when I kept repeating, "Dalai Lama, Lhasa," thinking I might be a pilgrim, on the holy way to Lhasa. Sonam, a Tibetan woman, years later in Missoula, Montana, was shocked when I heartily wished ill to Deng Xiaoping for the suffering he and his government had inflicted on Tibetans. I think I said I hoped he would die. Her response was,

"Nobody has the right to wish a death. Nobody knows the burdens that rest on his soul and how death now might irredeemably lessen his soul’s chances of reaching Nirvana."

I do not know how Doug should have behaved to reassure the Tibetan patrol without a Tibetan interpreter. How else could our party have let the horsemen know that Doug and three White Russians were the only people in the tent, and that they were not a threat? So, why was there no Tibetan speaker with us? Mackiernan may have taught himself some Tibetan before he ventured on this trip. This is suggested by Pegge in a diary that Laird acquired. Of course, knowing a few phrases does not mean one can converse or that a Tibetan nomad can recognize that one is trying to speak Tibetan. Rinchin Dolma writes that the dialect of northern Tibetan nomads is very difficult for her to understand. Doug may have believed that there was no need for a Tibetan interpreter, a case of frightening self-confidence. I should have insisted we bring one with us from Timurlik, but in hindsight, I seem to have abdicated responsibilities rather docilely to Doug. I wonder how I could have been so disengaged when it was my life and comfort that were at stake.

# 42 - May 4: Left #41 and went SE S down valley and then SSE on wide plain in which were many shallow streams now with but little water, and then ascended and descended long slope and small ridge. Here we met a stream which had just made a right angle turn from S to N to a W to E direction of flow. Went S upstream for three hours until at 1900 made camp at Tibetan encampment.

# 43 - May 5: Left #42 at 0600 and proceeded S up valley. Stream becomes marsh and at places frozen lakes as we went higher and higher. After 5 hrs stopped at Tibetan encampment for lunch.

# 44 - May 5: Left #43 at 1300 and again proceeded S up valley. After 2 hrs. came to Tibetan encampment. Here caravan stopped. The Bambo Rubin (Co. General) [company commander] of area who lives at Shen Tsa had come to meet us with candy, sugar, good will and good rice. We camped here for day. Here I was not only given opportunity to shoot Tserindorji but until I said no, Tibetan officer of Rubin wanted to shoot him that night as we slept.

**Shen-Tsa**

# 45 - May 6: Left #44 at 0700 and proceeded S up valley for hr and then S for hr up steep mountain. From here Shen Tsa presents itself as group of mud houses in enclosures and small temple. To S of valley in which
Shen Tsa is located in a very high snow-covered range. Also to far N and far E. Descent here extremely precipitous. Vasili’s leg had been troubling him very much for last two days and descent kept him in great pain. Within two hrs. a descent of over 3000 feet was made. By 1200 we were in Shen Tsa. Here we were put up in a guest house of one of the Dzong officials. This is the first building and home I have entered since leaving the Consulate grounds at Urumchi. We are treated very well by our host.

We were shown to a room with a sort of divan to rest on and, great delight, a large basin of hot water was handed to both of us for a scrub bath — the first for some months. I had taken a very chilly bath back at Timurlik. I leaned back on the bed and took a deep breath. No wind was wailing around me. Sunshine streamed through the door. I was safe. And then I glanced toward the pile of stuff stacked against the wall. Out of my saddle bag peaked an old friend, my copy of War and Peace. Some pages were missing, others were dirty and crumpled. I took it out, opened it and with a supreme sense of hope, happy to be alive, began reading it for the third time. After a while a sweet-faced, young woman, Bambo Rubin’s daughter, came to bring us food. A pity, she was clearly much in love with one of the members of the garrison and not interested in me at all.

I put my old army boots near the fire to dry out. Next morning when I looked they had dried all right. All the stitches had snapped. The leather uppers had curled up and separated from the sole. I

Communists in Tibet

“In 1943 a group of Khampas from Batthang arrived in Lhasa, among them Bab Phuntsong Wangyal [Phuenwang] and Ngawang Kalsang who had been educated in China and attracted to communism. They had come to Lhasa with the hope of raising support from the government to oppose the Chinese warlord Liu Wenhui who ruled much of Kham. Phuntsog Wangyal and Ngawang Kalsang had an even more daring idea – to establish contact with progressive Tibetans and set up a Communist Party. In 1943 they established the United Tibet Communist Party.”

In 1947, Phuenwang, the Tibetan communist, returned to Lhasa. The uncle who had helped him before was now working at the Chinese (Guomindang) government office in Lhasa. “... I went to him as soon as I arrived and told him the truth: that I had tried to establish a guerrilla force in Kham and that I had failed and had to run for my life."

He got a job for Phuenwang as a music teacher at the Chinese (Guomindang) government school in Lhasa. As a child in Batthang, Phuenwang had learned American songs from Tibetan orphan children taken in at the American mission station in his hometown. One of these was, “Marching through Georgia.” He later put Tibetan, revolutionary words to the tune:

*Rise up, rise up, rise up,*  
*Tibetan brothers.*

*The time for fighting has come but*  
*Still haven’t you awoken from sleep?*  
*We can no longer bear to live*  
*Under the oppression of powerful officials.*

In 1948 Phuenwang and the Chinese mission were summarily expelled from Lhasa.

While in Lhasa he had fallen in love with one of his students, a Moslem girl, Tsilila. She accompanied him back to Kham after he was expelled. She belonged to the family of Chumik Khangsar which made a pretty good living selling animals and flour in Lhasa.

I know far too little about Phuenwang and fellow Tibetan communists to know if they concentrated their recruitment efforts on low caste groups like Moslems or tried to interest all kinds of Tibetans, beggars, farmers, monks. In Kham Phuenwang proselytized fellow aristocrats.
gave them a well deserved burial and wore Tibetan boots from then on.

Shen Tsa Dzong, a small settlement of rectangular, mud-brick and stone houses with flat roofs, was established for the secular administration, "the Golden Yoke," and garrison. A small monastery housed the religious administrator, "the Silken Thread." Throughout Tibet there were dual authorities, secular and religious. Shen Tsa lies near the upper, eastern end of Lake Kyaring in a high valley at about 15,500 feet below a 20,340 foot peak on about the 31st parallel. Shegarkhung Lung lies on the 33rd parallel about one hundred and fifty miles to the north. If my chronology is correct then it took us a week, from May first through sixth, to travel from the site of the killing to Shen Tsa. George Schaller, with whom I discussed this, thinks we could not have covered the distance this quickly. Some twenty miles a day on horseback is not exceptional even given the steep terrain.

By May the land was becoming green with new growth — not grass but sedges. Animals were grazing around the buildings. We had been escorted to Shen Tsa by Bambo Rubin, commander of the garrison, and by some members of the welcoming committee. These now withdrew and returned to their homes someplace else.

May 7: Army officer has gone to Shigarhung Lung [sic] to bring back looted articles. Heads of three deceased are going with him to be buried with bodies. Camel head still to go to Lhasa.

May 8: Tserindorji on way to Lhasa to report. We must wait until letter from Lhasa arrives before proceeding further.

Bambo Rubin ordered Tserindorji to rush to Lhasa to report about what had happened and to bring a doctor for Vasili. His leg had swollen painfully. Getting him to Shen Tsa mostly by stretcher carried by Tibetans had been an awful experience for him and for his bearers. Tserindorji instantly walked off in the direction of Lhasa. I asked, "Are you sure he will go all the way to Lhasa?" ... "Absolutely, he will obey," he answered. Tibet may have been a wild place, but it had been an organized state for centuries, with a well-established administration. My Kazakh hosts at

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**The Reting Rimpoche**

One of the scandals that had rocked the Tibetan world concerned the Reting Rimpoche (Jampey Yeshe). As a Dalai Lama is incarnated at death into the body of a child, the government for years is in the hands of regents allowing for years of turmoil. Few Dalai Lamas have survived their minority. The present, 14th Dalai Lama, was discovered in Chinese controlled Amdo, now Qinghai, province of the PRC, to the northeast by the Reting Rimpoche. This area has long been ethnically mixed. It is the probable homeland of both Tibetan and Sinitic speakers (the founders of the Zhou Dynasty (1100-221 BC) invaded from this general area). The Reting Rimpoche, a frail looking, young and inexperienced man had been selected by lottery to find the new Dalai Lama and to reign during the Dalai Lama's minority. During his reign he was able to amass great wealth in a monopoly of the wool trade. For this his estate manager was mostly blamed. It was his sexual licentiousness that forced him to turn over his office to Taktra, tutor of the young Dalai Lama, in 1941.

When Ernst Schaefer and his German expedition were in Lhasa in 1939, the Reting Regent was then still in power. He asked Schaefer for arms from the German Government, the Nazi Government. Exactly what he wanted the arms for is not

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a *Dzong* means that it is an administrative center.

b I have been corrected by Dan Miller regarding the difference between grasses and sedges. Dan is a wildlife biologist and one-time student of mine. It was through his help that we were able to revisit the areas around Qinghai in 1991, and to the good offices of another student's father, Wei Hongyun, that we had the freedom and support to travel there.
explained. Maybe he wanted to become a Tibetan Ataturk, or a Reza Shah, a modernizing dictator.

After his forced resignation the Reting Rimpoe tried to get the position of regent back over the years. Finally, in 1947 he attempted a coup against the Tibetan government. The monks of Sera sided with him. There was fighting in the streets of Lhasa although the unrest was soon put down. Many were severely punished. The Reting Rimpoe “died” in prison in 1947. Many monks from Sera fled to Chinese areas.\(^{115}\)

On the 6th of May, 1950, Geshe Sherab Gyatso, noted Tibetan scholar and former abbot of Sera Je Monastery in Lhasa, now (after the coup attempt of the Reting Rimpoe) deputy Chairman of the newly established Communist Qinghai Provincial Government, made an appeal to the Tibetan people and to the Dalai Lama. ... it implicitly warned that the Chinese would use force if necessary to ‘liberate Tibet’. In retrospect this appears to have been the final warning to the Tibetan Government.\(^{116}\) The present Dalai Lama’s older brother, Takser Norbu, reincarnation at Kumbum, the large monastery near Xining in Amdo was on his way to Lhasa at about the same time that I reached Lhasa urging his brother, the Dalai Lama, to prepare to resist the Chinese Communist invaders. I did not meet him until he came to Berkeley and lived near us.

Timurlik prided themselves on not belonging to any such organized state of law and order.

While we were waiting for the letter from Lhasa and a doctor so Vasili could be moved, the little garrison tried to entertain us. I was called outside to take the salute. Lined up before me were a few men. One had what looked like a drum, and another had a coronet. They must have had a bagpipe also, as was standard for troops trained by the British. They began to play. First I heard a squeaky “God Save the Queen” and then “Marching Through Georgia.”

Did the posse of Tserindorji expect to stop spies infiltrating from the north? Or were they bribed by Communists (Soviet, Chinese, or even Tibetan) to kill Mackieman? Had word reached someone from the Chinese Communists that we were traveling that way? By then Osman Bator had been captured and no doubt been forced to talk about us and possibly revealed our travel plans if the Chinese Communists visiting at Timurlik had not done so first.

A posse may not have been sent out specifically to intercept our party. The Tibetans may have feared other intrusions from the lands controlled by the Chinese Communists. Many of the pasture lands of central Tibet were part of the fiefdom of the Panchen Lama, the second highest reincarnation of Tibet, centered at the great lamasery of Tashilhunpo near Shigatse. In 1950, there were two Panchen Lamas. One was in Lhasa, the one the Tibetans believed was the true incarnation. The other Panchen Lama was the creation and captive of the Chinese, first Nationalist and then Communist. He lived in Qinghai province.\(^{117}\) Beijing radio broadcasted a supposed telegram from their captive Panchen Lama to the leaders of the Chinese Communist government in January, 1950:

“On behalf of the Tibetan people, we respectfully plead for troops to be sent to Tibet to wipe out reactionaries, expel the imperialists, consolidate the national defenses in the southwest and liberate the Tibetan people, etc.”\(^{118}\)

When the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was alive he had pushed through some reforms in the conservative land over which he presided. He had laid plans for the British to train a modern army. The abbots of the great monasteries feared that such modernization would undermine the theocracy upon which the government of Tibet rested and when he died in 1933, the abbots tried to suppress such openings to the modern world. But there were quite a few Tibetans who had learned English as part of their military training and some at Shen Tsu were among these. So even before
the English-speaking doctor arrived from Lhasa I was able to talk freely with my hosts at Shen Tsa. And talk we did.

Vasili and I stayed at Shen Tsa from May 8th until the 29th which gave me plenty of time to hear what members of the garrison had to say. There were about three people, including Bambo Rubin, who spoke English fairly well. There were also some who spoke some Mandarin. Vasili spoke very rudimentary Mandarin which he used to converse with the Tibetans after a fashion. Bambo Rubin was an educated man who could read and write Tibetan, unlike our Kazakh hosts at Timurlik who were illiterate (except for the mullah and Osman Bator's wife). We would sit around the fire in the evenings, drink endless cups of hot, buttered tea with tsamp, parched barley flour, and talk and talk. Who was I and what was it that had brought Douglas Mackiernan to Central Tibet? Why had the messenger from the Dalai Lama's government arrived too late to avert the death of my companions? Who were the members of Tserindorji's posse and why were they patrolling around Shegarkhung Lung? Why did they shoot my companions? I was given a crash course on Tibet, its recent history, social conditions, and the factions in Lhasa. They asked me about what I knew about Communist China, about conditions in Mongolia and Chinese Turkestan, about the United States, Britain, India, and what Tibet might expect from them. It had never crossed my mind that I would find a group of people high in a lonely mountain valley in Central Tibet with whom I could converse freely, actually more freely than I had been able to talk to the Kazakhs at Timurlik or even to Doug and the Russians. It was those Tibetans at Shen Tsa who offered me companionship and warmth after a long, weary, and, finally, terrifying journey.

The Tibetans at Shen Tsa complained about the conservative government under the great abbots. The Tibetans at Shen Tsa wanted to see changes throughout Tibetan society, but they did not want Chinese Communists to move into Tibet and make the changes for them. Above all, they wanted Tibet to be an independent nation, free from Chinese rule, or Soviet rule, or Indian rule, or British/American rule. They did not ask that the United States send up weapons as part of an undercover operation unless it was under the auspices of the duly-constituted government of Tibet.

May 11: Army officer who had gone to Shigarhung Lung [sic] returned with most of our articles including the gold. For his cut most of the clothing of deceased and many things no longer of use were given him.

I did not know about the gold before the Tibetans gave it back, some 30 gold bars. I did not know where this came from, or whom it was intended for. That it was not simply Doug's own hoard became clear later. Maybe that report in the German newspaper, carefully preserved all these years in the National Archives, was not correct and Doug did not give lots of gold to Osman Bator. At the very least, he kept a good bit for further needs. Of course, I do not know how much gold he had with him originally.

Except for what Bambo Rubin and others at Shen Tsa could tell me I did not know how pressures from the two Chinas and from the Indian subcontinent to the south were playing out in Lhasa. Nor did I know what the United States' position in all this might be. By the time I reached Lhasa the Korean War had begun. I wanted the United States Government to be involved on the side of Free Tibet. As far as I knew my government was too ignorant and preoccupied even to think about Inner Asia, let alone do something definitive. The Tibetan government had sent missions to the West, but they had not been received. Lowell Thomas, the radio newscaster, had been sent as some kind of response by Dean Acheson, Secretary of State under President Truman. As a gift to be presented by Thomas to the young Dalai Lama, he was then about fourteen, Acheson, a Yale man, had chosen a purple, stuffed toy, a "Yale bulldog." I later saw it displayed when I was received by His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Summer Palace. Although Lowell Thomas and his son were favorably impressed by Tibet, nothing came of the mission.
Doug did not tell me of any mission to Tibet that he may have been directed to carry out. I fail to see what exactly such a mission could have accomplished that would not have been better served by welcoming Tibetan delegations anxiously trying to reach Western leaders and hearing them out and responding to their requests. It seems an odd thing to send an exposed atomic spy (Beijing had been having a field day denouncing Doug in its newspapers as an imperialist spy) all the way over the Chang Tang to Lhasa in order to discuss plans with the Tibetan government. Or had orders not come from the State Department, but from rival powers in the CIA that were not clearing their orders with State? Either way, it was surely much easier to get someone to Lhasa from Nepal or Sikkim than by the risky path over the Chang Tang.

May 11 [con’t.]: The soldier under Tserindorji’s command who had accompanied us was given the second series of 40 [lashes] across the bare buttock today. Tibetan officials greatly incensed at looting after incident and I was asked to witness. Man is laid flat on ground with BTM skyward in this ceremony. Two officers whip from both sides. I must admit that I derived some satisfaction from proceedings. Mac’s, Yovka [Leonid]’s, and Stepan’s faces and bodies as they lay by the stream bed kept coming to mind—especially Mac’s after the bursak had been put to his teeth. Also that of the 20-year old boy Yovka. He looked as though he died crying. It will be a long time before this smarty pants of a soldier sits down. This is all the punishment he will receive. Opinion here is that Tserindorji will be beheaded in Lhasa. I will stop this if possible but will not object if he also gets a taste of the lash. Also am going to try to arrange it so that he gives me three good ke-taus on stone floor. I have been brought to my knees but once and the person who caused it must reply in kind with interest.

Were Tserindorji and his men sent out to capture Mackiernan and the rest of us? Were they to bring back Mackiernan “dead or alive?” Is that why they decapitated the dead and planned to bring the heads to Lhasa? Mackiernan in his capacity as an American Vice Consul could have been ordered by the U.S. State Department to establish an American diplomatic presence in Lhasa, a foothold. As Shakya noted when he mentions such a mission, “It did not happen.”

For me the question of motive had a practical aspect. How should I respond to proposed punishments for the border guards who had killed my comrades? The Tibetan government was eager to show the United States that they dealt harshly with those who killed and plundered United States citizens. They wanted their punishment of Doug’s killers to impress U.S. authorities. There were those in the United States, I knew, who believed in drastic punishment, e.g., an article sent by Pegge Mackiernan to State Department demanding reparations and vengeance. I had seen my comrades wantonly shot and later discovered that they had been decapitated. On the other hand, was this a case where those who are really responsible are only too happy to see their underlings punished in their stead?

May 12: Although we knew neither the frequencies or the call letters used between Mac and the two stations we had been contacting, we tried to make contact. The list of frequencies and call letters Mac gave me in Barkol to use in case of emergency seemed outdated. It at least was not in use by the other stations during May when we attempted radio contact; first by attempting to break in on the other stations on their sending frequency and later by using all the crystals found in the tool kit

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a As Shakya noted when he mentions such a mission, “It did not happen.” What is the reference for this?
Tibetan Government Factions

The Tibetan government was riven by contesting factions. There had always been factional strife during the minority of a Dalai Lama. The father of Rinchen Dolma Taring (Mary Taring), head of the aristocratic house of Tsarong, was accused of collaborating with the Chinese (Manchu) army that invaded Tibet in 1910. He was convicted and executed together with his son, his body dragged down the long flight of stairs of the Potala. The 13th Dalai Lama later established his own protégé as head of this ancient aristocratic house of Tsarong, thereby assuring loyalty of this family to himself.

In the foreword to Dorje Yudon Yuthok (Sulkhang Dzasa's daughter)'s autobiography, The House of the Turquoise Roof, Heinrich Harrer writes of her half brother, Surkhang Ngawang Jigme, that he had the reputation of being a Chinese collaborator, a go-nuip, "a two head." The Surkhangs belonged to an ancient aristocratic family in Lhasa descended from kings who introduced Buddhism to Tibet centuries earlier. Ngawang Jigme's father, Samdup Tseten Surkhang, had been demoted from high office once for allegedly making a pass at a well-connected lady. He became an opium addict according to his daughter after becoming seriously hurt playing with firecrackers. To deal with the severe pain he had started smoking opium. He left his official wife and moved in with Dawa, Ngawang's mother. This was the final straw and the long-suffering wife received a legal separation by order of the Dalai Lama. She got the house and estate and although arrangements were made for Samdup Tseten, his oldest son became head of the Surkhang family in place of his father. In time, the 13th Dalai Lama forgave Samdup Tseten Surkhang and he became Minister of Foreign Affairs, in which capacity I met him later in Lhasa. Ngawang Jigme's position was obviously not an enviable one in the traditional system, a fact that may have turned his loyalties towards the Chinese Communists. But he may just have been like Phuenwang and many young people of the day, full of revolutionary zeal and thirst for "the modern."
with corporal punishment. We condemn our criminals to years of slow rot in prisons, conveniently out of sight and out of mind. When the flogging of the four horsemen was over to my surprise the men came over to me and thanked me for saving their lives!

Vasili fashioned three wooden crosses once we were in Lhasa. We gave them to the members of the border patrol after the government had punished them. They promised to take them back to the spot where our comrades had fallen, to bury their remains and place the crosses on their graves. Vasili, being from an “Old Believer” family, was especially concerned that ritual be observed. This the members of the patrol promised to do and probably did do. I was in no position to verify their actions.

Road to Lhasa

#46 - 14th day of 4th Month - May 30: On 12th (May 28th), the second officer dispatched to area of incident returned to Shen Tsa with most of the articles that had been missing. However, Vasili’s 10-oz. of gold still not found. 12th was Buddhist holiday [Buddha’s birthday], and we were guests of Rubin Gushi (Bomba Rubin).

Vasili, Doctor, soldier and I left Shen Tsa for Lhasa on morning of 29th. Vasili’s wound is nearly well but he is still being carried on six-man stretcher. We traveled on the long road to Lhasa from Shen Tsa.

The doctor from Lhasa had given Vasili a penicillin shot. At the time, penicillin was still more precious than gold. Later, at the end of July, at the border of Sikkim, we were met by U.S. government personnel. They presented our Tibetan guards with some ampoules of penicillin to take back to Lhasa as a goodwill gesture.

Leaving Shen Tsa went ESE for 3 hrs then ENE for three hours. In general followed stream which runs through Shen Tsa and then to Kyaring Tso [lake] but when stream and valley make right angle turn from ESE to ENE three hours from Shen Tsa trail goes over mountain. S to East of stream three hours later. After crossing stream we proceeded ENE two hours, crossing low hills to East of stream and then descending into valley with stream and small (1x1 kil) lake on south end. Here, 1 mile or so ENE of lake made camp. Camp all set up before we arrived. Doctor had informed people of our intended route to Lhasa and time of departure from Shen Tsa and thus all in readiness. Stretcher arrived about three hours later. Snowed at night.

#47 - May 30: Left camp #46 at 0700 a.m. elevation 15,800’. Traveled 5 hrs ENE up valley and over mountain range, elevation at pass 16,700’. Then East three hours down mountain to high valley and up valley to Eastern end, crossing river in process. At 1300 made camp #47 elevation 16,200’. Vasili arriving at 1730. Tomorrow he shall either ride a camel or stretcher will [be] carried by 4 yaks. Snowed during trip. There has been no food for camels since we left Shen Tsa and I was forced to abandon the bull this morning. Tibetans promised to bring him food and if he lives he will proceed slowly to Lhasa. Stay at Shen Tsa has greatly sapped camels’ strength. They have all lost wool - some as much as fourth. Country is just turning green and might, by fall, contain enough grass to keep camels going.
This is long road to Lhasa from Shen Tsa. Short road goes over mountains to S and SE of Shen Tsa by one animal mountain pass. Long road by which we must go because of Vasili takes ten days. Short road six or five.

#48 - May 31: Left #47 at 0630 and traveled East up valley and stream for two hours, then south up same stream for 2 hours, then where valley and stream fork took left-hand fork to SE, other fork to West camped 1130. Planned to only have tea here but no change of horses and no preparation made ahead of us so we will stay here rest of day making 1 1/2 days' march tomorrow. No graze for camels but people have brought some hay for them. Female camel's feet have gone bad again and she will probably be left behind. Vasili rode some today with no noticeable bad effects on leg. Elevation 16,700'.

I think this was the same place that the message from the Dalai Lama's office concerning our party was supposedly held up — maybe just an inefficient outfit. The brother of the man in charge of the area, a monk, came to see us in Missoula when Tibetan refugees were being resettled here, to apologize again to me.

#49 - June 1: Left #48 at 0630 traveling E upstream on slope of hills west of stream for four hrs then, still following stream, turned to SE and traveled 1 hr for one hour reaching Tibetan encampment and nearly at head of valley. Will stop here for tea and then cross hills to ESE valley surrounded by hills except to NW. Elevation 16,900'.

#50 - June 1: Left #49 at 1330 traveled 2 hrs SE up valley then 1 hr E over pass (el 17,650). To NW of pass is 1 x 1 1/2 kil lake (still frozen) - Nyenchentangla and Range seen from pass. Then followed stream 2 hrs, except for cutting over nose of hill to NE of stream, to valley and encampment to valley and encampment. Elevation of #50, 16,700'.

#51 - June 2: Left #50 at 0715 and traveled SE just over low hills enclosing #50, then down valley with stream, then up very slight rise to drop 3 or 4 hundred feet to bed of box canyon and stream. Here made camp (TC) at 1300, El 16,750' Nyenchentangla to E and Range to SE covered with snow.

#52 - June 2: Left #51 at 1430 and leaving valley which here runs south went SE for one hr over nose of range to left valley and then 4 hrs SE down valley crossing large stream several times. After 2 1/2 wo and one half hrs 2nd valley from south opens out on SE-NW valley. At this point over Guorila (Guori Mt.) to Zamsa. We continue SE. Nyenchentangla to SE 5 hrs after leaving #51 made camp at NW side of river flowing from above-mentioned North to South valley. Time 1945, El 16,100' (TC), tea and cookies.

#53 - June 3: Left #52 at 0830 and traveled due E until 1315 where made camp #53. Crossed to SE side of river (100 ft. wide, 1 to 2 1/2 ft deep, rapid flow, biggest flowing body of water since perhaps stream from E to W at Azik Batar Kol area) and kept to NE slope of hills gradually leaving stream. At 11:30 a.m. abreast of SW shore of Nam Tso [Nam Co, Tengri Nor, freshwater lake]. At camp #53 lake is only about
2 kil. to N in distance. Camels eating brush again for first time since we left Ming Bulak. Brush is low (never more than 1 ft tall) and reddish black without leaves. Tibet name Pierna. Will stop here today to feed and rest camels. El. 16,200’.

#54-55 - June 4: Left #53 at 1430 and arrived at #55 at 1655. Altitude at #54 16,200’ same from which Nyenchentangla had picture taken. El #55 16,150. El Nam Tso 16,050. From #53 to #55 have followed along south shore of Nam Tso (fresh) crossing the nose of nine ridges running from mt. to lake. Tenth ridge we went around on ledge and then to lake shore. In valleys between ridges are streams of varying size. Some crossable in fact by hopping from stone to stone. Some 30 ft. wide and 1 ft deep. Valley #10 is about 2 miles wide and contains 3 streams. Many Kulan seen. Snow-covered mt no more than 4 miles to S and SW. Many flowers, 1 large (1-inch at mouth 2 in. long) lavender, looks like cross between orchid and snapdragon, 1 small (1/2 inch mouth) yellow but same snap as lavender and sage. Tibetan name Song Kangba.

What were these lavender flowers? Penstemons are native to the New World and not found in the Tibetan region. Could these lavender flowers have been variations of the poppies (Mecanopsis) that Eastern Tibet is famous for? Betty Sherrif, who lived in the British Mission, 1942-43, in Lhasa and who together with her husband was an eager botanist and gardener describes a red poppy (Mecanopsis torquata) in the Lhasa area about where I saw all those flowers.122

This was near Zamsar, across the Nyenchen Tangla, on the main tributary to the Kye Chu River along which Lhasa is built. I think the river is named Chomo Gangar after the 22,965 foot peak which it drains. I do not remember seeing any bright blue poppies. Maybe they bloom later, or in another region. I know from trying to grow Tibetan blue poppies in Missoula that they are very sensitive to the correct soil pH. Other travelers have remarked on seeing many different kinds of primula; maybe that is what those lavender flowers were. Snapdragons were cultivated by Tibetans in window boxes alongside geraniums and marigolds in Lhasa. The yellow flowers I saw may have been a kind of toadflax (a Lanaria) or maybe yellow lupines.

Wildflowers
When we first came to Missoula, Montana, the bare hills around the town were covered with wild flowers in spring, yellow fritillaria, blue lupines, penstemons in blues and lavender, brilliant red Indian paintbrush, deep purple larkspur, golden balsam roots, death camas lilies, and later bitterroots, much like the ridges south of Nam Tso in Tibet. But today the wild flowers are less spectacular because of the spread of exotics, especially Russian knapweed, leafy spurge, and toadflax. Knapweed was brought to Montana from the steppes of Asia. We saw it in Inner Mongolia in 1984. There, pastures are intensely grazed — overgrazed — by sheep, camels, and horses. Knapweed is nibbled down so that it makes a lavender carpet when in bloom. It was not overrunning the land there as it is in Montana. What is happening to the glorious wild flowers of Tibet now under attack by the ill-advised grazing and farming practices of zealous and ignorant Communist cadres and by the carelessness of trekkers from the affluent West and Japan?

#56 - )#57 - June 5: Left #55 at 0615. Traveled 30° N of E 4 hrs along alluvial plains crossing 4 streams then crossed nose of ridge and descended to wide valley and recommencement of alluvial plains. Here at 1115 (snow-covered peaks to S) made Camp #56. Left #56 at 1230 traveling along plain and very low ranges.
Crossed three streams and camped at 4th at 1630. Snow-capped peaks due east. End of lake to North and highest of snow-capped peaks about 5° N of E. On leaving #56 traveled 30° N of E but gradually turned more and more E until by time of arrival at #57 rode due East. El at #56 16,100 – El at #57 16,350.

#58 - June 6: Left #57 at (sprinkled today) 0700 and crossed stream then nose of high hill and then head of high valley which merges with plain to north shore of Nam Tso. Crossed to slope of hills to East of valley and then proceeded south over mt. to Lakin pass (El. 17,200'). Crossed pass in about 3 hrs. Then descended steep winding valley in general southerly direction. At 1400 arrived at Dam (El. 14,800') Lowest since Pirene Pass.

#59 - #60 - June 7: Left #58 at 0330 and travelled SW down valley, then over low range and into 2nd valley. In middle of 2nd are a few low hills. To south of hills is home of Ba Dzong magistrate and we made #59 at 1300. Given empty barren house which soon changed under threats of Lobsunyarpil and Pindaadorji. Left #59 at 1630 and after precarious crossing (sprinkled today) of 100 x 2 ft. turbulent stream arrived at 2045 at #60. #60 at head of 2nd valley. El 15,125. (Notes for map – Nyenchentanela [sic] to NW Sharno is nat dam at foot of Luckinla. Ba Dzong. Dashi Tonggin Gomba). (Note to National Geographic: – Dzong – Mag. district. la – pass or mt.)

#61 - June 8: Left #60 at 0800. Rained during night and at 0700 in morning reached top of pass (El 15900). Sprinkled on road. Pass exactly opposite Nyenchentangla. One river comes down 1/2 way slope of NC and L where it separates 1 to NE and 1 to SW. Continued SW to Zamsar, arriving at 1400. Ruben Gusho and six soldiers were met here on way to Lhasa. He had crossed Guari La to our north. El 15,450’. Paotai 3rd N hill E Zamsar on side river.

#62 - June 9: Left #61 0700 traveling down river. Immediately before leaving Zamsar crossed stone bridge only after one camel fell in drink and much difficulty. Camel fished out. At El 14,500 rye planted. Dejin Dzong El 14,100 and planted either to rye or peas. Trees appear at 14,250. Crossed 2nd bridge about 1 1/2 hrs from Dejin Dzong. Arrived at Dejin Dzong at 1250. Will eat eggs if shock is not too great.

#63 - June 9: Left #62 at 1445 and arrived at Ma (#63) at 1745. Ma is name of white flower. Here met employee of Indian Mission and Foreign Office cook. Will eat roast chicken tonight. Eggs were good. Heavy rain just before arriving Ma. Received letter from Richardson of Indian Mission. Will meet Deishu Gusho, interpreter of Foreign Office tomorrow. Barometer broken.

#64 - June 10: Rained heavily during early morning. Left #63 at 0815 and arrived at Nhantzu at 1215. As with #63, #64 is tent in grove of willow
and poplar. Ride and camp both extremely pleasant. Girls from Dejin and Lhasa decorate their faces with a black tree dye, some only under eyes, other on side of nose and some as wide streaks on the face. I do not approve. Nhantzu 400 ft lower than Ma.

This face decoration is made by boiling whey until it becomes a thick, dark concentrate and then painting it on the face.\(^{123}\)

The green Tibetan countrysided opening up around us was like entering through a time warp into a medieval miniature, maybe stepping into Duc de Berri's *Book of Hours*. Rich farms were cultivated with oxen or *mdzou*-drawn plows by prosperous-looking farmers spread around solidly-built stone manor houses. Here and there a cluster of smaller houses appeared among orchards. Between the fields of barley, rye, and peas, bloomed wild flowers.

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**Feudalism in Tibet**

Tibet before the Chinese Communist take over has generally been described as a feudal state. The term "feudal" has been freely assigned to all sorts of political arrangements by reformers in the 20th century. The system existing in Medieval Europe varied in different areas so that comparing it to what was happening in Tibet before the Chinese Communists destroyed the old system is treacherous at best. As nobody has made a systematic study of what was actually happening in different parts of Tibet the comparison to Medieval Europe becomes even murkier. One thing is clear, in both Medieval Europe and in Tibet what was most pronounced was the overarching power of the church. Tibet was a theocracy held together by the Dalai Lama's government in a very loose organization which included the ancient state of Sakya which existed before the Dalai Lama's office gained control.\(^{124}\) Tibetans in Missoula have told me that there were other old "kingdoms" embedded in the polity of Tibet, with their own privileges and obligations. A Tibetan woman, Sonam, told me that she had been invited back by the Chinese Communists in the 1980s to reclaim her royal inheritance. She did not like what she saw and went back into exile. The Tibetan system was held together by service obligations. Most of the gentry retained rights to estates as long as members of the family performed services for the government in Lhasa. Similarly, farmers and artisans were compensated with land from the estates as long as they performed the requisite services.

Tsaron Sha-pe Wangchuk Gyalpo, the father of Rinchen Dolma Taring was descended from the 8th century doctor, Yuthok Yonten Gonpo (*yuthok* means "turquoise" and refers to the turquoise supposedly heaped on his roof by admiring demons and gods). There was another prominent Lhasa family also called Yuthok, related to the tenth Dalai Lama, but that name referred to a blue-tiled bridge in Lhasa.\(^{125}\) *Sha-pe* is a title indicating membership in the Kashag, the highest authority in the land, entitling the title-holder to wear yellow, figured silk and a long, blue turquoise earring and on special occasions a round, black, fox-fur hat. In order for a family like the Tsarongs to retain the rights to their estates they had to supply a family member to high government administrative or military office. If no suitable family member existed the family accepted a married-in son-in-law to perform these duties for them. There were also aristocratic families who were descended from ancient kings who retained their estates without providing services to the government. Finally, at the reincarnation of a new Dalai Lama his immediate family was elevated to noble rank. In this way the Tibetan aristocracy was revitalized. The ecclesiastical side of the government also allowed commoners to advance to high rank and positions in the government.

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\(^{a}\) *Mdzou* are fertile yak-cattle hybrids.
The Tibetan form of feudalism based on service gentry and land owning serfs was not necessarily harsh, although Hugh Richardson felt it was. Serfs had title to the land they tilled, but were duty-bound to supply a tax in kind and perform certain labors in return to the lord of the estate and to the government of the Dalai Lama. Very onerous was the duty to supply animal transport to any who carried a special pass issued by the government. A peasant could leave the land as long as his obligations were met. He could also come back later in life, a kind of old-age pension. With the service gentry often not resident on the estates assigned to them, a steward overseer was the most land-bound. With little accountability the position was rife with graft and exploitation. With so many monks, who were mostly celibate (only the Yellow Hat sect to which the Dalai Lama belongs demanded celibacy), there was not the population pressure so evident in other parts of Asia. Here, instead, there was a shortage of workers.

Rinchen Dolma Taring explains, “Chensal Namgang, who later took the surname Tsarong when he was ennobled by marrying into our family, and who was then given the forenames Dasang Dadul and the title of Dzasa (similar to an English earldom) by His Holiness. Chensal Namgang was born in 1885 into a peasant family in Phenpo, north of Lhasa where his father had a little farm and made arrows.” For a while Rinchen Dolma was married to him together with her sister. She later married Jigme Taring from Sikkim.

The family of one of the richest men I met in Tibet, a trader, Pandatsang (or Pomdatsang?), had also been serfs originally. I met his daughter years later in Seattle. She was waiting tables to pay for her university education. The Chinese Communists claimed that they had to liberate the Tibetans from feudalism. Tibetan serfs were generally better off than the farmers of the North China Plain in my day who had no animals to help them work their land, only a hoe and their own sweat.

**Lhasa**

#65 - Lhasa - June 11: Left #64 same time and arrived at small village six miles from Lhasa one hour before dark. Rained like hell in late afternoon and I rode ahead of rest of party. Met Tse Gung, my official interpreter and Henrig Harrer, Austrian, just before arriving. Presented me, among other things, Tibetan clothes. Left at 0600 next morning and, after coffee at British consulate (Indian mission), came to house prepared by Foreign Bureau. Chinese Communist delegates here but they have not succeeded as yet. Good to be here — Oh God....

We were riding Central Asian ponies and leading the camels. I later gave the remaining camels to the Dalai Lama, to end their days in a little zoo together with an elephant, a gift from another visitor.

As we neared the holy city we could see the great monasteries of Sera and Drepong, the medical colleges perched on Chokpuri, a steep spur of rock, and the golden roofs of the Potala. The willows along the Kyi Chu were green with new leaves. The citizens of Lhasa were picnicking under large white tents with blue designs near the clear waters. Some were happily swimming in the buff.

Here I will turn to a statement I wrote describing my relations with the Tibet Foreign Bureau, dated September 8, 1950:

The day before we arrived in Lhasa, I was met by Heinrich Harrer and Driesur Guno. Harrer is one of the Austrians who escaped from British prison camp to Lhasa. He met me in order to offer congratulations on my
Democracy in Taiwan

In Taiwan the tillers of the land were tenant farmers, not sharecroppers or serfs, on the estates of landlords. They were not day laborers, more insecure and with less scope for personal initiative. A day laborer had to perform service assigned to him. Under Japanese rule Taiwanese tenants found that their leases were contested by largescale sugar plantations on which they could find work as day laborers, not as farmers in their own right. That there were still many tenant farmers on Taiwan when the Guomindang, upon escaping to the island after the Communist victory, instituted a “land to the tiller” land reform program was very beneficial. These tenants quickly figured out how to make a living from their newly-acquired land, experimenting with cash crops and inter-planting. Once they were a little ahead, retaining ownership to their own land as a safety net, many members of a family found employment in nearby towns. When we went back to visit the farmers I knew in the 1960s, in 1989/90, their families still held title to their land. They were very unwilling to sell once this was legally possible. They even refused to lease their land to outsiders even when inheritance customs made the portions too small to farm profitably. The situation had not reached the conditions found on Native American reservations in the U.S. where the administration of inherited plots had become so complex by the 1960s that the Bureau of Indian Affairs simply rented out the land and then divided the rent payments between the heirs. These payments could be as small as 25 cents. Many Taiwanese saved up their money, often using “joy luck clubs” where a number of acquaintances pool their resources and then use the money in turn, instead of turning to banks. They branched out into little and big industries of their own, some attached to their homes, jia ting gong chang, “garage industries.”

In 1989/90, the village and township provided many community services that had not existed in the past. There was a village-supported kindergarten. Once a month the senior citizens met there. We were invited to a meal and afterwards everybody sang Japanese fight songs with gusto and quavering voices. By then most of the one-time impoverished tenant families had become prosperous world travelers by air and in cyberspace. Sitting in the little drug store open to the dusty main road, people talked of their last trip to Beijing, staying at the Great Wall Hotel. “Just think, I only spat on the sidewalk and a policeman appeared and gave me a ticket!”

The tremendous entrepreneurial spirit unleashed by the land reform had not as yet translated into a sense of pride for the village and the surrounding environment. Failed industrial plants were simply abandoned and left to sink back into the vegetation. Old boilers were left to rust, half-demolished factory walls leaned into the roadway, and the water in the irrigation canal ran red with dye from a paper factory. Little boys fished in the canal and brought their catch home proudly to add to the soup. A lumber yard burned down while everybody watched and fire trucks could not reach the blaze because it had been built without proper access. There was much fudging about property lines. But the public mood had shifted. Taiwanese were not only tired of Guomindang dominance, but they felt they had the economic power and self-assurance to reassert Taiwanese as opposed to mainland values. Martial law was lifted in 1987. The movie, City of Silence, was shown freely, allowing the terrible 1947 massacre of Taiwanese, especially Japanese-trained literati, by Guomindang troops, to be talked about. Until then even mention of this event was punished by the government. At the sacred New Year’s meal when the close family shares food with ritual meaning around a “hot pot” in the center of the table, we were invited to friends of the Lin’s in a nearby town. After the meal, Li Tenghui, newly-elected Premier, still of the Guomindang party, but a native Taiwanese, spoke to the nation. He spoke first in Mandarin, then in Hoklo, then in Hakka. Our hosts listened and wept. At last, the long oppression was broken. At the next election the Democratic Progressive Party of Chen Shuibian won. The rulers of the PRC do not like the situation, but for now Taiwan is an independent, democratically-governed country.
safe arrival, sympathy for the death of Mr. Mackiernan, and to imbue me with a sympathetic attitude for Tibet. Driesur Guno, the telegraph master in Tibet, had been appointed my aide-de-camp by the Tibetan government.

Heinrich Harrer is well known to U.S. movie-goers from the movie, Seven Years in Tibet, with Brad Pitt playing Harrer, although I do not remember him looking that much like Pitt when I knew him. Harrer, as part of a German mountaineering expedition, had been interned by the British in 1939. He later escaped from prison camp at Dehra Dun in India in 1943, arriving in Lhasa in 1946, together with his fellow Austrian mountaineer, Peter Aufschnaiter, both quite destitute.

Harrer is famous for his first ascent of the Eiger Wall of Mont Blanc in the Alps. He was also an early member of the Nazi party (1934, even though he was not a German) and protégé of Heinrich Himmler, the organizer of annihilation of Poles, Jews and Gypsies in concentration camps. When I knew him in Lhasa Harrer was obviously dragging his feet about going back to Europe. Peter Aufschnaiter married a Tibetan woman and was prepared to make Tibet his permanent home.127

Harrer looked us up later when we were graduate students in Berkeley (1954). He was on a speaking tour promoting his book, written with the help of an unnamed ghost writer, Seven Years in Tibet (translated from the German original). He borrowed some of the pictures I had taken in Lhasa, but he obviously found me less interesting than back in Lhasa where he went out of his way to be helpful.

June 12: we entered Lhasa, I was met on the road by Mr. Kipup, an official of the fourth rank in the Foreign Office of the Government of Tibet. He had come to offer the welcome to Lhasa held for us by the Government of Tibet.

I may have gotten that a bit wrong. It was probably Kyibu Wangdu Norbhu, 6th rank official (at least he was that in 1938), who was in charge of the city police. He was one of the four boys sent to England to be educated at Rugby in 1913 (arranged by Sir Charles Bell and the 13th Dalai Lama). On his return he was put in charge of developing the telegraph system which he knew little about, so he soon retired to the family estate.128

A servant of Mr. Hugh Richardson, former British political officer and now Chief of the Indian Mission in Tibet, asked that I stop at Richardson’s. This invitation was taken in very poor grace by the Tibetans. They wanted to do all within their power to make my stay comfortable; they wanted to do all they could to make me happy. They did not like the idea of Richardson entertaining me but nevertheless consented to Richardson’s request. As a precaution they invited themselves also. On every official visit I made to the Indian Mission, I was accompanied by an English-speaking Tibetan.

I do not really know why the Tibetans felt suspicious of Hugh Richardson. Back in 1939, he was very hostile to Ernst Schaefer and his German/Nazi expedition, sensing their anti-British inclinations and expecting them to be Nazi spies eager to destabilize the British Raj in India. During the war he was not in Lhasa. He returned to Lhasa in 1946, just about the same time as Heinrich Harrer arrived there. What had Harrer and Aufschnaiter been up to since their escape from Dehra Dun in 1943? Harrer describes making lots of maps especially of the border region with Nepal. He may have glossed over other events in his book. By the time I came to Lhasa the British Raj was no more. Richardson now represented the new Indian government, but the sense of revulsion against Himmler’s accomplices ran deep. He must have been suspicious of plans Harrer was hatching with some members of the Tibetan government and with the CIA.
After tea at Richardson’s we were taken to Triede Lingga, a Tibetan house in the beautiful gardens of Lhasa, between the city and the Kyi Chu (river). This was to be our home.

This was the same guest house which Lowell Thomas stayed in when he visited Lhasa a year or so earlier. It is also where Schaefer stayed back in 1939. Out of a trapezoidal window, the traditional shape for the windows of Tibetan houses, I could look down on the Kyi Chu. Outside another window lay the walled city of Lhasa. Harrer joined the doctor and helpers (handlers?) from the Tibetan Foreign Office in assisting and guiding me. A few days after I had settled in, Harrer came over to invite me to run up some wretched mountain peak with him. He was amazed when I declined. For me it seemed like utter idiocy to

In 1936, when it was acquired, the power of the Raj was already ebbing. Richardson received me correctly, but without enthusiasm.

I was wearing the robes the Tibetan government had given me. My beard was rangy. In short, I had “gone native,” that ultimate opprobrium for Rudyard Kipling’s colonial Englishman. Vasili, on the other hand, looked quite dapper. He had a tailor in Lhasa make him a Western suit and wore a felt fedora of the type also favored by Tibetan farm women.

I asked Richardson to send a message to the United States for me. I wanted the United States government to hear directly from me what had happened on the Chang Tang. This was on June 11. In time I received a reply from my government with suitable condolences, but nothing else. I was not a United States government employee to whom the government owed special instructions. A letter from New Delhi, #161 sent on July 27, 1950, from Loyd V. Steere, Counselor of Embassy has this to say:

“...”

Richardson later visited us in Berkeley with his recently-married wife, Huldah Rennie, warm and friendly. I still see us sitting in Berkeley’s Rose Garden, looking out over San Francisco Bay, and talking about Tibet. But back in Lhasa he had no advice for me on how to deport myself in dealing with the Tibetan Foreign Office even though he was clearly the most knowledgeable Westerner on Tibetan affairs and on Tibetan history.

On the next day Jassak S.S. Surba and Jassak Lama Niuhsia, the lay and clerical heads of the Foreign Bureau, arrived with presents and apologies for the unfortunate incident. They provided an elaborate lunch for me in Triede Lingga.

For the next few days I was busy talking to various Tibetan officials who had come to ask me about the situation in China. These officials
The complexity of Tibetan lineage relationships has been brought home to us in Missoula after Tibetans were resettled here. After the 1989 Tian An Men Massacre in Beijing, President Bush senior’s first response was to do nothing about this unspeakable human disaster. Finally, Bush was persuaded to issue 1000 green cards (work permits and permission to seek US citizenship) to the Dalai Lama in order to allow some Tibetans to come to the United States. Those around His Holiness devised a complex scheme whereby different U.S. cities could become host to about twenty Tibetan heads of household who could then bring their families over later and establish viable Tibetan communities. Missoula became home to some eighteen Tibetans, most of whom had never met each other before and belonged to different social classes and came from different parts of Tibet: a prince of the ancient royal house of Sakya, a young man from the countryside in the Khampa area, a woman with a master’s degree in social work from the University of Bombay (her thesis concerned prostitutes from the mountains). It was not easy for them to interrelate with each other and form a community, let alone live communally in the one house provided for them by the Tibetan Resettlement Committee of which we were members.

This resettlement effort put great strain on young women. In the Tibetan scheme of things brothers are obligated to fulfill their father’s responsibilities, sisters those of their mother. Some of the Tibetan women who came to Missoula were quite young and eager for love and children, but they now found themselves responsible for large families left behind in Nepal or India. Their sense of guilt at not fulfilling these expectations can be enormous. One young woman who had fallen in love with a non-Tibetan finally succumbed to her father’s demands back in Nepal to marry a man he had chosen for her. It almost broke her heart. She found the man chosen by her father impossible to live with. Finally, she extricated herself from this and we are told is married to another man, the proud mother of two children. One man who with his brothers shared a wife in a polyandrous household now found himself quite alone in a strange land, terribly lonely, obligated to help his brothers and the one wife they share, but who had to remain behind to take care of their old parents. He sought solace in drink. The U.S. Family Reunification Program is often not flexible enough to accommodate the various and complex definitions of “family” held by different Tibetans.

In Taiwan, with patrilineality and patrilocality, obligations are much more clearly defined. When we were last there the division of labor between-in-laws was still in place. Sons were responsible together with their wives for their parents. All sons were equally responsible and so grandparents traveled to each of their sons’ households in turn. This clear division of responsibilities may be changing. Daughters now find it much easier than before to visit their own mothers and of course, want to do right by their own parents. With growing prosperity women in the countryside have their own mopeds which they drive freely around the paddy fields to look in on mother even when, as is customary, she lives in another village. Taiwanese practice both surname and village exogamy. In the past checking on mother was much more difficult for a daughter. It usually had to wait to the time of the Mid-Autumn Festival (the Moon Festival) when daughters traditionally visit their natal homes. In what way these changes will effect the prestige of the mother’s brother as high-status outside friend remains to be seen. He is traditionally the protector of his sister’s interests and of her children’s. In this capacity he is the arbitrator when the estate is divided among brothers, his sister’s sons. In Taiwan all male heirs divide the patrimony equally (a little more going to the eldest responsible for the ancestral memorial services). Should society become much more bilateral, the mother’s brother’s role could logically, at least, become less important. I do not know how the position of the mother’s brother is conceived in Tibetan society.
all arrived bearing gifts of one sort and another, mostly foodstuffs for Vasili and myself. I told them what I knew about the situation in China, Mongolia, and Turkestan and my opinion of the Chinese Communists. I stressed the fact that the Chinese Communists could not be trusted and used as an example their activities in Chinese Turkestan and Inner Mongolia.

Everything was done to make me comfortable. The English-speaking doctor acted as advisor and translator. There were parties and picnics. Women wore much jewelry, including turquoise-studded reliquary boxes. Their striped aprons varied the seven colors of the rainbow in designs reflecting the wishes of different families. The aprons were woven of silk and wool by specialists who came to the house. At some events women wore fabulous wooden hairpieces, patruk, decorated with pearls and other jewels. At one party a man asked me to help his son come to the United States to study. Then at another party another man asked the same thing. It took me a while to figure out that the young man to be helped was one and the same person. Both men who spoke to me were his father. In Tibet a group of brothers may marry one woman to preserve the inheritance. In other cases, a man may marry several sisters. Tibetan family relationships are complex, made even more so by the different liege obligations of the different sexes among family members.

At the end of the first week I paid my formal visit to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Since the Dalai Lama has not reached his majority and has not as yet taken over the secular affairs of the nation, it is not a tradition that he talk to foreigners. Therefore, it was impossible for us to exchange views, although we grinned at each other during the entire time of the "interview."

The Dalai Lama invited me to his summer palace, the Norbulingka, which was an easy walk from the guest house. I walked through the covered gate flanked by sentry boxes, through the gardens and up some steps of the modest pavilion where the fourteen- (or was it sixteen?) year-old youth sat on a slightly raised dais guarded by his huge monk bodyguards in maroon robes with immense padded shoulders, wearing felt boots with upturned toes. Vasili and I presented white silk scarves of felicity. His Holiness accepted them, but could not talk to us. He looked at us with a twinkle in his eyes and obviously eager to ask me many questions, but he had to obey protocol. I bowed to him and he laid both his hands on my head in a double blessing. Then I backed away in what I hope was the proper show of respect.

After my call to the Dalai Lama I was free to see various people in Lhasa, both Tibetan and foreign. I paid a visit to Mr. Richardson and I saw Mr. Fox, Chief of the Tibetan Radio Bureau, former chief of the radio department of the British Mission to Tibet. I also paid visits within the next few days to some of my Tibetan friends, Surhan and Sadutsang. Surhans are one of the best and most influential Tibetan noble families. Mr. Surkhang, known in this statement as Jassak S. S. Surba, is the lay Chief of the Foreign Office. His brother, who does not have the name of Surkhang or Surba but has taken the name of his wife’s family, is Commander-in-Chief of the Army. His eldest son is the Chief Minister of Tibet, an even more powerful position than that of his father. The second son is a general in the Tibetan army, and a former member of the Tibetan Trade Mission to the United States.
The Sadutsangs are a trading family on a par with Pangdatsang, and as a result of their loyalty to the Government of Tibet and the service rendered to the Government of Tibet, the youngest son, Rinchin, has been made a member of the Tibetan nobility and is in a position of fifth rank in the Foreign Office, a very high post for a person who is probably no more than 25 or 26 years of age.

I also saw Heinrig Harrer and Ned Pailoff (Nedbailoff).

Ned Pailoff was a White Russian and a mechanic who was living in Lhasa, after having been interned during the war in Dehra Dun. He was finally released in 1947. To his dismay, the allies wanted to repatriate him to the Soviet Union. He escaped to Sikkim and from there was invited to Lhasa to repair machines of the old electrical plant. Vasili felt that Pailoff was suspicious of his, Vasili's, credentials as an anti-Soviet Russian.

The Foreign Bureau gave me another dinner. At this dinner the Torgot Prince Minwang (Tsegangdorji) was also present. They asked to see me again at the Foreign Office, and within a few days I met them in their office behind closed doors. At the conference were Surba, Liuhsin, and Kyibu. They asked me for advice concerning the possibility of relationships between the Government of Tibet and the Government of the United States of America.

In reply I first made certain that they understood that I was not an American official, and anything that I said would be of necessity in an unofficial capacity. They replied that they understood this, but that I might be of value both to the American and the Government of Tibet.

They then reported to me that they had requested that a Tibetan Mission be allowed to go to the United States, but that the United States had turned down this Mission on the grounds that the Mission would be inauspicious at the present time. They also said that the American Government wished later in the year to send a First Secretary and Vice Consul attached to the Embassy in New Delhi to Lhasa in order to meet the Mackiernan party. The Government of Tibet replied to this request in the same manner that the American Government replied to theirs — that at the present time the visit of Americans to Lhasa would be inauspicious. I agreed with the Tibetans in their action. Elaborating I said that any overt action done now which might aggravate the Chinese Communists would endanger the safety of Tibet.

I continued according to my report to advise the Tibetan government, pointing out the ills of feudalism and the United State's disappointment with the Chinese Nationalists, in a manner that reading it now seems amazing. Here am I, an unemployed, penniless, bedraggled young man meeting members of the ruling body of the most esoteric country on earth and then advising them! I was a proper Yankee at King Arthur's court. Mark Twain would have had a field day. The Tibetans assumed that I must be an important personage of some sort with access to the seats of power in the government of the United States. I tried to explain to them that I was only a simple student, a lost Fulbright scholar, who had no special access, but they would not hear of this. They desperately needed contact, and sought recognition by the United Nations as an independent country and any type of help from the United States government. At this late date even the most recalcitrant and conservative abbots were aware of the grave danger posed to Tibet by the new Chinese Communist government.
I improvised as best I could. Nudged by Vasili I asked the Tibetan government to allow Kazakhs and White Russians associated with Hussein Taiji and Osman Bator, and Mongols associated with Prince De, free transit across Tibet. At that time I still did not know Prince De's fate and hoped he and his followers had reached Tibet and could establish a government in exile. It was not until later that I learned the trucks and material of the Mongol Branch of the China Relief Mission had not been turned over to Prince De, but were abandoned to the Chinese Communists.

They asked the National Oracle of Tibet, the Nechung Oracle, who advises His Holiness the Dalai Lama, to enter into a trance state for my benefit. This fragile-looking young man (the old oracle had passed away in 1945) was wearing an enormous headdress with a polished steel mirror on his chest inscribed with the word *Khri*, “Attention!” He was 'speaking in tongues' as he explained the future he saw in the mirror. His utterances were interpreted by experts and relayed to me, but I found no guidance in them. The oracle is a manifestation of the Bon religion which existed in Tibet before the introduction of Buddhism in the 8th century AD.

I did not have guidance from the U.S. government on how to proceed. I had no secure means of communication. I do not know what the previously-mentioned letter from Loyd V. Steere is referring to when it states, “The Embassy endeavored early in July to persuade them (i.e., Vasili and me) to hasten their departure ...” There had been a request by some U.S. officials to be allowed to come to Tibet in order to rescue what was left of the Mackiernan party. The Tibetans asked me whether I wished the Tibetans to reverse their decision and to ask for a rescue team to come up to Lhasa. I did not know what to make of this request. I expected that a direct message would reach me clarifying the situation. Vasili and I again tried to make contact by ourselves through the field radio, but we lacked some essential code in order to get through.

Finally, as I was not an official, nor carried any diplomatic documentation or pouch, I suggested that the Tibetan government, the Kashag, needed to prepare and sign an official request for military help from the U.S. government if that is what they wished. If I simply went to U.S. government officials without some recognizable legal mandate from the Tibetan government, they would not take me seriously. I offered to carry two letters: one to the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi and one to Dean Acheson, Secretary of State under President Truman. I also suggested they make immediate radio contact with the U.S. government and discuss the situation with the correct State Department desk.

I was asked to make an official appearance before the Kashag in session with the Tsongdu in the great hall of the Potala palace. The Kashag was the cabinet of the Tibetan government. It consisted of four officials, three lay and one clerical. The council, Tsongdu, was made up of some one hundred delegates.

I climbed up the many steps of the Potala palace, up the great staircase to the great hall that was somewhat bigger than an indoor basketball court without bleachers. The ceiling was held up by innumerable square wooden columns draped with red cloth. The beams of the ceiling were painted with bright colors. I sat on a slightly-raised platform at one end with the high officials. Their staff and advisers sat in front of us. The Tibetan officials were dressed in their many-colored silk brocades, with a long earring in one ear and a jewel knotted in their top knot, the *Sha-pe*, and flat, fur hats. Monks in maroon with horn-like yellow caps and Great Lamas in maroon and saffron moved about in the flickering light of butter lamps.

I did not speak. My presence bore witness to the proposals being presented. The members of the council voted by, as I recall it, handing in a signed paper stating their approval or disapproval. The proposal passed by only one vote. All thought that there was still time. They thought that the PRC would not invade Tibet till after the snow; not till spring 1951, at the earliest, and that U.S. military help together with recognition of Tibet as an independent state with a seat at
the United Nations could still save their country. What the Tibetans did not want was another "Younghusband Expedition" blasting its way into Lhasa, dropping bombs on the holy city in some misguided, overreaching effort possibly involving "regime change." Tibetans in power wanted to get help but they wanted to remain in the driver's seat.

My days in Lhasa passed full of wonder. Most mornings I walked the five-mile Lingkhor, the Pilgrim's Way around the city of Lhasa. Here pilgrims from all corners of the land humbled themselves in their devotion, in their penance. Some measured their full length prostrate on the ground. Along the road beggars asked for holy charity. Beseechingly, beggar dogs held out their begging bowls which they carried around their necks.

I would then enter the holy city and walk to the Jo-khang, Tsuglak Khang, the Cathedral of Tibet. I squatted on my heels next to one of the many wooden pillars that held up the ceiling of the vast hall. The flickering lights of the butter lamps highlighted the sooty images of Buddhas, gods, demons and other supernaturals that enveloped me as I listened to the chanting of the monks and inhaled the wonderful fragrance of juniper incense. After a while, I could feel the horrors of the Chang Tang and the memory of my decapitated comrades lying dead on the icy ground fall away. I had wrestled with the "terrible gods of Tibet" and survived. I was free of anger and fear for a lifetime.

After a long while I arose and walked out onto the Barkor, the main shopping street of Lhasa where all the colorfully-dressed vendors and shoppers from every corner of Tibet and beyond pushed past each other. I passed the workshop of a Nepalese (Nawari) image maker. The shop was open to the street so the passersby could watch the artisans at work. I looked over his wares and then ordered a small, bronze Buddha statue. Tibetans are not artisans. Even then sacred objects were made by Nawari or others coming from the south. Tibetans in Missoula told me that even carpet-weaving was originally a task not befitting a true Tibetan. There were professionals traveling from manor house to manor house who performed this task.

Tibet had a complex guild system. Even many of the beggars were members of a guild and had their rights and special obligations. Butchers and blacksmiths were outsiders, often Muslims, because of their dangerous occupations. Even though Tibetans eat meat, killing an animal for a Buddhist is still a most defiling occupation. The Nawari craftsman said the statue would take several months to make and then consecrate with Tibetan texts. I told him to omit the texts as I had not studied Buddhism and felt shy of moving so unlearned into others' spiritual space. I prepaid for the statue and postage with spending money the Tibetan government had given me. I asked him to send it to my home in the U.S.

True to his word, months later the statue reached me in Berkeley, California. I was so delighted I wrapped it in a silk prayer shawl, and took it to an anthropology seminar I was attending at the University of California. I wanted to show to a friend for whom I always saved a seat. She had a job over lunch hour and was always late. She said the right things about my bronze Buddha. It has since graced her and my living room for over fifty years. The Buddha and a pair of handknit woolen stockings with black and white checkerboard heels made for me by a friend in Lhasa are the only mementos I have of that strange time in Lhasa as I gradually regained hope for life after the bleak uplands of Tibet.

**Farewell to Lhasa**

We stayed in Lhasa until the end of July. It took that long for the letters from the Foreign Office to be ready. Once I had received them I was ready to leave. I said goodbye to Lhasa and the surrounding monasteries. I tried to visit them all: to climb to the roof of the Potala, among the
golden tombs of past Dalai Lamas; to look out over the countryside below the dragon-shaped eaves of Drepong Monastery; to hear the monks in the medical college on top of Chokpuri Crag take their celestial flights, landing back on earth with loud thumps. I tried to take it all in, to preserve it until some day I could come back but, of course, I never could. That fantastic and wonderful world is gone. It has been swallowed up and destroyed by the fanaticisms of the modern, man-centered world — first the so-called “liberation” by the Maoist communist state, then the Cultural Revolution, followed by Deng Xiaoping’s “to be rich is beautiful!” I have never gone back to Lhasa.

With a large group of well-wishers seeing us off, protected by two Tibetan soldiers, one of whom acted as cook and spoke English, we set off floating down the Kyi Chu in a coracle. This almost-round vessel made of yak hide stretched over a willow frame has long been one of anthropology’s conundrums. Coracles were historically used, at least so the noted anthropologist, Dr. Robert Lowie, told me, only among the Mandan of the upper Missouri and the Irish. At first he did not want to believe that I had floated in one down the rivers of Tibet. Actually, similar round boats have long plied the Tigris and Euphrates, although I think they are made of reeds instead of hides. I kept looking back to see Lhasa and the golden roofs of the Potala fade slowly from view as the current of the Kyi Chu swept the coracle downstream.

We floated until the Kyi Chu flows into the Tsangpo, a distance of some 30 miles. The Tsangpo becomes the Brahmaputra after flowing through an incredible gorge in eastern Tibet. Instead of fording the river here we let our coracle drift down stream some fifty more miles until we reached the ancient monastery and temple of Samye, the oldest Buddhist temple in Tibet, built when Buddhism was brought from India. Samye is built in quite a different style from the monasteries and temples I had explored in Lhasa. Samye’s walls circumscribe a rounded space. It was not a monastery-fortress, grim and angular on its spur of hill, but a religious enclosure, a mandala, laid out on the valley floor. Tibetans in Lhasa had told me that I simply must see Samye as part of the history lessons they were eagerly imparting. The Tibetan government paid for this trip. They felt responsible for us until we crossed the pass into Sikkim.

Apricots were ripening in the orchards along the banks of the Tsangpo and grain was being harvested. We spent a couple of nights, and then took the ferry over the river. This was operated by women with long oars who also jumped into the water to pull the ferry to the other side amidst much laughter and merriment.

There was a lot of laughter in the Tibet I knew. Many other travelers commented on dirt in Tibet, but I must confess that I did not notice it especially. Of course, I had spent a number of years in East Asia by then and there was a lot of dirt there, too. There was if anything even more dirt in China proper than in Lhasa. Open sewers, piles of rubbish, and starving dogs were common sights. Beggars were everywhere, too, but there seemed to be fewer in Lhasa than in cities further east. There certainly were no public toilets in Beijing and other cities. Men relieved themselves against alley walls. All were welcome to watch. Now I am told Lhasa is cleaner. Cleanliness may be next to godliness, but is there as much laughter?

Mules were waiting for us with our luggage for the ride to Sikkim. The mules had traveled by road over Gokar La Pass. We rode the mules south-southwest, winding our way over the green foothills to Pari Dzong, a traditional Tibetan town around a formidable citadel. From there we rode down the lovely Chumbi valley which continues south into Bhutan becoming the Amo Chu. Monsoon clouds were massing over the Himalayas so when we reached Otter Lake (Ram Co) we could not see Chomolhari, “Goddess of the Mountains,” with her escort peaks reflected in the clear waters as Tolstoy and Dolan had. In Yadong, a small town of steeply-gabled houses nestled between wooded slopes, we were received by the Pandatsang family. They were rich merchants originally from the Kham area involved in the wool trade. They made me very welcome.
On the trail south from there we met the Indian representative, S. Sinha, who was traveling to Lhasa to relieve Hugh Richardson. We had a long conversation. He told me that the newly-independent government of India was in favor of an independent, sovereign Tibet. Then we turned west to climb the 13,500-ft. Natu La (Nathu Lha) Pass. I dismounted. To the north stretched range after range of soft grey-green to the silvery haze of the Tsangpo valley. The city of Lhasa lay far beyond. To my east the clouds suddenly lifted and there rose 23,989-ft. Chomolhari sparkling in all her glory. I bowed to the Goddess, remounted, and rode into Sikkim over the Kara La Pass.

Vasili remembers this moment differently. He told me recently when we visited him again on Hawaii, "When I reached the top of the pass and looked down into a sea of clouds, for a moment I, like the old men at Lake Zaijan, my old home, believed, yes, the world is indeed a flat disc. Now I have traveled so far I have reached the end of the world. Careful, or I will fall off the edge into the deep."

Once over the passes I slipped off my mule and started to run down the slope, down from the ice and snow into the lush growth of the southern slopes of the Himalayas. Gentle rain enveloped the green with mist. I ran on. Soon I could see regular bushes, and then fragrant, glorious wild rhododendrons in full bloom. They towered above me, magenta and white. I ran on. The rain became heavier and warmer. Then I noticed that all was not gentle in this warm and moist world. There were leeches greedy for a meal ready to slither up whatever footwear I had on, or to drop on me from the wet bushes. They were ready to settle in and gorge themselves with my blood.

In pouring rain we reached the first rest-stop at Changu in Sikkim, which was then still an independent country (later, it was absorbed by India). We were put up at the old British Raj guesthouse. A rhododendron-wood fire crackled in the fireplace. A bottle of Scotch stood on the table and — best of all — letters from home.

We had been met earlier, just below the pass, by a LIFE magazine reporter, Jim Burke, by the U.S. representative to Sikkim, Foreman, and by U.S. Vice Consul Frederick Latrash. Like Doug Mackiernan, Latrash was a Vice Consul with a different agenda and the title of vice consul was a cover. He was clearly miffed that he had not been able to come to Lhasa in order to "rescue" me. I believe he and George Patterson and others wanted to use Mackiernan's death as a way to receive an invitation to Lhasa. Patterson was a one-time Scottish missionary who had become deeply involved in the anti-Communist Chinese fights spearheaded by the Khampa of eastern Tibet and which would later involve the CIA. Latrash explained that monsoon rains had washed out the road to Gangtok so we could not use a jeep and had to continue riding our mules.\footnote{Gangtok is the capitol of Sikkim and was the trade entrepot for wool and salt from Tibet.}
Plate XVII: Farewell to Lhasa

Above: Coracle oarsman with sheep next to his feet — a last gift from well-wishers in Lhasa

Top Right: Coracle on the Kyi Chu

Right: Tibetan well-wishers seeing Frank and Vasili off down the Kyi Chu

Below: Peter Aufschnaiter, Vasili Zvazov, Tibetans, and Heinrich Harrer (far right)
Main temple with yaks over: Cleric at Samye in 1950
Right: The temple library
Right: Window frame showing Indian architectural influence
Plate XX: Traveling to Sikkim

Top Left: Lake Yamdrok

Above: Frank "gone native" on Julap Pass

Left: Frank, on left, and Vassili reading mail at the first rest stop on the border in Sikkim in 1950

Below: Frank giving a press conference in Sikkim with Frederick Latrash behind and to the left of Frank
XXI: Taiwan 1965

ove: Gate with flowering trees the Taiwanese call 'horse-shoe trees'

ove Right: Lin Zhenxiong, interpreter, Liao, village friend, Li Sumei, and Frank in 1965

ht: Thatched peasant house with #3 daughter, Turan, and village girl, New Year, 1965

ow: Lin Great House in 1965
Plate XXII: Taiwan 1989-1990

Left: Lin Hongming, caretaker of the Lin ancestors, in front of ancestor room in the compound where Frank lived in 1965 and 1989/90

Above: Susanne and Frank, visiting Japanese architect Lin Zhenxiong in 1989

Below: Thanksgiving with illegal Filipino workers in the Lin compound, 1989. Lin Hongming standing in front on the far right

Bottom: Temple of the Lords of Benevolence, Taiwan, 1990
The brother to the administrator who failed to send the message from the Dalai Lama's government to the patrol on time in 1950, a Tibetan monk. He came to offer apologies in 1993.

Wang Du, Niyma Dolma's son, a second generation Tibetan-American, 2000

Ma Moua (Hmong Tsai) from Laos, dancing in Missoula, Montana, 1977 (photo by Geoff Sutton)

Susanne holding up one of the paired "Pandau" she is receiving on behalf of the Bessac family from the Heu family (Hmong Njua), Fresno, CA, 1993
Calcutta

Latrash had arranged for me to come to Calcutta first before going on to New Delhi and the U.S. Embassy. Calcutta felt like a bubbling pot of hot stew after my year of living in arid, high-altitude solitude. The heavy atmosphere weighed on me like a smothering blanket. Sweat ran down my back, fogged my glasses and dripped off the end of my nose. The streets streamed with people pushing and shoving, shouting and gesticulating. It stank. The smell of hot curry and rancid ghee hung in the air along with less-appetizing fragrances. Only a tired fan rotated slowly in the hot air in Latrash's office.

He was eager to begin debriefing me. He began with saying the beginning of my old CIA code just like Doug had done almost a year earlier. I completed it, but then I was lost. I did not understand what he was talking about, what he wanted to know from me. He mentioned gold. Oh yes, the Tibetans had returned thirty bars. Whose gold was it? Whom was it intended for? How much were thirty bars of solid gold worth? So Doug was carrying a "secret weapon," nothing newfangled requiring arcane scientific knowledge, just old-fashioned gold? Or was the gold all that was left from the consular assets handed over to Mackiernan when the consulate in Urumqi was evacuated? I had given one bar to the Tibetan officials to help defray our costs in Lhasa.

Something was very strange here. What had my old OSS friends led Latrash to expect about me when they gave him my identifying code? He had expected to meet a fully-briefed CIA operative. Instead, here was this lost Fulbright student who had been out of touch with the rest of the world since leaving Urumqi in September, 1949, almost a year ago. Had Sun Wugong, Monkey, the great trickster, a hand in this?

Latrash from his base in Calcutta had laid quite elaborate plans to assist the Tibetans militarily. He spoke of the number of "assets" he had within Tibet by which I gathered he meant contacts. He spoke of an airstrip that was waiting for heavy transport planes to land. Harrer had pointed out some stony field to me saying something about an airstrip, but what he showed me was perhaps fit for a little biplane to land, the kind hunters use in Alaska. I mentioned this, but Latrash was convinced that I was mistaken. We reached an impasse. It was not because we did not have the same aim in mind, to assist Tibet against invasion. It was in the approach that we differed. He was quite willing to start sending weapons up over the Himalayas without the explicit request and knowledge of the constituted government of Tibet. He was ready to intervene in a politically-complex situation without really knowing who his allies in Tibet were. In other words, this was to be one of those operations where my government planned to intervene without taking the
precaution of understanding the real conditions on the ground. I was eager to get to New Delhi to deliver the letters from the Kashag to the proper authorities.

New Delhi

From Calcutta I flew to New Delhi to hand over one of the letters from the Kashag and the maps that Harrer had asked me to give to the U.S. government. He may have intended them for Latrash, but I did not know that. He, like I, did not think there was a difference. I settled down to make a formal report to the United States State Department of my time in Tibet and my conversations with the Tibetan Foreign Office in Lhasa. Here is what I wrote in my report (p. 5 to Enc. No. 4, Desp. 661, 9/21/30 New Delhi):

September 16, 1950: I left Lhasa at the end of July for India. While in Tibetan territory I was the guest of the Government of Tibet. In my opinion the incident at Shigarkhung Lung was an extremely unfortunate accident. It is also my belief that the Government of Tibet was in no way responsible for the accident.

The soldiers were not aware of our identity. The non-commissioned officer in charge of the six men was unfortunately a fool. It was his desire to fire on our tent; against the better judgment of the other five men. One of the men happened to be very nervous and frightened and thus fired a shot at our men when the two parties came together.

The message from the American Government concerning us was dispatched from Lhasa to all frontier posts the day after it arrived. It is customary for official messages to the outposts to be passed from nomad to nomad. At all posts but Shigarkhung Lung the message arrived by the

Vasili’s Immigration to the U.S.

Vasili was taught some English by Alex Kreshev, a one-time counselor to the last Tsar, at the same time that he worked for the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi. In time he came to the United States and, under the tutelage of General Petroff, lived in the San Francisco Bay area. He invited us to his wedding to a young Russian woman. The wedding was held in the Greek Orthodox Cathedral in San Francisco. The reception was at the Cossack Club where even the doorman was a former count. There was much blessing of bread and later everybody danced waltzes and mazurkas.

Vasili came to visit me in Berkeley, bringing with him a number of his Russian comrades from the Escadrone unit, as they called themselves, the Russian soldiers around Osman Bator. It was some time after 1951 (see National Archives, #891.411/4-251) that twenty-three Russian refugees — two women, twenty-one men — arrived in Calcutta from “the Altai” after traveling across Tibet. I remember receiving this notification at the time, but I did not recognize any of the names. I had had no close contact with the Escadrone at Barkol. Vasili said that he had brought these old comrades to see me as they wished to thank me for making it possible for them to travel through Tibet unharmed. As I pointed out previously, I had asked the Tibetan government to allow free passage to people under Osman Bator and Hussein Taiji when I met with them back in Lhasa, 1950. I think this was actually Vasili’s idea. One of the women may have been Mackiernan’s Russian wife whom he had married during the War. The “other woman” in Mackiernan’s life in Urumqi did not make it to the (Cont. on page 132)
middle of April. Only the outpost at Shigarkhung Lung received the message late because a nomad failed to relay it on as required.

I visited the British Embassy and told them what I knew of conditions in Lhasa. They did not quite agree with my appraisals. I asked the U.S. Embassy to take care of Vasili. Vasili believed that Mackiernan had made a solemn promise to him: should they come through it all alive, Mackiernan would see to it that Vasili could immigrate to the United States. Vasili believed it was now my duty to honor this promise although I had no power or obligation to him to do so. I also found Vasili singularly unprepared for assuming the role of a citizen of the United States. I thought he should want to learn some English first. Vasili stolidly refused. I think what seemed like obstinacy to me was rather an Old Believer’s concern about correct and immutable language and liturgy. He felt abandoned and betrayed, friendless in an alien land. I was out of my depth. I took a plane back to the United States.

Washington, D.C.

On the way back to the States I checked on a friend I had last seen in Dingyuanying. She had found a haven in Turkey. I flew on, first to New York and then Washington, D.C. Lowell Thomas, the radio personality, met me at the airport, took me out to lunch, and put me up for the night. He was eager to talk about Lhasa which he had visited a year earlier. Doug’s folks lived in a pleasant house on a quiet street in a suburb. I looked them up to express my condolences. In Washington, I handed the other letter from the Kashag to Dean Acheson, Secretary of State, and explained what the Tibetans had asked me to communicate: that they saw themselves as an independent country, but feared drawing too much attention to this now until snow closed the passes, but then they asked the United States to work closely with their government to arm and train a Tibetan army.

It was too late. Troops from the PRC had begun the invasion of Tibet before the snow fell. This brought about the end of free Tibet, the beautiful, strange land I had been allowed to visit before the modern world, as interpreted by the Chinese Communists, broke in, raped and overwhelmed her and flooded the land with settlers from the low lands and later with tourists.

Old OSS buddies and acquaintances, now in the CIA, gathered round. I could not figure out if they were afraid of me or for me. I soon discovered why. At a formal reception honoring Douglas S. Mackiernan and others I listened as Dean Acheson spoke passionately about the unfair attack on Owen Lattimore by the Junior Senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy. I had landed right in the midst of the anti-Red, “Who Lost China?” witchhunt.

McCarthy had branded Owen Lattimore a top communist agent, then revised his charge and said that “... Lattimore was a pro-Communist propagandist who had sought to promote Communist objectives in China.” Lattimore was called before the McCarran House Un-American Activities Committee and indicted on charges of giving false statements under oath. Although these were later dismissed by a judge the harassment, cost, and loss of prestige for Owen Lattimore were immense. As an admirer of his books and his advocacy of pastoral nomads, especially the Mongols both of Inner Mongolia and of Soviet-controlled Outer Mongolia, I had begun corresponding with Lattimore in Dingyuanying. I wanted to visit him at Johns Hopkins where he taught. My “handlers” discouraged such a visit.

What had Lattimore done to rouse such fury from some in Congress and the Old China Hands? Why accuse him of “losing China?” The problem was first of all that Owen Lattimore was a prolific writer and popularizer on the War in the Pacific, and on the peoples and lands of Inner Asia. He had been special advisor to Chiang Kaishek (paid by the Chinese) and then editor for the
One of the men Vasili introduced to me as Rawicz was held in great respect by Vasili and the others. I wonder who this Rawicz was. At the time there was much going on in my life, university studies and the beginning of my own family, so I did not try to find out more. Later, when Vasili and I talked about it, Vasili did not want to go into it, because, he said, “I have dictated all that to Tamara’s nephew who works for the U.N. As soon as he has the time he will write the story of my life.”

In 1956, a book was published which caused quite a sensation in England, The Long Walk, by Slavomir Rawicz. It describes a hair-raising escape from a gulag in Siberia ending ultimately in Tibet. According to the book the escapees reached India, half-dead, and fell into the arms of a British patrol. The time was supposedly during the Second World War, maybe 1943/4. Did this escape really happen? Many in Britain questioned it. No British patrols or hospital attendants came forth to verify Rawicz’s claims. As Rawicz also told of meeting three “incredible snow men,” covered with long red hair, menacingly sitting on the trail below him on the south face of the Himalayas, it was easy to question. I wonder now if the story had been redesigned to cover up the real adventure. Rawicz may well have been a prisoner in the Soviet Union, as many Poles were. Many were later exchanged to fight in the Allied armies against the Germans. A man like Rawicz, a very patriotic officer, may have later returned to spy on Soviet research facilities, manned by prison labor and Nazi scientists, in Kazakhstan. I was told only one man had made it back from such a venture and joined Osman Bator. Rawicz and some other members of Osman’s entourage had managed to elude Chinese/Soviet patrols to reach safety via Tibet. Even though by 1951 Chinese Communists occupied Tibet the Dalai Lama’s government was still sufficiently in control to protect these refugees.

This interpretation may sound pretty far-fetched and I have no proof. When I brought up the question of Rawicz again to Vasili, he claimed that he had forgotten all that. Like me he is showing his age. But when I mentioned the book, The Long Walk, he allowed that maybe he had heard of it. I take this to mean that the connection I intuited is correct.

In the early 1950s in Berkeley there were many refugees/immigrants with incredible stories to tell, so that an escape from a Siberian gulag and a walk through Tibet seemed quite possible. In Berkeley there were Poles who had survived Soviet captivity, and German Jews who had survived concentration camp. There were GIs who had survived incredible adventures in west China or as fighter pilots in the north Atlantic, e.g., Bob Squier (archaeologist and long-time Chairman, University of Kansas, Lawrence). So many amazing stories! Some, no doubt, left a bit of uncertainty in the mind of the listener. 

\[\textit{The Pietrkowski (Peters) family was close to my family: Georg and my grandmother, Olga Fajans Hempel, studied medicine together in Germany and become life-long friends. Stephan, the oldest son, a mathematician at Berkeley until he refused to sign the loyalty oath, became my mentor. Bernhard, the youngest, was no longer in Berkeley. He had worked with J. Robert Oppenheimer, the Director of the Los Alamos Nuclear Laboratory. Born in Poznan, then a part of Germany, now Poland, Bernhard was arrested in the 1930s for anti-Nazi agitation and sent to Dachau concentration camp. He managed to escape. I think one of the guards helped him. He rode his bicycle secretly by night to Italy and ultimately came to the United States. Here he came to the attention of Oppenheimer and became a graduate student in his institute. But under pressure from the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), Oppenheimer denounced him as a communist sympathizer. His US passport was taken away — a despicable situation. He moved with his family to India and later to Denmark to work with Niels Bohr, the scion of nuclear physicists. There were others. The Paasches, Esie and Jochen, lived down the block; they were close friends of my late uncle, Wolfgang Leppmann, but ultimately could not save him. Esie (Marie Terese Paasche) was the daughter of General Von Hammerstein; Jochen was the son of a well-known German pacifist, murdered after World War I by right-wing extremists. Hammerstein and later his sons repeatedly tried to assassinate Hitler. Esie’s brothers, after their father’s death, were involved in the failed putsch which Frank and fellow OSS talked about on Catalina Island back during survival training. The Hammerstein brothers managed to escape because they knew their way around army headquarters. During The Second World War, the Paaachses lived in Japan protected by a friend of General von Hammerstein at the German Embassy in Tokyo. (NY Times obituary, Feb. 13, 2000) SLB}\]
International Pacific Institute (a private group, underwritten by Rockefeller and other powerful magnates, promoting international understanding). Later, he worked for the War Information Office. In scouring through all Lattimore's massive output McCarthy's aides thought they could detect a pattern indicating that the views Lattimore broadcast to the American people reflected, or paralleled, the changing line of the Soviet Union.

Writing this in our own day after Vietnam and now, when the climate of suspicion, accusations, and government falsehoods, are escalating with the question of why the Bush administration got us into Iraq, the McCarthy hysteria no longer seems so extraordinary. Then it was the "loss of China" and the expanding Soviet Union. Congressmen's votes were being bought by the China lobby and some of that aid money directed to Chiang Kaishek.

Always, as Confucius said, it is the ambivalence and misuse of terms, the need for the rectification of names. What does the government of the day mean by "democracy" and by "freedom?" Whom in China were we fighting to liberate? Were we allies only of the weak Nationalist government under Chiang Kaishek? Or were we liberating "the Chinese people" from hunger, poverty and bad government, impartial in the raging civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists?

When still in Yunnan fighting alongside Chinese Nationalist soldiers, I and my fellow OSS paratroopers felt that the Nationalists in Chongqing had wrong priorities and were best circumvented. Chiang would not commit his troops to a full scale attack on the Japanese preferring to save them for fighting against the Chinese Communists. And of course, nobody really explained what they meant by "China." On what basis were Tibet, Mongolia, East Turkestan and Taiwan integral parts of "China" even if their populations spoke different languages and vigorously proclaimed that they were not a part of "China?" What constitutes "following the communist line?" Were all those, perhaps naive, reformers "fellow travelers," that is, agents of Stalin's Soviet Union? Or is Marxism with its top-down approach and ready use of force to achieve so-called human betterment misguided, if not evil, in any guise?

At that time, when I was still impressed with the 8th Route Army, people could easily have accused me of being a communist or at least a communist sympathizer. The odd thing is that through the years colleagues have accused me of exactly the reverse. The academic world's relationship to "China" has been every bit as convoluted as that of the old China Hands. In the Sixties, when I did field work in Taiwan on the land reform, other anthropologists (Norma Diamond, Pasternak, Gallin, Harrel, Wolfe) who were also there at the time avoided me as "pro-Guomindang." In their support for Taiwanese they opposed the ruling clique of Chiang Kaishek. They also tended to be Marxists and were inclined to favor Communist China in that early Vietnam era. There is also a strong sense of territoriality implicit in fieldwork. In the overheated academic debates that followed I have continued to find myself assigned the role of the reactionary. Melvyn Goldstein even accused me of McCarthyite tactics in the American Anthropology newsletter! Our academic "tribe" has not internalized much from our study of anthropology.

My acquaintances at the CIA in Washington, Marge Kennedy and others, suggested I go to work for the agency. The position of Vice Consul in Persian Azerbaijan was briefly offered to me. My glaucoma again made me ineligible. They should have given me an accounting then of why Mackiernan asked me to go along on this long and perilous trip especially when my glaucoma made me ineligible for much tamer government employment.

The government's opaqueness overwhelmed me. I asked questions and never got answers. As I had all along planned to return to university, I left Washington, did not accept a government job, and went home to California. My father was gravely ill.
Invasion of Tibet

Phuenwang was expelled from Lhasa in 1948, together with the Guomindang Chinese mission. With his uncle’s help, he had taught music at the school the Chinese ran in Lhasa. He used his time to indoctrinate his students with communist propaganda. When he returned to Yunnan via India he discovered that Chinese Communists had gained control of three counties. On August 15, 1949, he and his Tibetan comrades joined up with Chinese Communists under the command of a Bai called Ou Gen. In order for the Chinese Communists to supply Phuenwang and fellow Khampa communists with weapons, Ou Gen demanded that they subordinate their Tibetan Communist Party to that of the Chinese. This Phuenwang and comrades did. This meant that Phuenwang and his fellow Khampa revolutionaries subordinated their organization and original ideals, i.e., Tibetan nationalism, to the dictates of the Chinese, Han-dominated, Communist Party. Phuenwang was invited to “liberated” Chongqing to meet with Deng Xiaoping, Liu Bocheng, and He Long by Zhu De, commander of the PLA, to plan how to “liberate” Tibet.

“They said that the central government had decided to send PLA troops to liberate Tibet, and that the Southwest Bureau’s 18th Army would have primary responsibility for the liberation (this was March, 1950). They also told me that the government had decided to try to liberate Tibet peacefully, and they asked whether I thought a peaceful liberation would be possible. I told them I thought it was a much better strategy than trying to use military force.”

On August 17, 1950, the first Field Army under General Peng Dehuai was moving southward from its bases in Xinjiang and the Second Field Army led by Liu Bochen was moving westward. On October 7, 1950, 40,000 PLA troops led by General Zhang Guohua crossed the Drichu River accompanied by Bapa Phuentso Wangye who was in charge of organizing animal transportation and grain supplies to allow the PLA troops to attack eastern Tibet. They crossed the great rivers, the Drichu (Yangzi) and the Dzachu (Mekong), and climbed up the steep mountain ramparts dividing the river valleys. They used pack animals and brought along fodder not to enrage the Tibetans who did not have the means to feed invaders with so many animals. Then they attacked Chamdo, the largest city in eastern Tibet. After fierce, but futile Tibetan resistance, they took Chamdo by force. Many Tibetans were killed. On November 7, 1950, Robert Ford, employed by the Tibetan government, radioed Lhasa from Chamdo to tell them of the invasion. He was captured by the Chinese and imprisoned for four years, tortured and brain-washed like my old fellow students in Beijing. His efforts to alert the Tibetan government were of no avail. The Tibetans were unprepared.

I heard about this after I had presented the letter to Dean Acheson at the United States State Department in Washington, D.C., and had warned that the Chinese Communists might try to attack Tibet from the east instead of the regular route from Qinghai. After consolidating their position in Chamdo the PLA proceeded to Lhasa.

Phuenwang, in Tibetan dress, led the victorious Communist troops triumphantly around the Barkor. Phuenwang became the leading Tibetan cadre in Lhasa from 1952 to 1958. The Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa, but the situation deteriorated steadily. Phuenwang was accused of being too much of a Tibetan nationalist, not following the correct communist line of the day. He was arrested at the orders of the leaders of the PRC and condemned to eighteen years of solitary confinement!

Phuenwang was ultimately “rehabilitated” by Deng Xiaoping, and given an ambiguous role near centers of power in Beijing. While he was rotting in prison, going half mad, “the Great Leap

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a Goldstein in his book omits telling us if this was a mother’s brother, or given the complex family relations of an important Tibetan/Khampa, family maybe a co-father, e.g. brothers sharing a wife.
b The Bai were a Miao/Yao speaking minority group in Kham.
Forward" and then "the glorious Cultural Revolution" destroyed, plundered, executed, mutilated, imprisoned, and tortured the peoples of Zhongguo and of course, most of all the people of Tibet. My feeble attempt to stay this terrible disaster for Tibet was as ineffectual as a drop of summer rain on a roaring forest fire.

To what extent was Phuenwang to blame for the Chinese Communist invasion of Tibet? He believed that communism held the key to a better future for all Tibetans. He detested the feudal order of serfs and aristocrats and thought land reform would unleash great creativity and well-being for ordinary Tibetans. He discussed the "liberation" of Tibet with Deng Xiaoping and other leaders. He then participated fully in the military attack on Chamdo. He helped negotiate the "17 points" together with some Tibetan officials, some Tibetan Communists, and the members of the PRC leadership in Beijing. These points were used to persuade the Dalai Lama to return to Lhasa. In 1959, the Dalai Lama fled again into exile and established the Tibetan government-in-exile at Darmasala, India.

The book that Goldstein, et al., have written about Phuenwang and the defeat of free Tibet is based, as explained, on conversations with Phuenwang and on the writings of Dawei Sherap, a Tibetan-born intellectual working in China. That means that we are hearing the results of days and days of self-criticism, brain washing, and indoctrination in this book. Presentday Chinese leaders are happy to make Phuenwang and fellow Tibetans take some of the blame for the destruction of Tibet. The centenary of Deng Xiaoping's birth is at hand. Leaders in Beijing, especially older leaders, recognize the moral bankruptcy of their rule, and their imminent loss of "the Mandate of Heaven." They are begging the Dalai Lama to return, but still only on their terms. In this book Phuenwang has joined his pleas with theirs.

If Phuenwang and his Tibetan Communist Party had not joined up with the Chinese Communists would that have delayed the invasion of Tibet sufficiently so the snows would have closed the passes until the letters from the Kashag to the United States government that I delivered, had effect? With arms shipments coordinated with the Tibetan government, Tibetan troops with United States assistance could have turned back the Communist troops. Tibet could have been saved, an independent country with a seat at the United Nations.

If the Tibetan border patrol had not shot up our party Doug would have been in Lhasa within a few weeks, in mid-May. This might have given him time enough to talk to the right officials in Lhasa, and to reach the correct centers of power in Washington, D.C. to convince them to immediately recognize Tibet as an independent nation. Doug would have been able to arrange for arms shipments to the proper Tibetan authorities. I was certain then that Doug and I were in full agreement: saving Free Tibet was our mission.

Of course, I do not know if Doug and I were really in agreement as we did not discuss it. Doug may just have been interested in prospecting for uranium and researching articles for the National Geographic Society. Much of my own conviction about what the U.S. government should do concerning Tibet came from talking with those Tibetans under Bambo Rubin up there in Shen Tsa. Maybe it was I who had dreamed up this mission all along.

What might give one pause about U.S. intentions is a curious exchange between lawyers at State Department concerning the United States' demand of retribution payments from the government of Tibet for the death of Douglas Mackieman. This is the question the lawyers grappled with: was asking reparations a de facto declaration of Tibetan independence because it assumed that Tibet was a sovereign state responsible for the actions of its military? The lawyers argued that asking for reparations from Tibet had no political consequences. The State Department was not willing to risk offending leaders in Beijing or the China Lobby in the United States by allowing Tibet, even in this backdoor manner, to become recognized as a sovereign state.
Back in the summer of 1949, the American government may have been willing to carry out some decisive action, such as sending Doug to open a U.S. mission in Lhasa. It then got cold feet. The U.S. finally decided not to demand reparations from Tibet. Suddenly, in 1953 or there about, I received a lump sum of money (about $500) from the U.S. State Department. It did not say why they felt I was entitled to it. I was delighted to receive it and not about to quibble. The GI Bill was a help, but did not exactly provide lush living for a growing family.

If the mission I envisioned had succeeded then the unspeakable tragedy, the destruction of Tibetan civilization, might have been averted. Om mani padme um! — "O, the Pearl in the Lotus."

But could Tibetan civilization, even if independent, have withstood the pressures of the modern world? The Chinese Communists and their Tibetan collaborators thought that they were bringing reform, justice, equality, and "progress," all, of course with the help of deadly force (Mao's end of a gun). At first, they did not overthrow the government of the Dalai Lama nor kill the landed aristocracy and confiscate their estates. That came later. They believed that if they raised the standard of living of the poor by introducing industry and modern farming and herding techniques, all Tibetans would gratefully hail them as liberators; but that is not, unfortunately, what happened.

Occupation has its own dynamic. The top-down arrogance of the cadres in a great hurry to implement "scientific" reform caused disruption and anger, a situation bound to corrupt power and the absolute power of the "Great Helmsman" absolutely. Even when members of the Chinese Communist Party shunted Mao aside he was able to regain preeminence with no sense of limits of any sort. He declared himself "Monkey," the supernatural celestial who could gleefully wreak chaos in heaven, so why not on earth?

The efforts of Phuenwang and his fellow Communists created great misery. Those who seek spiritual enlightenment that is not authorized by and under the control of the PRC government can be summarily thrown into prison or destroyed economically and socially. Ordinary Tibetans have become powerless beggars, too poor to find medical help at PRC-run clinics. There are no Tibetan clinics in Lhasa, according to Tibetans in western Montana who are trying to establish a Tibetan clinic in Lhasa.

If Tibetans had been allowed to run their own affairs maybe the encroachment of the modern world could have been kept in bounds. The gompas with their frescos and carved eaves, the chortens, resting places of saintly remains, the monasteries, and the stone houses of Lhasa would not have been ruthlessly smashed by Red Guards. Over a million Tibetans were murdered. Many endured horrible years in prison. Many have become refugees. Lhasa now is just another ugly Chinese city. Once proud and laughing Tibetans now occupy the lower rungs in the social order. Change is inevitable, but it is not kind to inflict a government or economic system upon others. I write this as United States and British troops have invaded Iraq to bring "democracy." I shudder.

The letters from the Kashag that I delivered to Dean Acheson did have repercussions. Like so many human efforts the responses to Tibetan pleas, when finally heard and then acted upon, were not those I had either advocated or welcomed. The United States government with the help of the CIA armed Tibetans rebelling against the People's Republic of China.

By 1952, sporadic uprisings had broken out in eastern and central Tibet. These spontaneous revolts were used by the CIA under Allen Dulles, with the approval of President Eisenhower, to destabilize the government of the PRC. From its inauguration in 1953, the Eisenhower administration had been seeking to challenge communism by other means than direct and costly military confrontation as in the unpopular Korean War. The rebellion in Tibet was tailor-made for a covert action program designed to challenge communist consolidation in what was at that time
still Moscow’s communist twin in the Far East. As the Tibetan resistance was still isolated and not sufficiently well-organized, CIA operatives met the Dalai Lama’s brothers, Gyalo Thondup and Takster Rinpoche (Norbu). The Dilowa Hutukhtu was also drawn into the scheme. The idea was to train a pilot group of six Khampas in guerrilla warfare and radio communications. These men were to be parachuted back into Tibet to provide updated and regular reports on the insurgent movement taking shape.

“The primary object ... had little to do with aiding the Tibetans: It was to impede and harass the Chinese Communists.”[^148] This was the same period when the United States encouraged the people of Eastern Europe to throw off the communist yoke. When the Hungarians heeded this call in 1956, the United States decided not to help them.

Back in 1949-50, I did not believe my government was capable of such duplicity. By 1953, with General Eisenhower and the Dulles brothers in charge, it was. Kermit Roosevelt under CIA direction arranged the coup that ousted Mohammad Mossadegh, popular prime minister of Iran. Mossadegh had nationalized the British Oil Company. He was assumed to be a tool of the Soviet Union as the communist Tudeh party was growing in strength all over Iran. This coup in Iran set the stage for other coups. The United States, Great Britain’s sidekick then, lost honor and innocence. Till then the United States had held a position of respect in Iran. The Presbyterian missionaries in Iran did not proselytize. They tried to help Armenians and Assyrians rebuild their church and shattered community after World War I. They built hospitals and schools. The CIA coup changed that, but that was not my world in 1950.[^149]

United States support of Tibetan resistance was too little and too late. The fighting continued until Kissinger and Nixon betrayed them all and handed secret details of the resistance over to the Chinese Communists in 1972. One of the CIA men involved in supporting the Tibetan revolt from Laos told me that they called their unit’s “Frank’s patrols,” supposedly after me. I hope not. I think they were named for Frank Wisner, a CIA operations chief. The revolt was finally crushed when Nixon “opened up China.” But by then there was little left of the old, free Tibet I had had the privilege to visit.

Chinese oppression of Tibet led to greater and greater repression and finally the total destruction of the old civilization of Tibet and all traditional spiritual cultures in the People’s Republic of China. The Red Guards in a terrible iconoclasm smashed and defiled the reverence of the past and gleefully insulted and murdered ever more people and each other. Did they behave so viciously because they and their leaders in the PRC feared the superior spiritual power of Tibetan civilization? All the peoples that had been variously under the Manchu umbrella shared aspects of the Great Teaching, the Da Jiao. Suffusing this are beliefs about the nature of human inner life which recognize the discipline and wisdom of the Tibetan holy man. Was Mao Zedong’s fury and that of his cadres fed by a deep-seated, inner terror, a fear of their own imminent spiritual destruction? To so wantonly break powerful taboos demands a price. In 1991, when we visited the Tai Hang Mountains, the earlier center of Red Guard empowerment, we discovered small altars or paintings of Guan Yin (or Chenrezig, the patron deity of Tibet), the Goddess of Mercy, set up near each of the sites celebrating Mao’s empowerment of the Red Guards.

The land of Tibet with its great snow mountains and icy uplands still exists, but the land of the Tibetan people I knew does not. What of the message of Tibetan Buddhism regarding the nature of life on earth? By losing the land of Tibet, the 14th Dalai Lama, the present Dalai Lama, has been able to speak and be heard by many, many people throughout the world. He has become a beacon for all those who seek a different relationship to creation than that offered by modern materialism, and by other religious systems: symbol-obsessed Judaic self-promotion (the Chosen People); Islamic fear of Allah’s creation lest the worshipper forget Allah, single and infinite; and Christianity,
chained to the barbaric sacrifice of a young man in atonement for mankind’s sins. His Holiness, the Dalai Lama continues to speak for the sanctity of all life, all plants and creatures ultimately related through their DNA, interconnected and striving for a better rebirth.
I still do not know if Doug was on a mission to help Tibet or just planned to collect pictures and materials for an article for *National Geographic*, following in Sir Aurel Stein's and Sven Hedin's footsteps. He may well have been alerted to a mission back in July, 1949, as Shakya implies, but by late spring 1950, the situation had radically changed. By then there was not the will by the U.S. government to engage the PRC, or the Guomindang in Taiwan, on the issue of Tibet.

The CIA still refuses access to papers relevant to Doug's affairs. Was there a State Department-sanctioned mission or just some wild scheme thought up by some CIA operatives? Why did Doug ask me to go with him? In Barkol in the encampment of Osman Bator when I challenged him to explain what we were doing there, he became angry and refused to explain. He did not want me along suggesting I go off to the Mongolian People's Republic with some of the Kazakhs. I forced him to ask Osman to help us ride south to Timurlik.

Nick Dujmovic, historian associated with the CIA, thinks that Doug was trying to mobilize the Kazakhs under Osman as a possible "fifth column" as the U.S. later tried to do with Tibetans rebelling against the PRC. Publishing documents that reveal such plans would certainly raise eyebrows in Beijing today and maybe be bad for business. Doug was involved on some level monitoring Soviet atomic research. The Soviets were aided in this by Nazi scientists whom they had captured at the end of the Second World War. Maybe Doug helped some of them escape. Even today the U.S. government is very uncomfortable about connections with Nazis, especially members of the SS under Heinrich Himmler.

For Osman Bator fleeing to Outer Mongolia may have been the more viable alternative. He was not a prince of the old order, he had not collaborated with the Japanese and he was not a religious leader whom the Marxists were dedicated to destroy. He was a "son of the people." I have heard that the survivors of the particular Kazakh *awl-urus* who protected us at Barkol and at Timurlik, those who did not escape to Kashmir, have either withdrawn to Gansu or to the Mongolian Republic where they are small time herdsmen today. Some have moved to Kazakhstan to raise tobacco. A grandson of Osman Bator is still living with them (personal information from Peter Finke). Vestiges of "segmentary lineages" have disappeared. They all now live firmly under the control of centralized states.

When we were back in the PRC in 1991, we received permission to return to Timurlik. It was then hastily withdrawn. We heard in 1991 that all Kazakhs in Chinese Turkestan were rounded up and moved to the Altai Mountains (personal report, Kerry Foresman). More recent reports about all pastoral nomads in the area that we have been told, tell of a new policy of environmental protection. In order to prevent overgrazing nomads are being resettled in high rise apartments in town and fobbed off with a stipend. For those not able to sneak back onto the open range alcohol
provides the best escape (personal communication from Richard Harris, corroborated by Niyma Dollma). The “Rez” (Indian reservation) revisited!

Out there in Chinese Turkestan with large numbers of refugees, anti-Soviet militias, Soviet agents, Kazakhs, Russians, variously-affiliated Chinese, oasis-dwelling Turks, Tajiks (Indo-Iranian speakers), Mongols, Christians, Moslems, Buddhists, landlords, nomads, tenant farmers, and beggars of questionable loyalties, it was very difficult to know who was working for whom and when. All these people were trying to survive in the changing climate between Stalin’s Soviet Union, the Mongolian People’s Republic, and Mao’s PRC. Later events cast doubt on the extent to which the Communist states worked closely together. For a while they did.

For people trying to survive it was fiendishly difficult to figure out how to play their cards. Take Vasili Zvanzov. He told me that he had deserted from the Red Army, fought under the command of a Dungan, a Muslim, and joined his father in Chinese Turkestan. In Doctor Zhivago, Pasternak provides a glimpse of the children who survived the chaos of revolution and war. The old loyalties and certainties of their parents have little meaning to them. Vasili seemed to me to fit into that generation. Since then he has renewed and continued relations with the Old Believer community in Oregon and has become a successful businessman, husband and father in the United States. And he has been back to visit White Russians in Turkestan.

This still leaves Shegarkhung Lung, on the Chang Tang, that fateful day of April 25 or 29, 1950. Were the murderers of Doug Mackiernan, Stephan Yanuishkin, and Leonid Shutov, just overexcited and frightened Tibetan soldiers, or was something more sinister afoot? Much has been made of the delay by our government in notifying the Lhasa government of our need for free passage. Whenever the U.S. government radioed Lhasa, the posse led by Tseringdorji did not have to shoot first, ask questions later. Earlier travelers such as Sven Hedin and Heinrich Harrer report meeting stiff opposition to their transit, but not summary execution. The American airmen who crashed in Tibet during World War II were treated well by the Tibetans.

The Tibetan patrol, probably part of the newly-recruited and trained Tibetan military, may have been on the look out for Chinese Communist infiltrators or Kazakh raiders. Even if Tibetans at first thought we were Kazakhs, they came close enough to my comrades to see Vasili’s blond thatch and blue eyes and tell by our non-slanting eyes that we were Westerners, not Kazakhs. They may, of course, have been looking for Westerners — for Mackiernan in fact. Had they been detailed by Tibetan Communists to stop Mackiernan at any cost and bring his head back as proof? I wonder what Phuenwang knows. He is old like me now. Can his memory be trusted? Would his Chinese Communist handlers allow him to remember even at this late date?

No U.S. “foothold” was established in Tibet, if such was indeed the official mission of the United States Vice Consul from Urumqi. I was not an official of the United States government. The U.S. government recognized this. When I sent a message through Hugh Richardson it received a polite condolence from State Department, but no instructions.

The CIA was a young agency at the time. Did they think of me as one of their own? I had accepted a position with the CIA back in 1947, in Beijing. I had asked to be taken off the payroll, but I still had security clearance, it seems, when Doug spoke the first part of my personal code in Urumqi. It is unimportant how my answer to him is parsed. The important question is: to what extent were my subsequent actions guided by and in accordance with orders coming from the CIA in Washington? As the CIA of necessity is an undercover, highly-compartmentalized agency it is impossible for me to answer this question to the satisfaction of those who believe I was under CIA orders. If I indeed had secret orders, then I blatantly disobeyed these when I did not ask the Tibetans to invite Latrash and his “assets” up to Lhasa to rescue me. Harrer intimated that there were plans for military aid. Tibetans at Shen Tsa and later at the Tibetan Foreign Office in
Lhasa told me they did not want surreptitious U.S. involvement that bypassed their established government and sent arms to some faction or other. They wanted recognition of their sovereignty. I listened to the Tibetans.

Why does the CIA still refuse to de-classify papers related to Douglas S. Mackiernan? What is the CIA hiding? One possibility that comes to my mind relates to CIA use of Nazi war criminals after 1945. Some, like Eichmann, the butcher of Auschwitz, and Mengele, the doctor who experimented on living concentration camp inmates, were allowed to escape to Latin America. Ernst Schaefer was extensively interrogated by British and Americans as a war criminal, but then allowed to go to Venezuela. Despite extensive efforts by members of Congress, files dealing with these actions by the CIA and other branches of the government have not been made public. Some that were public have since been reclassified (New York Times, Feb. 20, 2006). Has the Mackiernan file been classified with this larger cover-up because of Harrer’s collaboration with Latrash?

At the same memorial service where I heard Dean Acheson defend Owen Lattimore, I also met Pegge, mother of Doug’s twins. I asked to see her. We met and I asked her if she knew what had happened to those things I asked Latrash to send back to the States with Mackiernan’s things. These included my Kazakh tomak, a bolt of imperial yellow silk that the Dalai Lama had given me, some Tibetan religious paintings I had bought, a few pieces of Tibetan silver, and the Tibetan robes I had been given before entering Lhasa. She said she had no idea.

Pegge, as Mrs. Douglas Seymour Mackiernan, contacted my parents while they anxiously waited to hear what had become of me. She is recognized as Doug’s wife on the official death certificate. I brought out the divorce decree between Mac and his first wife with his personal affects to give to Pegge so she could be his legal wife. It never dawned on me that some part of the government might not have accepted Pegge as Mackiernan’s legal wife even when someone at the CIA surreptitiously gave me the name of Doug’s “handler” to give to her. As Mackiernan’s wife, why did they not give it to her themselves?

Pegge seemed very stressed when I saw her, clearly worried about money. Doug had not taken out insurance of any kind. There was little money for the twins so she was rather ruthlessly trying every angle to get money. Doug’s first wife managed to enlist the help of her Senator, Margaret Chase Smith. Pegge, as a journalist in her own right and an acquaintance of Claire Boothe Luce, wife of the publisher of LIFE, managed to get her hands on the story Jim Burke and I had written in India and to rewrite it, adding “cute” and sensational touches and giving it a more anti-communist slant. The phony route shown in the article was created in the Embassy in New Delhi before I had crossed over into Sikkim and publicized in the New York Times (July 30, 1950). I had nothing to do with it. Pegge got paid for her efforts. She had probably expected to write up Doug’s travels for National Geographic Magazine. She believed she “owned” the story.

All these years I have believed that Pegge received those few things I collected in Lhasa and had just kept them for herself. Now I think the things may have gone to Doug’s first wife, or more probably, to his father who was declared the legal executor of his son’s estate. They may still be hidden in the vaults at Langley, mistakenly included with things belonging to Mackiernan that for unknown reasons have not been returned to his family. I discussed this situation with Doug’s parents when I met them back in 1950. This business kept me from continuing contacts with the Mackiernans and they with me. I also think they feared becoming singed by the McCarthy anti-communist rampage. How sad. I could have befriended Doug’s children and told them about their father and about our adventures together.

The other day, looking at old copies of Asia Magazine that my daughter, Joan Orielle, found after my mother’s death at “Rosewild,” my old home, I read about Admiral-General Mandarin Fredrick Ward, soldier of fortune extraordinaire. Sandwiched between the advertisements of slick,
boxy Packard’s and Flappers with cloche hats, it told how still in his twenties Ward had organized the defense of Shanghai for Chinese merchants and defeated the by-then cruel and corrupt Taipings — a powerful anti-Manchu revolt partly inspired by missionaries. He married a Chinese woman, remained in China trying to prevent the British from joining the Confederate cause in the American Civil War. When he was killed in 1862, a grateful Manchu Emperor erected a shrine to his memory.

Doug was made of similar stuff: brave, resourceful, knowledgeable, a leader among men. He needs to be remembered that way.

Back in the United States the ideal that the United States should be a melting pot of peoples was commonly proclaimed, less so in anthropological circles. Interest in Native Americans was changing the anthropologists’ perception of American society. That is one of the reasons I chose anthropology rather than another discipline when I returned to university. I had not learned Chinese characters first, vernacular speech second as so many China scholars had. This made me more open to thinking of cultural diversity within the areas colored yellow on the map. It also allowed me to talk to many different people, not just the literati, with widely different perspectives and ethnic affiliations.

So how did my experiences effect my career in anthropology? I never would have become an anthropologist without those years in East and Inner Asia. The classes I taught in cultural anthropology were permeated with what I had learned from Han Chinese, Manchu, Mongols, Kazakhs, Tibetans, and Taiwanese. Although I published articles, gave papers, helped found the Mongolia Society, the Tibetan Society, and the Western Branch of Asian Studies, I have not written the books that have real impact. To do so I needed time and that was always in short supply. More importantly, I was able to draw on those years when I was soldier, peacekeeper, aid-distributor, wanderer, and explorer in order to help my students, many of whom were GIs who struggled with their Vietnam experiences, and their conflicted views of the United States.

The world has changed for anthropologists. “Participant observation” was seen back in the 1950s as essential to the discipline. To learn to stand outside one’s own cultural preconceptions was what made anthropology legitimate. The kind of field experience necessary to achieve this is exactly what has become more difficult in many parts of the world. With globalization the boundaries between ethnic groups and their ways of life have blurred. At the same time, communication on an individual level flourishes. It is easy to talk over the internet to someone as bombs burst there and hear about troubles with his wife’s “tribe.” This does not really translate into an overview of learned and importantly, shared behavior. Problems with the wife’s “tribe” may reflect time-honored marriage patterns. They may just as well be the working out of “modern” marriage laws instituted by Saddam Hussein and the Baath party. Many anthropologists are now engaged in different, often more clearly practical, applied branches of anthropology: medical anthropology, cultural resource management, forensics (enriched by Nazi experiments as those favored by Himmler, and possibly some of those Germans who visited Lhasa in 1939). Cultural anthropology has taken a back seat. As the Iraq war proves yet again, to ignore cultural differences, the complex assumptions of others, is a recipe for disaster. There is no other way than living among people who do not share your world view and listening to them and hearing them out and then to communicate what they have taught you without offending them nor ignoring the demands of your own culture.

At the end of World War II there was a widespread sense of hope that we could rebuild a better, fairer world. This sense of boundless possibilities ended in the late spring of 1950 when North Korean troops, backed by Soviet might and PRC soldiers, marched into South Korea. For me those years, 1945-50, were an amazing gift. I was free to travel the length and breadth of East and Inner Asia, meet many different peoples, and live among them. My own sense of infinite possibilities ended when I looked at my comrades dead in the snow of the Chang Tang, April 1950.
In Lhasa, summer 1950, the Tibetan government had been desperately sending out delegations to the West hoping for recognition of Tibet as an independent state. They were not being heard. There were very few Westeners in Lhasa that summer that might still reach the outside world for the Tibetans: Hugh Richardson, the obvious emissary, still caught in the role of proper British colonial officer even while working for the new Indian government; Heinrich Harrer and Peter Aufschnaiter, previous members of Himmler's SS, reluctant to return to their home in Austria; Vasili Zvanzov and Nedbailoff, stateless refugees; and myself, Frank Bessac. I had no official affiliation with any United States government agency, including the CIA, but I was a known entity to my government.

I agreed to help the Tibetans. It was too late.
In time I became a full professor of anthropology, chairman of the department and then emeritus at the University of Montana. I no longer go fishing in Rock Creek (it also has far fewer trout than when I first came to Montana). Nor do I go backpacking in the Anaconda Pintlers, the Bitterroots, and the Mission Mountains. We no longer keep horses in the pasture next to our house. A family of whitetail deer has taken up abode there. In the fall a bear or two rumble by stealing apples and looking into our windows. My eyes have not gotten any better, but I can still see enough to plant tomatoes and bring zucchini from my garden to the neighbors. My latest of a long succession of collie-golden retrievers has passed away. A feisty golden cat with six-toed feet has moved onto my lap and purrs. Friends and old students, children and grandchildren come by. How good it is to have been allowed to live. And what of the White-Boned Demon? We all meet it in many guises throughout life. May the Bodhisattva Guan Yin, Chenrezig, of Mercy and Compassion protect us all.

The End
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