



**Smithsonian Institution**

*Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery*

## **Three Roads to Urga (circa 1920s)**

Extracted on Apr-19-2024 02:10:44

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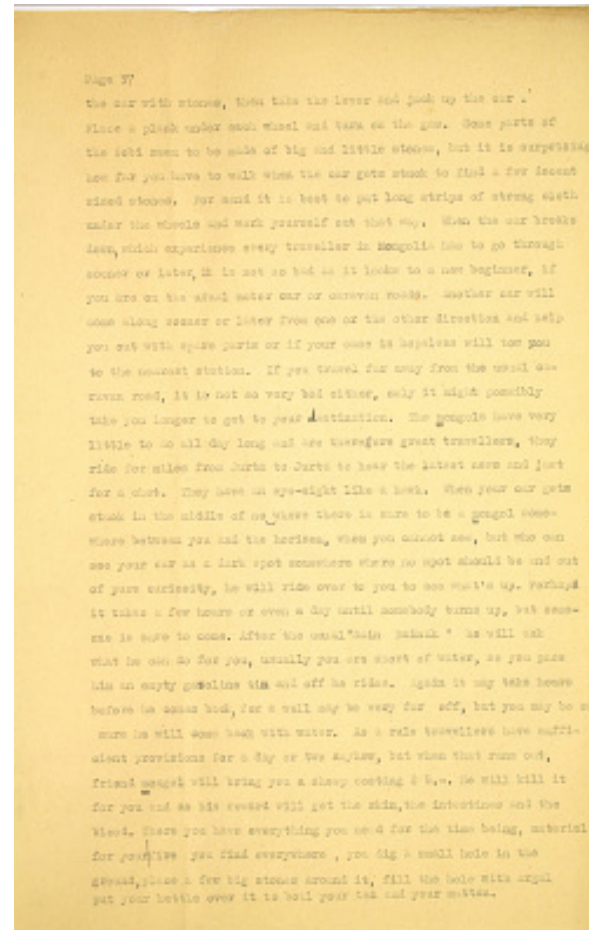
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the car with stones, then take the lever and jack up the car. Place a plank under each wheel and turn on the gas. Some parts of the Gobi seem to be made of big and little stones, but it is surprising how far you have to walk when the car gets stuck to find a few decent sized stones. For sand it is best to put long strips of strong cloth under the wheels and work yourself out that way. When the car breaks down, which experience every traveller in Mongolia has to go through sooner or later, it is not so bad as it looks to a new beginner, if you are on the usual motor car or caravan roads. Another car will come along sooner or later from one or the other direction and help you out with spare parts or if your case is hopeless will tow you to the nearest station. If you travel far away from the usual caravan road, it is not so very bad either, only it might possibly take you longer to get to your destination. The Mongols have very little to do all day long and are therefore great travellers, they ride for miles from Jurta to Jurta to hear the latest news and just for a chat. They have an eye-sight like a hawk. When your car gets stuck in the middle of nowhere there is sure to be a Mongol somewhere between you and the horizon, whom you cannot see, but who can see your car as a dark spot somewhere where no spot should be and out of pure curiosity, he will ride over to you to see what's up. Perhaps it takes a few hours or even a day until somebody turns up, but someone is sure to come. After the usual "Sain Bainah" he will ask what he can do for you, usually you are short of water, so you pass him an empty gasoline tin and off he rides. Again it may take hours before he comes back, for a well may be very far off, but you may be sure he will come back with water. As a rule travellers have sufficient provisions for a day or two anyhow, but when that runs out, friend Mongol will bring you a sheep costing \$ 6.-. He will kill it for you and as his reward will get the skin, the intestines and the blood. There you have everything you need for the time being, material for your fire you find everywhere, you dig a small hole in the ground, place a few big stones around it, fill the hole with argal put your kettle over it to boil your tea and your mutton.



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