

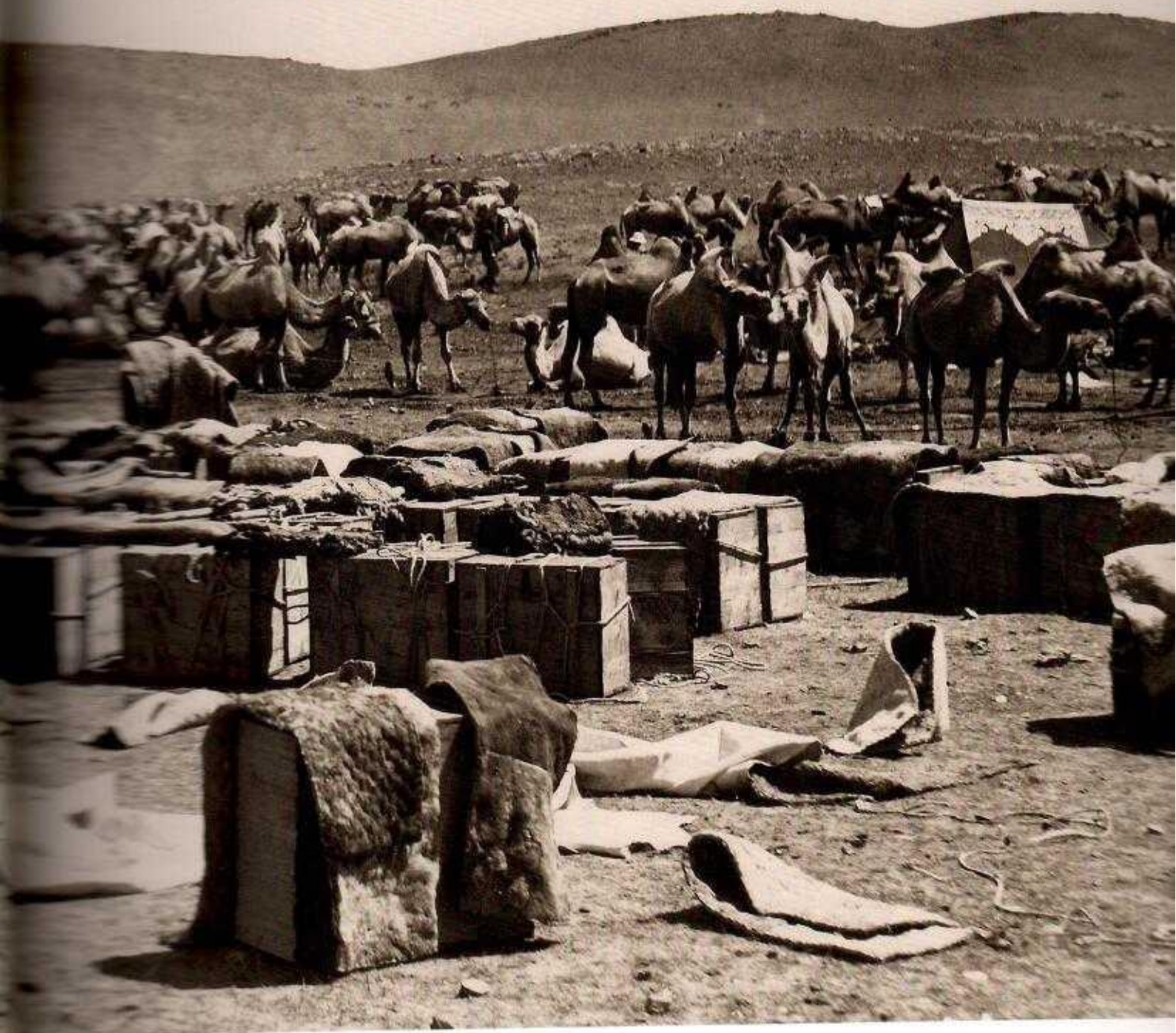
CHRISTEL BRAAE

AMONG HERDERS OF INNER MONGOLIA

The Haslund-Christensen Collection
at the National Museum of Denmark



Scandinavian Explorers in Mongolia



Mongolia - the vast land area situated between Russia and China - was practically unknown to Scandinavians before 1900. A few reports from individual travellers in the 1700s had provided extraordinary insights into the country's geography and population, but these had long been forgotten. Likewise forgotten were the legendary mediaeval sources

like Johann Plano Carpini and Wilhelm von Rubruk,¹ who had travelled the region in the mid-1200s, followed later by Marco Polo, whose vivid chronicles are from the last quarter of the same century. The three had been sent out as emissaries of European courts and papal authorities to report on the Mongols in their homeland - on the hordes

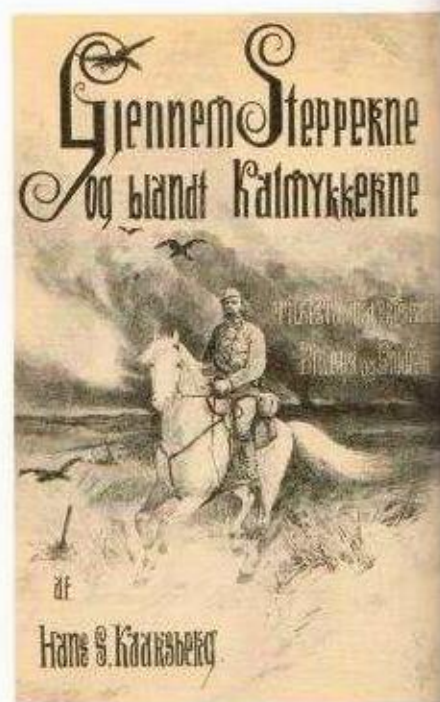
that had reached the borders of Europe in 1241, and whose extraordinary military expansion through Asia left traces of great political and cultural power. With the demise of the era of the Great Khan² in the late 1300s, however, Mongolia soon disappeared from the world's political scene and was absorbed first by the Ming and later the Qing Chinese imperial-dynastic realms. In the words of Walther Heissig: "The politically tainted mediaeval image of the Mongols gradually languished into travesty. The great powers of Russia and China turned the former ruling Mongols into helpless clients, and the West forgot all about them" (1989a, 7-9).

Accounts from the frontier

Our contemporary knowledge of Mongolia, and the development of relations between Mongolia and Scandinavia, took their beginning in the late 1800s. The history of these relationships was rooted in the European mercantile expansion in the East and was moulded by the thinking of the Enlightenment. This was a time of discovery and exploration which anticipated the industrial revolution in most European countries, most definitely so in Scandinavia. Early contacts went via Russia, which was considered the most progressive vehicle for European expansion at the time; the first reports on Mongolia proper were thus testimonies from the Russian frontier.

The growing European trade interest in Russia in the early 1700s and subsequent explorations of the frontier areas in Siberia gave way to studies of Mongolia to investigate possible access to trade routes to China via Russia. To promote awareness of the riches of her country to Europeans, the Empress Catherine II and the Russian Academy of Sciences engaged German scholars to participate in expeditions to the remote corners of the Empire. Among these was the Berliner physician Peter Simon Pallas (1741-1811), who participated in expeditions between 1720 and 1774 and reported his observations and finds to the Academy, from which they were circulated to learned societies in Europe (Heissig 1989b, 101-103). From the late 1770s on, familiarity with Mongolian culture and history, in Scandinavia as in other parts of Europe, was promoted by Pallas' seminal work, *Sammlung von Historischen Nachrichten über die mongolischen Völkerschaften*, published between 1776 and 1801, a comprehensive monograph, with abundant copperplate illustrations, on the West Mongolian tribe known in Europe as the Kalmyks, the Dzungarians or the Oïat, and by

The front-page of Danish physician Hans S. Kaarsberg's account of his journey across the Russian steppes and his stay among the Kalmyks in 1892. The title reads in English: *Across the Steppes and among the Kalmyks on Horseback and by Troika*.



the Mongols by their confederated name the Oïrat.³ Their homeland was Ili in the vast steppe region south west of the Altai Mountains in East Turkestan, in present-day Xinjiang.⁴ Pallas did not actually go to Ili, but to the location in southern Russia on the steppes between the rivers Don and Volga, where the Oïrat had settled after a long exodus from Ili in 1636. In 1771 about 200,000 of them returned to their native land, while approximately 66,000 remained in Russia. This group was the object of Pallas' studies, and some hundred and twenty years later a Danish physician by the name of Hans S. Kaarsberg (1854-1929) visited the settlement on his journey across the Russian steppes. His observations were published in Danish in 1892 as *Gennem Stepperne og blandt Kalmykkerne til Hest og med Trespand*.⁵ From that journey Kaarsberg brought 27 Kalmyk objects to the Danish National Museum, founding the earliest collection of Mongolian objects in Denmark.⁶

Early Scandinavian reports on the Oïrat also stem from Swedish officers, who were taken prisoner along with Finnish soldiers after the defeat to Russia of the Swedish Karl XII at Poltava in 1709; they later came into contact with the Oïrat. One of the Swedish officers, J. C. Renat, spent 17 years as a privileged prisoner among the local nobility (Aalto 1989, 95). Upon his release in 1733, he returned to Sweden, accompanied by four Oïrats. He brought back reports and remarkable insights into the lives and organization of the tribe, as well as ethnographic objects and local

The late Khatun of the Torguts, photographed by Finnish-Swedish Field Marshal C. G. Mannerheim, who in 1906-1908 was on a mission through Central Asia for the Russian general-staff. In 1907 he visited the Torgut Mongols at Khara Shar (present Iranq), some 20 years before Haslund, who stayed among the same group over a period of six months and became well acquainted with the Khatun's son, Sin Chin Geger. Photo: C. G. Mannerheim, 1907.



maps of the area (cf. Wahlquist 2002, 24-29). His extraordinary story is told in Haslund's book *Zajagan* (1935, 122-127) where the inclusion of Renat's account contributes to the author's reconstruction of the history of the Torgut, one of the four confederated Oirat tribes. A similar experience was reported by one of the Finnish prisoners of war, Ph. J. von Strahlenberg, who spent 13 years as a cartographer in Siberia. On his return to Finland in 1730 he published a *Kalmük-Mongolian* dictionary along with comprehensive geographical reports. Early accounts from Mongolia proper came from the Swedish-Finnish Erik Laxman, who took up a position as a minister of the church in Siberia around 1700. From there he went on long excursions into northern Mongolia and communicated with European scholars about the results of his studies of Mongolian and Tibetan. Other Finnish scholars followed suit, but from the mid-1800s it was M. A. Castrén whose comprehensive studies in Mongolia laid the basis for future Finnish philologists and for the establishment of the Finno-Ugrian Society in 1885 (Alto 1983, 99). The Society launched various expeditions to Mongolia, the earlier of which were dedicated to the study of the Orkhon inscriptions, eventually deci-

phered by the Danish philologist Vilhelm Thomsen in 1893. From the early 1900s on, the philologist and explorer J. Ramstedt and his students conducted studies in Mongolia, securing the continuation of studies in Finland of Mongolian language, folklore and archaeology (ibid., 99-100). When the famous Swedish-Finnish explorer C. G. Mannerheim (1867-1951) – later Interim Regent of Finland – planned his journey through Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang in 1906-1908, it was Ramstedt who offered him practical advice and the Finno-Ugrian Society which financed his collecting activities. In reality Mannerheim, as an officer in the Russian Army, was sent on a mission to assess the Chinese military power in the region. To cover up his true mission Mannerheim was instructed to travel as an explorer and collector of scientific material (Lahdentausta et al. 1999, 8; Varjola 1999, 64). The archaeological and ethnographic objects collected by Mannerheim now reside in the National Museum (Museum of Cultures) in Helsinki, Finland; among these are fifty everyday objects from the small group of Torgut Mongols of Khara Shar in Xinjiang, visited by Mannerheim in 1907, and an object of study for Haslund some twenty years later.



Mongolian caravan outside Urga in 1922, photographed by Danish telegrapher K. A. Albertsen who was on a maintenance mission through Mongolia to repair the telegraph-line, built by the Danish company The Great Northern and completed in 1899. Photo: K. A. Albertsen, 1922.

With regard to Norwegian-Mongolian relations, information on Mongolia in the early twentieth century came from two sources: a Norwegian botanical expedition sent to the Siberian-Mongolian frontier in 1914; and the missionaries of the American-Norwegian mission in Urga.

By the mid-1800s Russian expeditions to Mongolia had been intensified, now under the auspices of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, which hosted more than thirty well-equipped expeditions during the last quarter of the century (Nekljudov 1989, 89-94). The launching and travels of the expeditions were eagerly studied by learned societies all over Europe. Thus, in the first issue of the journal of the Danish Geographical Society, published in 1877, a letter from a Danish telegrapher, Emil Hansen, in Omsk depicts the situation in Siberia: "Besides the various expeditions to northern Siberia where the Russians are racing the many foreigners, two Russian expeditions to China to investigate the northwestern part of Mongolia and Tibet have been launched this summer" (Hansen 1877, 44). The leaders of these expeditions, properly introduced to the Danish readers in Emil Hansen's letter, were G. N. Potanin and N. M. Przevalsky, both explorers of great renown. "The time is coming", Hansen explains, "when China at large opens up to the European civilization. As we see it [...] it will

happen over land and not like earlier from the sea". Consequently, the main object of Potanin's expedition, we learn from Emil Hansen, was to obtain information on Mongolia's production and trade with China, and on the prospects of improving the Russian trade in the area. "Scientifically", Emil Hansen continues, "the ethnographic investigations need our full attention [...] in regard to the different indigenous peoples to be visited along the routes: among these the Mongols, the Kalmyks, and the Djugarians etc." (ibid.). The travel accounts from these expeditions, along with the scientific reports from A. M. Pozdneev and P. K. Kozlov, and later that of B. Vladimirstov, were read by scientists and commercial institutions as well, and became influential to European expeditions and other travellers to the region. The contributions of these explorers to early Mongolian studies are duly regarded as pioneering, as are the rich collections brought back by them to the museum at the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg.

By the late 1800s knowledge of Mongolia relied on accounts such as the ones mentioned above, now supplemented by reports from citizens living in Siberia and northern China, where many entrepreneurs and businesses had established themselves, as had Danish companies. Up to the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, the relationship be-



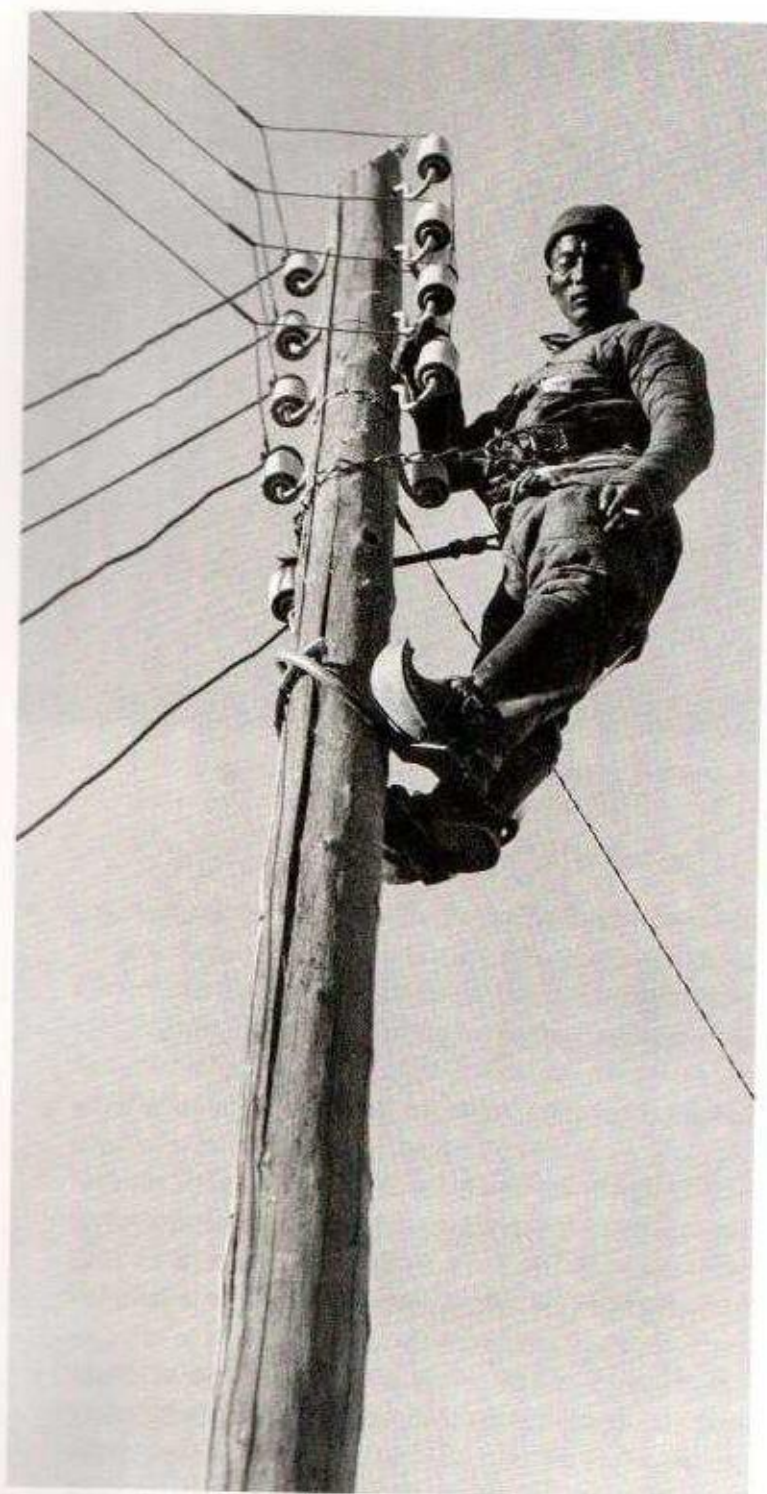
The office of The Great Northern in Khiakta in Siberia, the end point of the Peking Khiakta telegraph line, initiated by the company in the 1890s. Photo: K. A. Albertsen, 1922.

between Russia and Denmark was characterized by strong economic interests. The need for better integration of the vast and heterogeneous empire caused the Russian state to instigate enormous projects in agriculture, commerce, and communications; a development in which Danish companies participated, with particular success in Siberia (Jensen 1989, 241–261; Jensen 1979, 45–57; Sohn 2002; Larsen 2007). The Danish companies operated on many different fronts and with large investments,⁷ and included the Siberian Company (dairies and dairy production equipment), F. L. Smith (cement and construction), the East Asiatic Company (shipping), the Transatlantic Company and the Russian Trading Company (goods). Most of the trade was handled from Denmark, but it is estimated that by 1917 some 3000–2500 Danish men and women had settled in Siberia. Some companies planned to extend their business into Mongolia with butcheries, fur companies, dairies, etc. (Kamp, Hansen & Heinberg 1950–51 III, 284).

The Danish East Asiatic Company (ØK), present in Asia from the late 1800s on, and the Danish Great Northern Telegraph Company, worked on both frontiers in Russia and China. The Great Northern obtained concessions from the Russian state in 1869 – and from China in the following year – to complete the already-started telegraph line

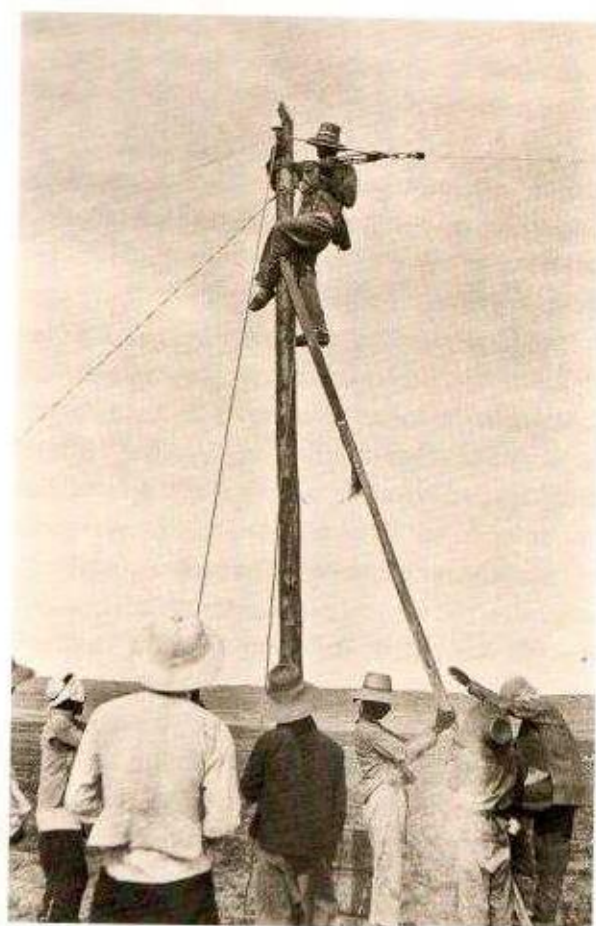
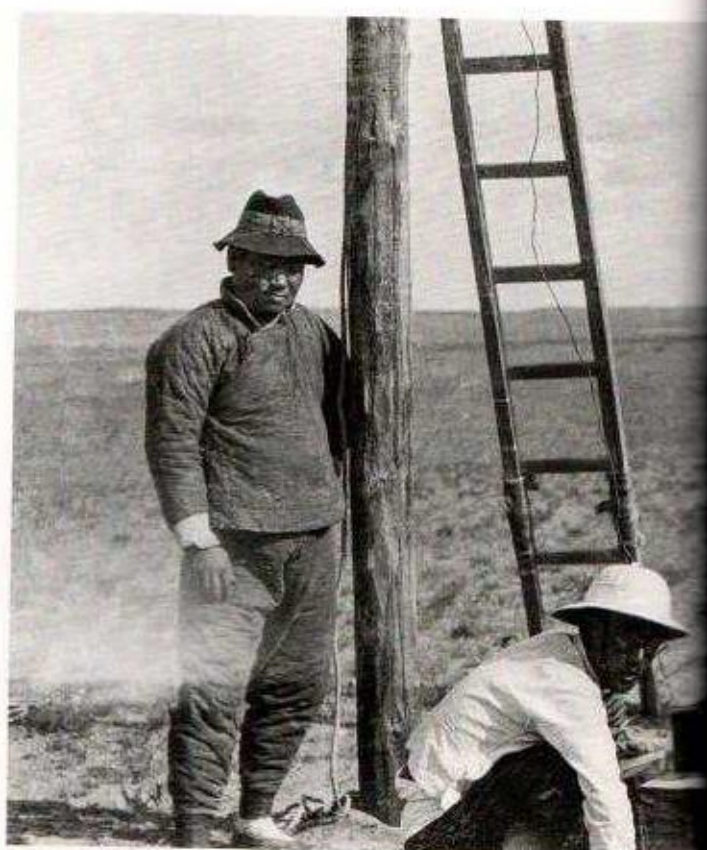
between St. Petersburg and Vladivostok with connecting lines from China and Japan respectively (Kamp, Hansen & Heinberg, 1950–51 III, 243–247; Jacobsen 1997). The first of these was successfully completed in 1872. The overland line from Peking to Khiakta, inaugurated in 1893, ran through Mongolia, an entrepreneurial activity which brought the company – and Mongolia proper – into the picture in earnest. Delayed by the Sino-Japanese war in 1894 and the devastations which this caused, the line was completed in 1899. The work was headed by the Danish engineer H. C. Schiern (1853–1917). Initially employed by the Great Northern in China in 1884, Schiern was transferred to the Chinese Telegraph Administration, from which he took charge of all land-lines in Manchuria, Korea, and northern China.⁸ The stretch of 1658 km was laid out with fifteen poles per kilometre and ran over hilly steppes, through the Gobi Desert, over mountain terrains and came to mark out the overland road used ever since by travellers, including the early Danish explorers, between Peking and the Mongolian capital Urga.

The employees of these companies, particularly the Great Northern, regularly reported their observations from their stations on the Mongolian frontiers to the Danish public in newspapers and in the *Journal of the Royal Dan-*



The Great Northern's telegraph poles ran across the steppe throughout Inner and Outer Mongolia.

In 1922 the telegraph line across Mongolia was managed by the Chinese Telegraph Administration. In the wake of the political turmoil after Mongolia claimed its independence in 1911, the line was demolished first by Chinese soldiers then by White Russians and many poles had to be replaced. Photos: K. A. Albertsen, 1922.





Danish telegraphers Harboe and Langebæk, both employed at the telegraph station in Urga, in the company of two Khalkh ladies. Like Albertsen, Langebæk enjoyed taking photos of the local population, a fair number of which is kept in the Danish National Museum's archives. Photo: n. n. Langebæk, 1921-1922.

Telegrapher K. A. Albertsen in his well-packed car ready for the repair-mission in 1922. Photo: K. A. Albertsen, 1922.





ish Geographical Society, as was the case with the earlier mentioned letters from Emil Hansen in Omsk. Browsing through the issues of the Society's journal from around the turn of the century, among the otherwise dominant Polar-exploration subjects one finds regular reports from China and Siberia written by the staff of Danish enterprises. The articles differ from the usual reports on scientific travel and exploration in their enthusiastic promotion of the region.

Siberia – otherwise best known as Russia's prison camp for criminals and dissidents – was praised for its abundance of natural minerals. Its forests and game and the prospects for trade, industry, and agriculture were emphasized. Although "scientifically" oriented towards the conventional geographical knowledge advocated by the Society, these articles tend overtly towards the trends of the time: growing international trade and subsequent industrial expansion.



A Khalkh family outside their yurt near the capital of Outer Mongolia, Urga. "It is a strange state, Khalkha Mongolia", writes Danish telegrapher Alfred Schönebeck. "It is the only one in the world that has no permanent settlements and no cities. The Mongols live the nomadic life in small parties all year round [...] so no villages arise" (1911, 290-291). "Khalkha" Mongolia carried the name of the dominant Mongolian group in the region.

Photo: n. n. Langebæk, c. 1922.

sion for presenting Danish readers with more thorough information on the country; but, he argued, one had to be critical of the existing sources:

There exist various older and more recent, particularly Russian, travel accounts of Mongolia, and in these the readers will find interesting pictures of the scenery of the country, the customs and manners of the peoples, their religion and culture, etc. Mongolia as an entity, however, is still unknown territory. The various expeditions that have penetrated over time its inner areas, have only reported on the road they themselves have taken, and have therefore only managed to shine a faint sidelight on the darkness of the map [...] Of the untraveled and remote areas one can only speak with great uncertainty. [...] One aspect which almost all travellers have left out is the living conditions of the population, and yet these are worthy of our attention, as is the whole future destiny of Mongolia (Schönebeck 1912, 290).

During the following decade knowledge of Mongolia and its population grew as reports came from the increasing number of Westerners, including Scandinavians, who traversed the country on expeditions, as adventurers, scientists, missionaries, merchants and entrepreneurs. In the meantime, the declaration of independence in 1911 – one year before the fall of the Qing Empire – had precipitated Mongolia's appearance on the global political scene: as a buffer zone squeezed in between the expansionist powers Russia, Japan, and China in the East, a development began that brought radical changes to the political boundaries in the entire region over the next four decades. Enormous political changes had been sweeping over Inner Asia ever since the mid-1800s and had initiated decades of political crisis.

It was amidst this critical situation that a group of Danish adventurers, including our protagonist, made their appearance in 1923. Before we proceed with the account of their extraordinary enterprise in Mongolia, we need to take a look at the region they entered and recognize the effects of the colossal political changes that had been taking place since the early 1900s. The complex political turmoil outlined below formed the backdrop for the group of Danish pioneers who set out to claim a piece of Mongolia and turn it into a Danish colony.

Nielsen 1962, 13; Christiansen 2005, 59). The first article on Mongolia proper to reach the Society's readers appeared in 1911. It was written by Alfred Schönebeck, a regular contributor to the *Geographical Journal* between 1906 and 1914, stationed by the Great Northern in the Mongolian border town, Khiakta, "the Siberian Venice", as he called it (1912, 289-298). Schönebeck considered Mongolia's demand for independence from China in 1911 an important occa-

Mongolia 1911-1924⁹

When Khaikha Mongolia claimed its independence from China in 1911, the future of the country was uncertain. Since 1644 Mongolia had been part of the Manchu (Qing) Empire, which included all Mongolians living in the imperial territories north of China proper. The area most remote from the seat of power in Peking was labelled Outer Mongolia and covered roughly the territory of the present state of Mongolia. The south-eastern region populated by Mongols was labelled Inner Mongolia and formed a narrow crescent-shaped borderland, stretching from the north east in Manchuria to Alashan in the south west. The Inner Mongolian area is bounded in the north by the Gobi Desert and in the south by the Great Wall of China. In 1911 this region counted a population of about one million agriculturists and animal herders. Outer Mongolia's much smaller population, about 600,000 souls, lived mainly as herders on the open steppes.

Outer Mongolia was ruled by Mongol princes in hereditary offices and by representatives of the Buddhist Church with a status equivalent to that of the princes. As a country subject to indirect rule it was relatively independent, but ultimately it was controlled by Chinese governors. The enormous area – the size of France and Germany combined – was divided into four provinces, so-called *aimags*. Inner Mongolia had a similar system of local princely rule, but with far more constraints from the Manchu authorities, since the region was subject to direct political control by a succession of representatives of the imperial government who imposed various political restrictions.

During the 1900s economic exploitation, heavy taxation and the plans of the imperial authorities to colonize the land of the herders stirred up strong anti-Chinese feelings. The Chinese Empire had itself gradually crumbled from within after the Opium Wars in the middle of the 1800s. The ensuing epoch of Unequal Treaties¹⁰ forced upon the nation by foreign powers brought the Empire to its knees. Republican activities had been going on for some time, and in October 1911 they finally led to the fall of the Chinese Empire. Two months later, an independent move-

ment spearheaded by Mongol feudal princes took advantage of the weakness of Imperial China and seized power in Urga. Backed by the poor herders, the Buddhist Church and others who had long engaged in riots against the Chinese in Urga and other big cities, they simply declared themselves independent: on the throne they installed the eighth Jebtsundamba Khutuktu – a living god and a reincarnation of a divine of Tibetan origin who by the age of five had been recognized as a spiritual descendant of Ghinggis Khan.

During the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, the conservative Mongol princes grew nervous about the politics of their Russian friends and turned back to China for help. However, Republican China had never stopped claiming its right to all of Mongolia and subsequently sent military forces to Urga in 1919 to remove the Khutuktu from the throne. In 1920, however, the Chinese soldiers had to return to China because of internal problems. In the power vacuum that followed in Mongolia, the White Russian Baron Ungern-Sternberg seized power in Urga with his terrorizing army of fleeing White Russians and a few thousand sympathizers of mixed origin – Mongolians, Tibetans, Japanese, and others – who expelled the remaining Chinese. Now followed a year of terror, until the Russians, that is, the Bolsheviks, came to the rescue of Urga in 1921 and reinstalled the Khutuktu, who remained head of state until his death in 1924. This event marked the year of the second Mongolian revolution. A treaty between the Soviet Republic and the revolutionary regime in Mongolia was signed in Moscow, securing Mongolian sovereignty in all national matters and full Mongolian independence. In a Chinese-Russian treaty of 1921, however, the Soviet regime declared that "Outer Mongolia is an integral part of the Republic of China and respects China's sovereignty therein".¹¹ But the presence of Soviet Russia and its influence on Mongolian politics continued throughout the next few decades. The true masters in Mongolia were the Russians, despite protests from the Chinese government.

According to the British mongolist Charles Bawden, the

development of a socialist society took its beginning as Mongolia underwent two distinct revolutions between 1911 and 1921. The first, which resulted in the declaration of independence, was essentially a nationalistic movement, aimed merely at the removal of Manchu authority. The second was inspired by the Russian example, was carried out under Russian guidance and control, and was the prelude to a period of profound change" (1989, 189).

The wider geopolitical scenario was dominated by the power struggle that Russia had been waging with Japan since the late 1800s to gain a foothold in the East, with Mongolia providing a buffer zone between the two. The treaty of 1860 gave Russia suzerainty over Mongolia, and with the treaty of 1898 between Russia and China, Russia gained a foothold in the Liodong Peninsula and laid claim to the harbour at Port Arthur (Lushun).

The Japanese for their part had been on the move on the mainland since their successes after the Sino-Japanese War in 1894-1895, when they had seized Formosa (Taiwan). The sudden Japanese attack on the Russian fleet in Port Arthur in 1904 instigated the Japanese-Russian War of

1904-1905 and led to a devastating and very humiliating defeat for the Russians, who were ousted from the Liodong Peninsula.¹² At this point the Japanese obtained access not only to the peninsula, but also to Korea, and eventually to China (Manchuria) in 1931.

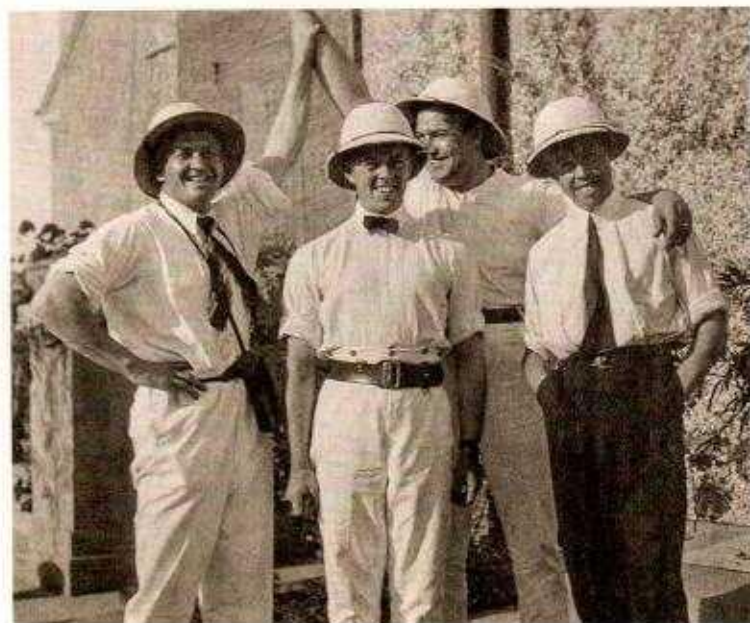
In short, after the revolution of 1911, the Mongols wanted to unite all their populations in the Inner and Outer regions in one Mongolian nation. But in this the Bolsheviks were of no help; they continued to support the old divisions and let the Chinese nationalist movement take responsibility for Inner Mongolia. The Republican Chinese government for its part never stopped claiming all of Mongolia; it insisted on the Chinese-Russian agreement of 1921 which secured Chinese sovereignty over Mongolia, leaving Inner Mongolia as part of Republican China, as it is today. In 1924 Outer Mongolia was declared an independent People's Republic – and along with Tannu Tuva became the first states outside the Soviet Union to gain such a status. In reality they were both satellite states under the Soviet Union.



Street scene from Ulaanbaatar with view to the Gandan monastery in the horizon. Photo: K. A. Albertsen, 1922.



Four Danish pioneers on their way to claim land in Uriankhai in North West Mongolia, in May 1923. They passed through the Chinese wall in Kalgan with enormous loads of baggage for the coming farm experiment. With the help of "15 carts, an equal number of Chinese and 45 horses", according to Carl Krebs, the leader and initiator of the project, they reached the capital Urga after 54 days. Photo: Carl Krebs, 1923.



The group of four Danes in the Chinese city Tiensien. From the left is Carl Krebs, always referred to as "Chief"; Haslund, the youngest nicknamed "Kiddi"; Tage Birck, nicknamed "Tot"; and finally Kaj Borgstrøm, "the Buffalo". The two remaining members, the farmer Erik Isager and Carl's brother Ove Krebs, joined the party later on. Apart from the pioneering spirit and jovial tone of the group, their project was a serious matter. A contract had been drawn up beforehand and each had invested the sum of DKK 5,000.⁴ The group had been carefully composed with respect to a strict division of labour with long preparation and training in Denmark, England and America: Haslund, Birck and Isager had studied farming, Borgstrøm mercantile relations, Ove Krebs mining and construction, while Carl himself, with his intimate knowledge of the region and fluency in Russian, was the organizer and principal figure vis-à-vis the authorities. Photo: Carl Krebs, 1923.



A local herder's family, employed at the farm in Bulguntai. Different Mongolian groups lived in the area: Darhads, Buriats and Khalkh, but also many so-called Soyots (Tuventians) besides about 5,000 Russian and Chinese settlers. Photo: Carl Krebs, 1923-1936.

sively covered by the press and hundreds of Danes had volunteered to join him. World War I was over, and while Danish neutrality had spared the country major suffering, the war had left no European country unaffected, economically and otherwise. Except for a small elite¹⁴ that had made fortunes producing goods for the belligerents, the economic situation in Denmark was critical and unemployment was high. The idea of migrating to Mongolia was embraced enthusiastically. The volunteers saw it as a possibility in line with the massive emigration that had gone on since the turn of the century to the Americas and Siberia, the so-called "New America". According to Krebs, the Danish immigrants who had been thrown out of Siberia after the Bolshevik Revolution were potential members of the project in Uriankhai. Backed by plans for an enterprise involving commerce, agricultural production and a research station, the project began to take form. With assistance from the Royal Danish Geographical Society and the Carlsberg Foundation, which sponsored the equipment for various meteorological observations, and a partly free voyage provided by ØK (the East Asiatic Company) the pioneers left Copenhagen on 18 March 1923 to board *MS Malaya* in Amsterdam, bound for Shanghai.

Carl Krebs (1889-1971) knew the region well. Originally trained as a physician, he chose a military career and graduated from the Academy of the Royal Guards in 1916, as mentioned earlier. After his military service Krebs travelled and worked extensively in Russia. In the aftermath of the Revolution he experienced the early years of the rising Soviet Union. With little interruption he remained in Rus-

sia from 1916 until 1922, primarily in Siberia and along the Russian-Mongolian border in "Transbalkalia". Initially, Carl Krebs and his brother Ove Krebs had been sent out by the Danish Foreign Ministry to look after the interests of Austrian prisoners-of-war in Russia, a task given to the Danish Legation in Russia. Subsequently, Ove Krebs continued in Peking in 1919 to take charge of the Danish Legation for a year, while Carl Krebs left for Siberia, where he joined the International Red Cross to do relief work in the prisoner camps. During his stay, dramatically described in his memoirs (1937), he was able to travel throughout the region around Lake Baikal several times; he spent long periods hunting in the vast forests and, like other travellers mentioned, was struck by the wealth of natural resources and the prospects for mining and farming in the area. On two occasions he travelled to Peking on matters relating to the relief work, and on these trips he traversed the 3000 km "by horse, automobile, and rail" through Outer Mongolia to China. It was on these travels that he discovered the fertile steppe region called Bulguntai - "the Sable Plain" - and the local population, situated south east of Lake Khövsgöl by the river Egiin gol inside Mongolia proper.¹⁵ According to legend, the region around Bulguntai was considered a "lost land". In Krebs' words "the area appeared to enjoy unoccupied independence, and was a place where a certain "plasticity" reigned, as in many other areas during the days of the revolution; in other words a place fit for our project" (1937, 106).

The total area of Uriankhai according to Krebs was about 2000 sq km, located between the mountain rang-



A first meeting on the steppe between the Danes and the Mongols! The finely dressed couple on horseback and their entourage are obviously local Chahar Mongols of the very land the Danes had just entered. Photo: Carl Krebs, 1923.

Sajan to the north and Tannu-Ola to the south. To the east, where the two ranges diverge, the large Lake Khövsgöl forms a natural border. With its rich water sources and wide steppes, this place was ideal for agriculture and cattle farming, and the forested mountains were rich in game with furs that were rated among the finest in the world and fetched high prices at auction houses in the West.

According to Krebs, the Uriankhai region was approximately the size of France and comprised a population of 50,000 – primarily local Darhad (or Darkhat) Mongols, Soyots (Tuvenians) and Buriyat (Mongols), about 5,000 Russian settlers and some Chinese. Krebs had attempted to obtain concessions for parts of the area belonging to the Russians, but despite close connections in the top ranks of the Russian Revolution, these had been refused several times. Now he opted for the eastern plains on the Mongolian side and hoped for cooperation from the authorities in Urga, the capital of the recently independent Mongolia.

One month after they had set foot in Shanghai, Krebs and his men found themselves in Kalgan (Zhangjiakou) the frontier town between China and Inner Mongolia and an important stop on the old land route between Khiakta and Peking; as such it was a suitable starting point for their further journey. Since their arrival they had moved northwards and passed Tiensien and Peking. Everywhere they relied on the help of the network of Danish expatriates, especially those on the staff of the Great Northern, who had guided them through the local bureaucracy and entertained them with series of dinner parties and tennis matches (Krebs 1922). Detailed critical information on the

latest political developments in Urga was given to them by A. Bøllerup-Sørensen¹⁶ and K. A. Albertsen,¹⁷ both telegraphists of the company with special field experience from Urga.

The journey to Urga had initially been planned as an automobile caravan, and 80 cars had been ordered to carry the enormous load of equipment. In the end an alternative, far less expensive solution was chosen: they hired "15 carts, an equal number of Chinese and 45 horses" (Krebs 1937, 100) to transport the agricultural machinery – ploughs, churns, centrifuges, harvesters, hunting gear, kitchen utensils and the scientific apparatus donated by the Carlsberg Foundation. One of the people waving goodbye on 14 July was Frans August Larson, a Swedish merchant originally sent to China in 1893 as a missionary. Larson was something of a local celebrity, not only because of his multiple business talents, but equally for his successful assistance on the British Consul C. W. Campbell's expedition to north-eastern Mongolia in 1902, and his participation in the American Natural History Museum's Third Central Asian Expedition (1922–1923) led by Roy Chapman Andrews;¹⁸ for his fluency in Mongolian and Chinese; and for his first-class knowledge of Mongol affairs. In 1920 he was honoured for his role as an adviser to the Mongolian regent, the Khutuktu, on Mongolian-Chinese relations during the turbulent years in the wake of the country's independence. For his services he was granted the noble title *Gün* (Cung), which according to tradition allowed him to be addressed as *La Gün*,¹⁹ Larson Duke of Mongolia. Larson had business in Urga and was expected to receive the party on their arrival, and to assist them further.



The Swede Frans August Larson became a valuable contact for the Danes, as he was for many other Westerners in Mongolia including Roy Chapman Andrews, on whose expedition Larson was a member for a number of years. Larson stands to the right with Granger in the middle and "Indiana Jones" Chapman Andrews to the left. Photo: K. A. Albertsen, 1922.



Climbing over the high passes of Han Deva beyond Kalgan, the party passed this beautiful temple. Photo: Carl Krebs, 1923.



"Old Urga was a city of monks", writes Bawden (1989, 11). In 1923 Urga was indeed dominated by Buddhist temples in alternating Chinese and Tibetan style. Between these buildings lay compounds of wooden houses separated by palisades, and beyond these thousands of felt yurts. The few larger Russian-built wooden houses were centred around the Byzantine Church. On the outskirts of the city on the southern bank of the river Tola were the Gandan Lamasery and the Bogd's palace. In 1923 the city had a population of 30,000, mainly lamas with a mixed foreign population of Chinese, Russian, American and Scandinavian merchants, all living in separate neighbourhoods. Photo: K. A. Albertsen, 1922.



A market place in the Russian quarter of Urga. The white wooden building to the left is the Danish company Andersen & Meyer with the Migjid Janraiseg temple rising in the horizon. "No other city in the world has Urga's make-up and we newly-arrived were immensely impressed. A colourful mix of the utterly conservative East side by side with telegraphs, telephones, automobiles, and other masterworks of the west. The Russian houses are scattered around the church with Byzantine domes, and enormous Buddhist temples range over thousands of felt-covered tents", Haslund writes of their arrival in Urga (1932, 53-54). Photo: K. A. Albertsen, 1922.



"Mongols on horseback, Chinese clad in slippers, long-bearded Russians and smiling Tibetans swarm between the palisade-fenced compounds dressed in flying prayer flags. To the east lies the Chinese Maimachin (neighbourhood), a piece of China, from whose numerous shops the sons of Han offer their goods to passing Mongols", Haslund continues (1932, 54). In the centre of the Maidari festivals in Urga in 1922, an exquisitely beautiful Khalkh woman caught the eye of the camera. Photo: K. A. Albertsen, 1922.

Once past the wall in Kalgan, the caravan climbed the high passes beyond the city to reach the enormous steppe some 1200 metres above sea level. For the next 54 days the men walked alongside the horse-drawn carts on a route marked by the Great Northern's telegraph poles all the 1650 kilometres to Urga. On 18 September they entered the city and Haslund wrote to a friend:

Finally we have reached our first goal, Urga - or as the Mongols call it Bogdo Kure (God's Monastery). It lies at the foot of the Holy Mountain Bogdo Ola (God's Mountain) about 1200 m above the sea. Last night the sun sat between the high mountain peaks and shone on Bogdo Ola's forested hills and on the hundreds of golden temples and prayer obelisks. Bogdo Gegen, "the living Buddha", has his palace here by the river Tola. The past two years have brought many changes to Urga and its holy places; now the five-edged star rules Urga and the 10,000 red-clad lamas live isolated by the Bogd's palace [...]. Our arrival in Urga was not particularly pleasant as I, who had ridden ahead, was caught and held prisoner for seven hours [...] Fortunately everything has now changed and we have become the pets of the government. The Ministers receive us kindly and with interest, and the local newspaper has welcomed us and calls us "bringers of culture". We live at Mr. Larson's comfortable compound as his guests. Yesterday he celebrated the six months since our departure from Denmark with a dinner and a dance. There were fifteen of us from six different nations present.²⁰

After two weeks the pioneers were ready to leave Urga and head west. The necessary business contracts had been established and documents had been signed by the Mongol authorities securing them the right to farm, hunt, fish and conduct trade in Bulguntai. To secure the economy of the future farm and its members, arrangements were made with an American-Russian fur company in Urga for regular deliveries of furs, which the Danes expected to buy from local hunters. Thus prepared they packed their load on forty ox carts and set out on a dramatic journey through the bleak landscape of the North West. They were held back for weeks by the first winter storms and only arrived at their destination on 18 November, eight months after their departure from Denmark, and two months after they had left Urga.



The first Christmas is celebrated in Bulguntai with local guests attending. The lit up tree and Christmas carols accompanied on banjo by Ove Krebs, or on the gramophone, may have made a certain impression. Carl Krebs and Borgström to the left. Photo: Carl Krebs, 1923.

Life on the farm

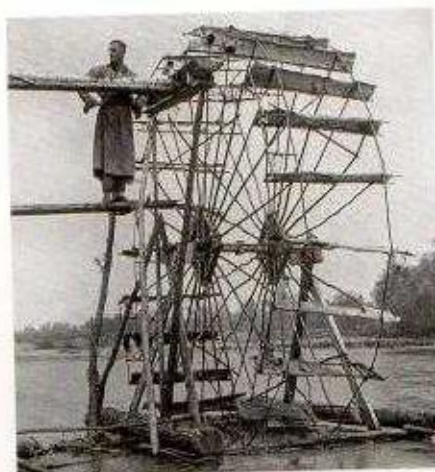
Years later, life in Bulguntai was portrayed in the travelogues published by the participants with equal doses of hardship, comradeship, and adventure, rendered in the style of the popular travel literature of the 1920s. The accounts include the tribulations of getting there, followed by descriptions of "life at the place" revolving around the shared struggle, at first with nature and then with the culture; the building of two block houses for shelter, the setting-up of a farm and the first hard toil on the land, the strange diet, the cold winters, the problems with the machinery brought from Denmark, and finally meetings and encounters with the native Mongolians and their wonder at the cultural ways of the people. The first local Mongols to appear in the accounts are the hunters with whom business had to be established, then come others who worked on the farm as herders, cooks and assistants, among whom many are described as friends, and as guides to the surrounding lands and forests and the social and religious life of the local inhabitants. The depictions of Mongol assistants and friends avoid the usual Western prejudices of the day about Mongols as people "hard to trust, dirty, and superstitious", on the contrary emphasizing the Mongols' outstanding dexterity in hunting, riding, and herding, and no less their resilience and strength during long journeys. The travel stories and memories (Borgström 1933 and 1934; Haslund 1932 and 1943; Isager 1930; Krebs 1937) obviously reflect the concerns and interests of each author, whether



they are meticulous descriptions of farm life and indigenous husbandry, the ultimate worry of constantly developing and securing life on the farm for the future, or humorous accounts of everyday life, alternating with ethnographic descriptions and vivid reports from regular visits to neighbouring temples and monasteries, as well as their daily coexistence with local Mongols. The descriptions of daily life mix a general atmosphere of frontier patriotism with bourgeois virtues and manners: the regular hoisting of the Danish national flag, the celebration of the King's birthday, the Sunday rest, and the perfect Christmas party in dinner jacket and patent-leather shoes.

The travelogues became immensely popular and the publishers in Denmark issued special youth editions of Haslund's *Jabonah* and Borgstrøm's *Three Years on the Zobel Plains* (1933). In the latter, Borgstrøm describes empathetically and at length the close relationships with the Mongols working on the farm, and the regular visits to the nearby monastery, "Odocknacoreen" as he transcribes its name, in a comprehensive ethnographic description (1933, 35-72).²⁰ From these visits Borgstrøm obtained 114 fine objects for the National Museum, all in accordance with the agreement made between Thomas Thomsen at the Ethnographic Department and Kai Borgstrøm back in Copenhagen before their departure, to which end the National Museum had furnished Borgstrøm with the sum of DKK 2000. Some of the objects are included in the catalogue section.

Reviews of Krebs' book, *A Dane in Mongolia* (1937), published one year after his return to Denmark, pointed to the fine, humanist individual who captured the imagination of his readers with descriptions of exciting and fearsome situations, or so it was expressed by at least one reviewer



Daily life on the farm was first a struggle of setting up the farm and toiling on the land. Later on technological constructions such as the water-wheel bettered the conditions. Photo: Carl Krebs, 1923-1925.

in the *Ugeskrift for Læger* (Weekly Journal for Physicians). In other words this was a portrait of a thoughtful personality and a true leader:

The book derives its value not least from the image it gives the reader – probably unconsciously on the part of the author – of a fully-fledged, outstanding personality with masculine will, courage and protectiveness towards the weak. Yet he is not solely the man of action, he has a richly faceted mind, he has dark moments and a touch of melancholy in the midst of his life of action (Kuhn 1937, 1401-1402).

Finally, a Danish nurse, Lena Tidemand, who knew Krebs from the Red Cross relief work in the Ukraine, joined the farm in 1927 and assisted Krebs in his medical work as a nurse and midwife for about one year. During her stay she sent series of articles to Danish ladies' magazines on the grave health problems of the Mongols, on the strange habits she encountered, and on her passion for hunting. Fortunately, she was also an outstanding photographer who documented the local life of Bulguntal.

The initial urge to explore brought everyone safely through the first exciting phase of setting up the farm and planting the land, but after six months or so the enthusiasm gradually waned with the hardship and triviality of the daily chores, which proved more tolerable for some than for others. "One day is more or less like the previous one", Haslund wrote to his friend in February 1924.²²

Later, Haslund describes how he is sent out on trips to explore the environment, to hunt or do business for the farm, and can be away for months, travelling with Mongol assistants only. On these trips he learned to endure the



Lena Tidemand on her way to Bulguntai in 1927. Tidemand knew Krebs from the Red Cross relief work in Siberia. She joined the farm in Bulguntai in 1927 and stayed for one year. Photo: Lena Tidemand, 1927. Private possession.



Beautiful Khalkh women on a social call in Lena Tidemand's cabin in Bulguntai. The rough pioneering life amidst the Mongolian wilderness is vividly depicted in Lena Tidemand's diaries accompanied by photos of the farm and the vicinity.⁶ When it came to the neighbours, the Mongolian herders, she praised their hospitality, their hunting skills and the women's beauty. "Back in Denmark my thoughts fly every day back to Bulguntai. First of all they fly to my lonely paths in the forest. I do long greatly for the free life of nature, but the conditions, the appalling dirty conditions, I do not long for" (2009). Photo: Lena Tidemand, 1928. Private possession.

hardships of travelling on horseback over long distances, to live the Mongolian way on a hunting diet, to stay overnight with local Mongolians in their yurts, and to master vernacular Mongolian. His curiosity and interest also prompted him to explore the surroundings. In the letter just mentioned, his priorities are clear: while the progress of the work on the farm, the weather and the sporadic mail service²³ are dealt with in barely one page, his description of a lama séance²⁴ whose purpose was to heal Haslund's friend and assistant on the farm, a Buriat named Djalserai, takes up the remaining seven pages. Djalserai had been doomed to a sudden and violent death by a local shaman, and could only be saved from this terrible fate by employing a lama to undertake an exorcism, Haslund writes, and continues:

"It is not easy for a white man to be allowed to attend a lama séance. Even Krebs, who has lived here for years and whose greatest wish it is, has never attended one". Haslund's description of the ritual, worthy of an entry in an anthropologist's field notes, reveals his talent for detailed ethnographic observation:

When we entered the yurt the lama sat naked in front of the altar and ate so that it made him perspire intensely [...]. When he had finally finished eating – it took a while – he began to take out his exorcism equipment: a large drum with painted images of all sorts of sorcery, fantasy animals and demons with flaming jaws, cymbals, bells, heavy prayer books bound in wood, and a lump of clay. On a square piece



Two Buddhist monks from the vicinity perform a ceremony which may very well be of the kind described by Haslund of his friend Djalserai, who, to be healed from a shaman's curse, had an exorcism ritual be executed. Photo: Carl Krebs, 1923-1925.

of wood with four corner sticks, the lama placed a man made of clay surrounded by 13 clay pyramids, each bearing a stick of incense. Then he began his exorcism with prayers at enormous speed, guided by the cymbals and the terrifying thudding monotony of the drum.²⁵

The description continues in minute detail over the next pages in the letter to the point, many hours later, when the victim, the poor Buriat Djalserai, is finally promised another 26 years of life, good luck in hunting, and no shortage of meat and milk for the rest of his life. The letter finishes with a happy ending: "Two hours later D. and I rode into the woods and at sunrise we discovered a flock of deer in a valley between forested mountains; there I shot my first deer." The event was not included in *Jabonah* (1932), but it was commemorated by Isager in his serial *The Danish Settlers on the Zibel Plains*, published in 1930 in the local newspaper *Udvaldte*. Isager had not been present in the tent and, although fascinated by the incident, he reported it in a rather more demeaning and matter-of-fact version:

By making a lot of noise and racket throughout the night, the lama managed it so that the chap would live another 26 years (...) Haslund had to pay five pounds of flour to observe the show, while the poor Buriat had to present a fox fur, a length of cotton, 20 pounds of flour, a "chartos" (a cow's stomach filled with butter), and some milk (Isager 1930).

Other events, such as Haslund's meeting with a shaman in a Soyot (Tuvenian) camp in the Saran mountains in 1924, made a great impression on him and subsequently not only appeared in *Jabonah* (1932, 198-205) but became recurring themes in his lectures and radio broadcasts:²⁶

To my enormous surprise the shaman was a young woman, agile and with attentive eyes. She wore a yellow sheepskin and rode a muscular white ambler (...) Later, the fight was about to begin. She was dressed up in her deceased father's old costume of antelope skin, covered with silk ribbons, bird feathers, bells of iron and brass, knucklebones, animal tails, bird skulls and many other things that jingled and rattled with every movement. On her head she placed a bonnet of feathers with a tail that ran down her back. With the drum placed as a shield on her left arm, she sat down in front of the fire facing the tent opening (...). She threw herself back and forth to the rhythm of the drum and uttered wild, inarticulate sounds from her throat. The expression of her eyes changed, they were wild and bloody, her face was swollen blue and red, her nostrils quivered and she foamed at the mouth (1932, 202-203).

The struggle against evil and possession by spirits of nature forms a recurrent theme in Haslund's book *Jabonah*; he recorded that for "the hunters and nomads who live face to face with the raw power of nature, it is the black sorcery of



Haslund soon adjusted to the surroundings, not only in regard to clothing, as he soon took on the Mongolian *deel* with knife-and-chopstick set hanging from the sash. He much preferred to go on hunting trips with his Mongolian friends than work on the farm, and he quickly picked up vernacular Mongolian. Photo: Carl Krebs, 1924.

the shaman they turn to in distress and danger" (1932, 200). Haslund's fascination with shamans remained with him all through his life and led to his successful collection of three complete shaman costumes in 1936-1938. Some of the case stories in *Jabonah* were based on personal experience and encounters with the locals, such as the case of the Soyot shamaness, while others were collected stories rearranged as fiction – or "invented cultural accounts" (Clifford 1986) as previously implied in chapter 1. The plots of the stories and the form in which they were presented stem from the tales told by the herders around the campfire, or by his many Mongolian companions after a long day's hunt. He listened to these stories again and again, and they became an inexhaustible source for his writing.

The joint experiment lasted nearly two years. In March 1925 Haslund was sent to Urga on business, and he never returned to Bulguntai. Tage Birck left for Denmark the same year, Borgstrøm the following year, while the Krebs brothers, Lena Tiedemand and Erik Isager extended their stay till 1928. In 1929, after everyone had left, Carl Krebs married a Russian woman and stayed until 1936, at which point he was forced by the authorities to leave Mongolia. A contract of 1926²⁷ with the Mongolian state secured Krebs the right to stay in the area for 12 years on the condition that he turned the place into a model farm and integrated the local inhabitants. By 1936 the contract was no longer valid because of the political situation. The intensified relations between the USSR and Mongolia, personified in the close alliance between Josef Stalin and the Mongol Minister of Internal affairs, H. Choibalsan, led to political radicalization in all matters everywhere in the country. Comprehensive taxes, restrictions and ordinances, confiscations of property, sudden arrests and expulsions of foreigners were daily occurrences. These incidents constituted what in retrospect was the beginning of the era of the Great Purge,²⁸ instigated from 1937 on, which began in the temples, monasteries and other so-called "feudal" complexes, which were consequently looted and burned down, with thousands of lamas killed. In April 1925 Haslund fled Urga in a large Dodge with a handful of other expatriates, soon followed by Larson, who was one of the last Westerners to leave the capital. They both ended up in Kalgan, China.

An activist diplomat

After everybody had left in September 1925, another Dane turned up in Urga and sent a report home to the Danish

Ove Krebs with mongolian children at the farm. Ove stayed until 1928, after which Carl Krebs was the single person at Bulguntai. He married a Russian wife and moved to a different settlement up the river called Ulan Hat where they stayed until 1936 at which point they were expelled as unwanted foreigners by the Mongolian government. Photo: Lena Tidemand, 1928. Private possession.



The Danes often visited the monasteries in the area, here (possibly) the Demchig Temple in Zayaiin Deed Khure, in present day Tsetserleg of the Arkhangai. Photo: Lena Tidemand, 1928. Private possession.



By April 1925 the Mongolian government had forced the last foreigners to leave Urga; they would otherwise have been expelled or incarcerated. Haslund left with Frans Larson and his associates from the Andersen & Meyer's company in a cortege of Dodges, tightly packed with as much of the company's stock that, they could take along. Photographer unknown.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs on his observations of the situation in Mongolia.²⁹ This was the newly appointed Danish ambassador to China, Japan, and Korea, Henrik Kauffmann (1888-1963), who had arrived in Peking in 1924. His two reports to the Ministry offer rare insight into the political situation in Mongolia at this time. Rumour had it – contrary to the official information from the Russian legation in

Peking – that the promise to withdraw all Soviet soldiers and advisers from Mongolia to pave the way for the independence of the Mongolians had not been fulfilled. Moreover and even worse, the Russians, despite the international weapons embargo, were sending loads of weapons to their Chinese clients through Mongolia. Consequently, this "red threat" was a burning issue among the diplomats in



The Danish Ambassador to China, Henrik Kauffmann, made a journey up to Urga by car, a very popular means of transport for Westerners at the time. In his report to the Danish Foreign Ministry of March 1925, Kauffmann writes: "There are no roads as such, and yet the more than 1000 km long route from Kalgan in China over the pass beyond the city, through the steppes and the Gobi Desert, is used every month by hundreds of automobiles. The trip can be done in 4-5 days if you follow the Great Northern's Khiakta telegraph line". However, many cars were often stuck in the mud on the steppe. Photo: K. A. Albertsen 1922.⁴

Peking. As reported to the Ministry, the trip from Peking to Urga in the summer of 1925 was a private excursion in the company of American friends from Peking.

The reason for the heavy traffic, as indicated by the report on the visit, was the busy, openly illegal transport of weapons from Urga to Kalgan to supply the ruling Chinese warlords, who had de facto control of northern China and Inner Mongolia. As for Mongolia, Kauffmann concluded that "the true masters of the country were the Bolsheviks and that the rest of the population consisted of lamas, nomads and bandits". Despite being on a private tour, Kauffmann paid visits to Mongolian politicians and Russian diplomats in Urga. Encouraged by the fact that in 1924 Denmark had been one of the first Western countries to recognize the Soviet Union, Kauffmann contacted the Soviet chargé d'affaires in Urga, who arranged for Kauffmann to meet the Mongolian Prime Minister, Serendorsche, about whom he writes as follows:

Contrary to most other "politicians" in Mongolia he still keeps his pigtail and received me according to old Mongolian custom in an old and very dirty riding outfit; he sits in a leather chair surrounded by primitive Mongolian objects and industrial goods imported directly from Europe and America. His office is furnished in a supposedly "European" style (...). The entire conversation took place between the Prime Minister and me. The Minister of Foreign Affairs – a former shepherd – didn't open his mouth.³⁰

While a condescending attitude permeates his overall description of the Mongols he observed, the message to the

Ministry back home about the Russians' standing in Mongolia was clear and factual:

Almost all foreigners in Mongolia are now Russians (...) On the Soviet Union is officially represented in Urga, and it is not too much to say that the team of Russian advisers in the Mongolian government institutions are the true masters of the country (...) In business too the Russians are working actively to displace all others, and consequently the number of non-Russians has gone down considerably. Most foreign companies are closed down (...) only a few, like the British American Tobacco Company, seem to have found modus vivendi, for their firm had a branch in Mongolia (ibid).

Official Danish interest in the Mongolian political set-up at the time was limited, which is why Kauffmann's initiative to report to the Ministry from a private trip to Urga may appear a little odd (Lidegaard 1996, 88). In the report there is no mention of his fellow participants who were in fact employed at the American Embassy. Sensitive information was presumably collected by the members of the excursion and Haslund's name appears among the sources (Lidegaard 1996, 91).

Moreover, his biographer adds, that no applications for refunds of the travel expenses were filed by Kauffmann with the Ministry, which was highly unusual, and he concludes:

More than anything this shows Kauffmann as an adventurous activist who plunged with considerable personal cour-



Street scene from Kalgan and one of its many temples. The name Kalgan derives from the Mongolian "gate" and it indeed functioned as a gateway between China and Mongolia. The Chinese called the city Zhangjiakou, the Zang family's gate. Photo: K. A. Albertsen, 1922.

age and initiative into actions that clearly exceeded the bounds of conventional diplomatic activity (Lidegaard 1996, 89).

Adventurous activism was indeed a distinctive feature of the time in the frontier region, and a fine prerequisite for the many individual (male) Westerners who struggled for survival in an atmosphere of political anarchy with no foreseeable future. The British American Tobacco Company, mentioned by Kauffmann, and known as BAT among Westerners in China, was one of the large foreign companies left in the area with job opportunities and an attraction for many of the foreign adventurers. Haslund found employment there in 1925 at their main station in the town of Kalgan.

Kalgan - the gateway

Kalgan - or Zhangjiakou as the Chinese call it - is the strategically important city for communication and trade

on the border of China and Inner Mongolia, and originally a Mongol city (the name Kalgan is derived from "halgaa" meaning door or gate), but since the late 1800s it had absorbed a steadily growing number of Han Chinese immigrants. With the completion of the railway between Kalgan and Peking in 1909, the city's commercial importance increased, attracting a greater international crowd of merchants, adventurers and job-seekers. By 1920 the city counted approximately one hundred Europeans and Americans and was a domicile to large companies, among them BAT and Standard Oil. Since the turn of the century this somewhat rough frontier city had developed into a hub with Westerners stranded amidst a politically turbulent region, where they found refuge and waited for better times and new opportunities. "In these muddy waters," Haslund writes, "swam adventurous types with a hunger for sensation, recruited from all corners of the world" (1932, 16). The domain of business and adventure also included the Hotel Wagon Lits in Peking at the other end of the railroad - the favourite place for meeting and observing "people you read

about in books but seldom meet, the kind to whom, for want of better words, I refer to as "characters" (ibid). By 1930 the railroad had expanded further west to the city of Pao-t'ou (Baotou), approximately 1800 km from Peking. The cities strung along the railroad (Peking - Kalgan - Ta-t'ung-fu - Kuei-hua-ching (Khukho Khoto) - Pao-t'ou) formed the main sphere of activity for Western interests and Scandinavians setting out on many projects of exploration and business. For Haslund and many of his peers, Kalgan became the place you visited and revisited and the gateway to Mongolia:

Back to Kalgan ... to buzz around in the old streets again to greet old friends, Chinese and Mongols, to wriggle one's way through black pigs, chickens, playing children and what not. The streets smell of the Orient and China, but if you poke your nose up a little higher, you sense wild steppe and desert sands: MONGOLIA. From Kalgan there is a mighty view ... the gateway to Mongolia. For thousands of years the caravans have come to and gone from this place, and until recently the Tartar market outside the city walls was a colourful stage for all kinds of transport animals and peoples of Central Asia. All this is now gone, or almost. In the bazaar you may still enjoy the sight of a lama and his escort dressed in yellow and red on their way to the holy mountain in Shansi, Wu Tai Shan - or a couple of weather-bitten hunters from the steppes with their bundles of fur riding from shop to shop, asking for prices. ... Through a hole in a cliff you can see a glimpse of the Mongolian sky.³¹

The Scandinavian network

Since the late 1800s Mongolia and northern China had been the field of interest for a succession of different international travellers: scientists, merchants and entrepreneurs, as mentioned earlier. They all brought their individual plans and ideas, some of which involved a certain degree of permanence in the region, as was the case with the international business and entrepreneurial companies, and with missionaries, who in many cases stayed in the area for generations. Some travellers remained for a year or two, while the more settled ones built up networks along lines of interest or nationality. Among the locally settled Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes, for example, there developed a tight-knit network of people living or travelling in Mongolia and China. Although the network had a firm base of fellow Scandinavians, it also included other expatriates



Happy days in Kalgan with friends and colleagues. Haslund was employed at the British-American Tobacco Company, known as BAT, for a period of nearly two years. He is seated to the left. Photographer unknown.

who had shared interests in the business and expedition activities taking place around this group of people. Over the years the network helped its members with jobs and funding, offered assistance in times of need or danger, and provided protection, consolation, medical care, lodgings and food. The basis of this network included Swedish missionaries and the staff of Danish companies and diplomatic circles, as well as fortune hunters and entrepreneurs who, like



August Larson (1870-1957), born in Sweden, immigrated to Mongolia in 1893, and stayed for 45 years. Locally settled Swedes, Norwegians and Danes made up the Scandinavian network in China and Mongolia. They helped and supported fellow countrymen, when they arrived in the region and often partook in their endeavours, here as members of the Sino-Swedish Expedition led by Sven Hedin. Larson was a key person in the Scandinavian network. Photo: Haslund, 1936.

Haslund, were on the lookout for work. The network also attracted a growing number of Mongols who, through their participation in Western expeditions and other entrepreneurial activities in the area, had gained experience and professional status as guides, interpreters and assistants.

This was the case for example with the Mongols participating in international expeditions such as those of Roy Chapman Andrews for the American Museum of Natural History in the mid-1920s and Sven Hedin's Sino-Swedish Expedition to the North West Territories of China (1927-1935) where the entire Scandinavian network of Mongols, missionaries and Westerners took turns as staff members over the expedition's eight-year period. In the many individual travel books and reports from the 1920s and 1930s, one reads the names – provided via the Scandinavian network – of local Mongols who accompanied the Western travellers. The American Mongolia specialist Owen Lattimore travelled in the early 1930s with a Mongolian assistant known as Arash, and to Lattimore he became a lifelong companion. Here is his portrait of Arash, a refugee from the Altai Torguts of Outer Mongolia, and of their relationship as travelling companions:

It was through Georg Söderbom that I found Arash. He had worked off and on for the Hedin expedition but had not been taken on permanently because he was very independent ... he was a first-class man and I could do no better than go with him. ... Arash and I had already sized each other up. ... He would wag his head over the fact that I never did learn to speak Mongol perfectly; also he would scold me for my clumsiness in learning to lash a pack or load a camel; but that was fine. When we were alone we were social equals and he was my superior in everything technical and professional; but when everyone else appeared he was a man in my employ who knew just how he should behave and just how I should. In this he was a marvel. Social gradations are important among Mongols (Lattimore 1942, 87; 90).

Haslund and his fellow settlers from Bulguntai were assisted by the network on their arrival in China, as earlier described; in particular by Frans August Larson, who helped them to set up their business relations in Urga, and who recommended Haslund to BAT after their flight from Urga in 1925. Later Haslund came to play an active role in the network upon being employed by Sven Hedin, a course recommended to him by Larson which resulted in his participation in Hedin's Sino-Swedish expedition for a period of three years. We shall return to this shortly. The network proved stable and reliable over the years. So much, in fact, that a decade later, when the political situation in Inner Mongolia had worsened considerably, it was the Scandinavians and Mongols of the network who supported Haslund

in all the necessary areas during his expeditions in the region. At the core of the Scandinavian network were the Swedish missionaries, centred on two families, the Larsons and the Söderboms. The close relationship between these and Sven Hedin – and the agency of Frans August Larson – brought our protagonist on to the scene in 1927 as a member of a grand enterprise.

The missionaries

The most steady supporters and custodians of the Scandinavian network were the missionaries of the Swedish-Mongol Mission, stationed in northern China and Inner Mongolia.³² The missionaries of the *Svensk Mongolmission* had their main seat in Kalgan under the wings of the American Christian Alliance Mission, with whom they were closely associated. The first Swedish missionaries to arrive in China in 1893 were twenty-seven young men and women, carefully chosen by Frederik Franson, a Swedish-American revivalist, with the aim of missionizing in China under the auspices of the American Mission and China Inland Mission. Franson had preached in America for years and had joined the organization of the well-known American evangelist and preacher A. B. Simpson from the Christian Missionary Alliance in Chicago, who encouraged him to recruit missionaries from Sweden for the missionary field work in China. Among the first group of men to go out there was Frans August Larson and his close friend Carl Söderbom, who along with their families became key members of the Scandinavian-Mongolian network. From his meeting with the missionary groups during his journey to China and Mongolia, the Swedish journalist Alexis Kuylenstierna depicts the small congregation in the middle of the hostile Kalgan at the turn of the nineteenth century:

Here lies the American Mission surrounded by yellow walls amidst yellow Chinese huts. Inside the sunny compound of houses, built half in villa style and half in Chinese style, frostbitten resedas and darkened asters are scattered. Inside, behind the clear windowpanes, the sound of singing and the organ playing the fast melodies of the American religious songs are heard. Then all is silence; people kneel in front of their chairs, midday prayer is held. Quiet as the grave; a strange image from the uproarious, dirty, greedy Kalgan (in Odelberg 2003, 105).



The mission stations were located in former temples and monasteries like Chagan Khure, which was transmitted to the Swedish Mongol Mission in 1930 by Frans August Larson, who had received the place from its former owner, a local prince. These monasteries – or mission stations – were situated in the midst of the enormous steppe. The distance to the nearest inhabited place, the mission station of Hadain Sume, was approximately 10 kilometres, and the nearest city of Changbei, from where the mail was retrieved, lay 60 kilometres to the south. Photo: Kaare Grønbech, 1938.

The Chinese uprising against foreigners, the so-called Boxer Rebellion (1900–1901) and its violent persecutions of Christian missionaries and “other foreign devils” forced the small flock of survivors out of China into Siberia via Mongolia. Luckily they escaped to the plains of Inner Mongolia and from there they continued north. Headed by Frans August Larson on a bicycle, a caravan of twenty-four Swedish and American missionaries and their children walked up “the telegraph road” following the numbered poles from Kalgan to Urga in thirty-six days with their camel-drawn carts. The Mongols along the way must have watched in amazement as the long trail of people and animals passed with the cycling Frans August at their head singing psalms and Negro spirituals while leading his flock through the Gobi (Oldenburg 2003, 58).

After an exodus to Siberia – or in some cases a return to their countries of origin – Swedish missionaries re-



The expedition members enjoy the afternoon coffee on the terrace at Hadain Sume with the Marthinson family and other missionary guests. At the heart of the Scandinavian network were the Swedish missionaries who had settled in China since 1893. Among the first to arrive were Frans August Larson and Carl Söderbom, whose families became the backbone of the network that grew stronger over the years. Missionary and physician Anders Marthinson and his wife Inge resided at Hadain Sume when the Danish expedition arrived at their field of work in October 1938. Like all the Swedish missionaries, they were helpful and hospitable. Photo: Haslund, 1938.

turned to Kalgan, which from then on became the headquarters of the Mission. Mongolian mission field stations were founded at Tabun-ol, Hallong Osso, Golchaggan and Tven, all localities in Inner Mongolia between one and two day journey from Kalgan. From there they pursued their missionary work, centered on medical and humanitarian assistance, extending their services across the Chahar and Inner Mongolian areas over the next two decades. In 1929 their missionary work was further extended to another station, Hadain Sume (Hadain Sume), and finally in 1930 to Chagan Sume, both locations of vital importance to the Danish expedition in 1938-1939. From these stations the network of medical service and salvation, of help and assistance, of lodgings and logistics, spread not only to the local Mongols and the few Mongolian converts, who usually stayed in the vicinity of the stations, but in large measure to Scandinavian travellers en route in the area. Such visits were carefully documented in the Swedish Mongol Mission's Magazine *Ljusglimtar från Mongoliet* (Flashes of light from Mongolia), along with current reports on the situa-



A Christian Mongol ringing the bell for Church service at the Swedish Mission station of Hadain Sume. About a hundred persons lived on the grounds of the mission station or nearby, among them many families, who worked and assisted the missionaries in multiple ways. Far from all were converts. Photo: Haslund, 1938.

tion in the area, the status as regards converts, and daily events, and were distributed among the congregations at home and abroad. Some issues were elaborated on in personal reports in a special letters page used in the magazine called *Darutifrån* (From out there). Consequently, when the internationally celebrated scientific explorer, the Swede Sven Hedin, announced his visit to the area and called for their help, the missionaries swiftly came to his assistance, as did the missionary Joel Eriksson when he was contacted on 26 November, 1929:

I received a letter from Larson asking me to meet with him and Dr. Hedin in Battaa Halgaa and bring them home with me afterwards. I did not like to say no although I was 36 miles west of there. Going through Durbet on the way, I was asked to introduce the Wang (Prince De Wang) and our friends there to Dr. Hedin and Larson. Finally I suggested they should visit our many mission stations in the area, which they gladly accepted, and we made a tour.³³

In fact the tour was planned by Hedin as part of his great Sino-Swedish expedition in 1929, the purpose of which was to select a suitable temple along a stretch of 112 miles to purchase for one of Hedin's American donors, and at the same time (conveniently) to enjoy the hospitality of the mission stations of the research area as guest houses for the nights, and Joel Eriksson's car as transport. Despite the admiration for Hedin, his views on the indigenous peoples and their religious practices were sometimes a challenge to his missionary hosts. For the medical doctor and missionary Eriksson, whose profession – and pietistic faith – were constantly confronted by the Buddhist lamas on matters of healing among the Mongols, this was not an easy task:

As you know, Dr. Hedin is at present interested in buying temples, I don't know what to say about this, but from an ethnographic point of view it probably makes sense, and I do not think that it can harm our interests; perhaps instead it will draw attention to the Mongols and our work among them. ... From Dr. Hedin's books I sometimes get the feeling that he admires the monasteries and Lamaism. I was therefore struck by his remark about a group of dirty priests one day outside a temple: "It is remarkable how that religion makes people ugly." I sincerely hope that he will not fail to see how Christianity can beautify these people" (Eriksson 1930, 1:8-9).

In a letter addressed to the mission station at Golchaggan, where they had been cordially received during their round trip to the monasteries, Hedin expressed his admiration for the devoted and brave missionaries, and in particular for Joel Eriksson:

He is a man of rare, great physical strength, of iron-hard energy and thorough knowledge. Through his work as physician among the Mongols he has gained a standing of infinite scope; he is so much the object of the natives' love, trust and admiration that even the robbers who ravage the area have left him alone. Recruiting him as a pathfinder, spokesman and pilot was like holding a hostage on board our small squadron of two cars (Hedin 1930b, 67).

The interaction between the Swedish missionaries and representatives of the "decidedly hyper-masculine adventurer milieu" (Sidenvall 2009) of the Scandinavian explorers was driven by a mutual interest in exploration, as much

as by mutual gains. Above all, it is remarkable that so many of the Swedish missionaries, women and men, participated wholeheartedly in the Scandinavian expeditions in the area and reported on them in their magazine. They appear to have had motives in common, and Sidenvall suggests that there was no sharp distinction between the missionaries and other male expatriates in northern China at the time when it came to their ideals of self-realization: "they participated in a common project of activism and self-making, the ultimate goal of which was independence and respectability, and eventually new social positions" (2009, 1).

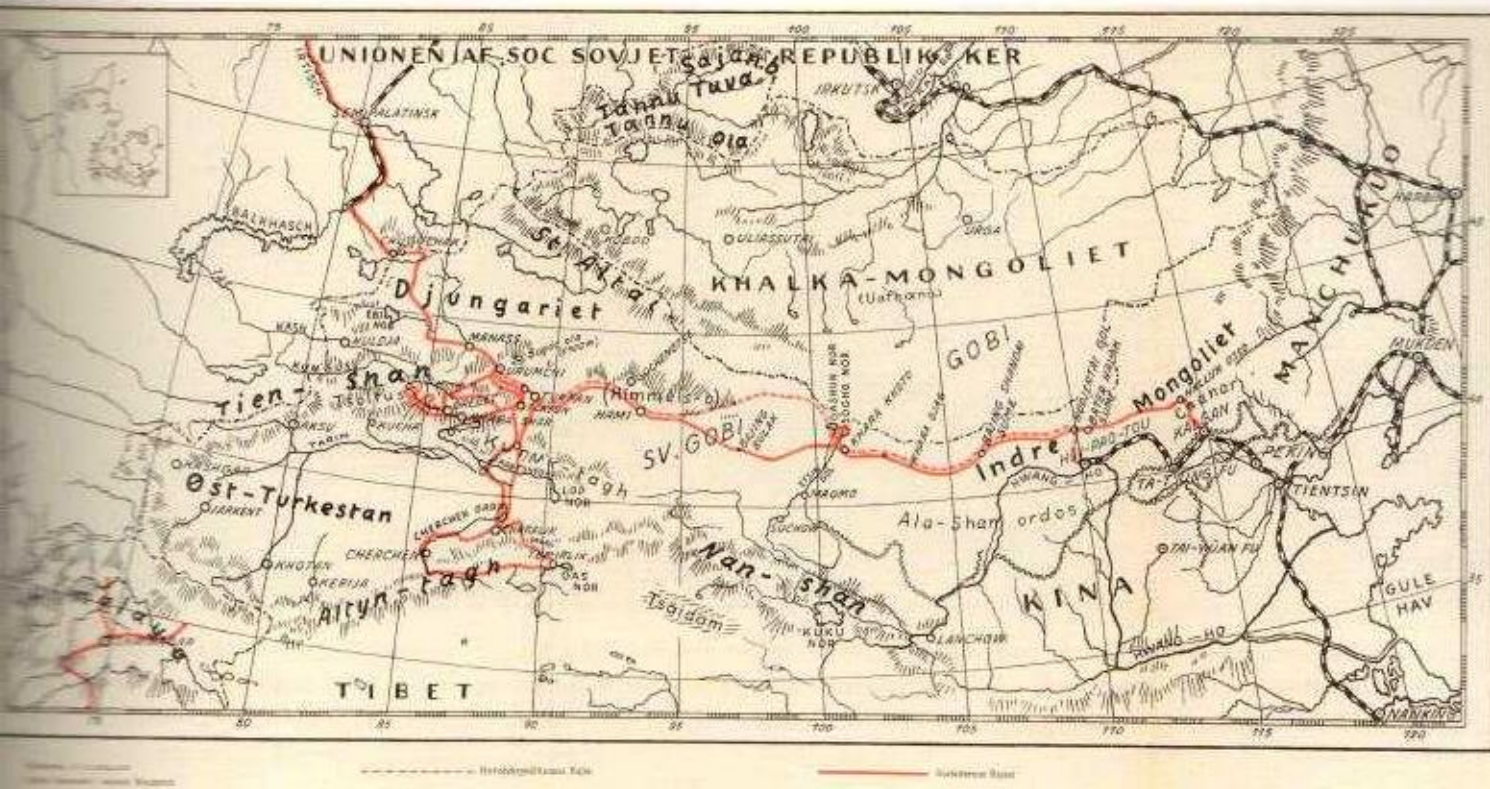
The rapid expansion of the Swedish missionary societies in the late 1880s to China (and to Palestine and the Congo) should be seen in combination with the effect of the general flight from poverty at home and the particular appeal to young persons of the lower classes of the kind of "missionary activism" propagated by Frederik Franson. This appeal was not only received well by the poor peasants and craftsmen who volunteered to join the missionary work; it also resonated with the middle class people who stayed behind and by whom the missionary activism was considered proper, courageous, and worthy of support, financially and otherwise. Consequently, in the case of China, the initial group of 20 men and women, who were dispatched from Sweden in 1893 were over the next seven years followed by 33 missionary candidates.³⁴

Caravans and comradeship: Exploring with Hedin

By 1927 Haslund had been living for four years running in Mongolia when a telegram reached him at Pao-t'ou on 1 February:

Meet the train to Kwei-hwa at Ta-t'ung-fu Thursday 1
Stop. Buy new toothbrush and be ready for long tour. Stop.
Great news. Stop. Larson.

Frans August Larson had been employed by the Swedish explorer Sven Hedin for his coming expedition as caravan leader and camping manager. In order to help organize provisions and equipment for the staff of 68 men and 30 camels, he encouraged Haslund to become his assistant. The Sino-Swedish expedition Part I was planned as a traditional Chinese-Mongolian caravan equipped to traverse the Gobi Desert to Edsinsol in Alashan as the first major stop, then to continue through the vast western area of the



Haslund's map of his travels with the Sino-Swedish Expedition from 1927-1930. China's largest province, the present Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China, formerly Sinkiang, or the more vague and imprecise East Turkestan, alternatively Chinese Turkestan, as used by Western travellers, has had the same form since the Qing Empire annexed the area in 1760. This "new territory" or "new frontier", as the Qing named the region, was squeezed in between Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, extending inside China to Tibet, Gansu and Qinghai; as such it was the heart of the old Silk Road and a hub of cultural and commercial crossroads, with a variety of ethnic groups, trade, and powerful empires (Starr 2004, 6-15). (From Haslund-Christensen, 1935.)

desert, the so-called Black Gobi, to the province of Sinkiang (Xinjiang) and its capital, Urumchi (Urumqi). From there sub-expeditions were to spread out to the areas south, east and west of the capital.

Caravan logistics was a highly complex affair, and given the magnitude of the present load, Larson had to find a reliable person. His first choice had been Georg Söderbom, a young colleague from his missionary network and the son of Larson's companion of his youth, Carl Söderbom. Georg had declined at first, and the choice then fell on Haslund, who happily accepted. Eventually Georg changed his mind and joined the caravan as an assistant with practical tasks - like Haslund, Born and raised in Kalgan, Söderbom was fluent in Chinese and Mongolian, and his innovative, original personality captivated everyone, including Haslund. Mutual respect and friendship grew between them and was revived a decade later during Haslund's expeditions to Inner Mongolia, when Georg Söderbom became a member of the Danish expedition.

While the negotiations with Hedin took place, Haslund wrote to his friend Ingeborg in Denmark:

One of Hedin's people came up here to ask me to join the expedition, which of course I would like very much [...] I cannot resist this wonderful adventure [...] I'll be away from civilization for two years. Eventually I'll go to Denmark in 1929, if alive.³⁵

Haslund received the contract on 1 March. It engaged him for one year at 400 SKK, with free accommodation plus food - equivalent to 12 Mexican dollars a day. "Mexican dollars" was the expression used in China for the large silver dollar coins similar to Mexican dollars, used in North China at the time.³⁶ As standard procedure for expeditions at the time, it was stated that all photos and all objects purchased were the property of the expedition, and that individual travel accounts could not be published until after two years of service.³⁷ In Peking, Haslund presented himself to Hedin,



The first team of scholars and workmen on the Sino-Swedish Expedition gathered before departure in June 1927. The Scandinavian members are seated behind the table next to Hedin to the left, except for Haslund (with hat) who sits in the middle of the group of Chinese scholars to the right. Photo: Paul Lieberentz, 1927. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

who recalled the meeting many years later in his usual melodramatic style:

Yes, it is true! I remember the day as if it were yesterday, when a smart, blond, blue-eyed young man with light and yet firm steps steered towards my table at the Wagon Lit in Peking, stood to attention and said: My name is Henning Haslund! His face glowed with joy and delight as if the setting winter's sun – or rather the distant Eastern sun – had shed its lustre on his figure (Hedin 1935a, 38)

The meeting was the beginning of a three-year period of expedition and caravan life under the leadership of Hedin – and beyond this of a life-long relationship between the two. Haslund was sent to Tientsin, the hub of commerce in China, to buy up the many provisions listed by Larson:

It was a hell of a job and I was devoid of all qualifications for such work. During my years in the wilderness I had travelled light, and from my first day in Mongolia I had realized that the less luggage, the fewer worries. Besides, experience had taught me that comfort in the wilderness is dependent on living the life of the people you stay with. But then again ... now there were 27 gentlemen to think of and accommodate (Haslund 1935, 18).

On 20 March the task was accomplished: food and equipment worth \$20,000 – 40,000 kilos in weight – were packed on the train to Pao-t'ou, ready to be loaded on 30 camels. The train made a stop in Peking, where the Danish Legation gave a farewell dinner; the Minister H. Kauffmann was on the spot and presented Haslund with one of the Legation's *Dannebrog* (the Danish national flag) to hoist during the expedition.

The journey ahead had far-reaching consequences for Haslund and laid down his future path. But he knew little of all this, when he wrote to Ingeborg earlier that month, although he did anticipate a future on the move, and was open to multiple options after the expedition:

When the expedition is finished, presumably in two years I'll come home for a short holiday. But what I will do afterwards depends on fortune. Everything changes so fast here in China that no one can tell what the situation will be like in two years; if good – then I may get a nice offer from my old company; if really good, I plan to exploit my chances for my own. Maybe I'll even start my own expedition to Mongolia, Danish-Swedish, or maybe I'll settle as a farmer in England, or Denmark, or Sweden, or I'll go to South Africa on another expedition, or maybe I'll find a small gate to Sinkiang or Tibet ... but why worry when everything is predestined by the gods.³⁶



Packing provisions in Pao-t'ou. As assistant to camp manager Frans Jönsson, Haslund was employed to buy and organise the purchase of 40,000 kilos of provisions and equipment for the expedition. Photo: Paul Lieberantz, 1927. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

Before we proceed, let us first take a look at the man who persuaded Haslund to join the expedition, the already-famous Swedish explorer Sven Hedin, the most prominent traveller in Central and Inner Asia at the time. His impact on the protagonist as mentor and friend was significant and remained so all through his life, although at times their relationship suffered from Hedin's nationalist-conservative and later on strong pro-German sympathies before and during World War II. In the early working years as a member of the Sino-Swedish expedition, however, Haslund was ignorant of Hedin's political views, and was thoroughly impressed by "Chief" Hedin's authority and charisma, as demonstrated in the respectful and loyal tone of their field correspondence. Hedin, for his part, embraced Haslund as an enthusiastic and energetic member of the expedition, and was taken by his charm. As we shall see, he assigned him responsible tasks that laid the foundations for skills and competencies of which Haslund could make professional use later in life.

Hedin - pathfinder and cartographer

Born in 1865 into a wealthy, conservative Stockholm family, Hedin from early on was given the best possible education. His interest in geography and Central Asia was fostered during his stay in Baku 1885-86, where he worked as



Haslund was excited to become a member of Sven Hedin's expedition. "I long to be away, and look forward to 700 nights in the breath-taking tranquility of the desert", Haslund wrote to his friend Ingeborg in Denmark. Photo: Paul Lieberantz, 1927. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

an assistant to a Swedish engineer, while simultaneously studying Russian and Persian, languages he used during several journeys to Persia over the next few years. Later he took up geography as a university subject with the legendary professor of geography and Central Asia specialist Ferdinand von Richthofen in Berlin; and at the age of 27 he received his doctorate in geography and cartography from the University of Halle for a thesis based on his observations of the Demavend, the highest mountain in Iran.⁴⁰ He conducted three one-man expeditions to Central Asia in the years between 1894 and 1909: twice to the Takla Makan Desert in Central East Turkestan (the present Xinjiang), first in 1894-97 and again in 1899-1902, during which time he conducted specific excavations near the lake Lop Nor in the eastern part of East Turkestan; then finally to Tibet in 1906-08, where he explored the sources of the Brahmaputra and Indus rivers, mapped part of the Tibetan high plateau and, controversially at the time, proved the existence of a mountain range, the Trans-Himalaya which led to a serious dispute between Hedin and the Royal Geographical Society in London.⁴¹

In Copenhagen, on the contrary, this extraordinary discovery prompted an invitation to give a lecture at the Danish Geographical Society on 27 April 1909, on which occasion Hedin was granted honorary membership of the Society. Everyone of importance in Copenhagen was present,



Sven Hedin in the Takla Makan between 1899-1902. Schooled in geography and cartography Hedin conducted three one-man expeditions to Central Asia and, later, a series of expeditions to Tibet. His studies of the Takla Makan Desert in former Eastern Turkestan placed him in the company of famous explorers like Paul Pelliot, Albert Le Coq and Aurel Stein, who along with the Russians Przevalsky and Koslov, had travelled the same region. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

from the King and members of the Royal Family to members of the Government, ambassadors, etc., to greet Sven Hedin, flanked by his two sisters Clara and Alma. After his lecture on his journey to Tibet, the Secretary of the Society, the former explorer of the High Pamirs in 1896-99, Professor Ole Olufsen,⁴² saluted the guest as follows:

Again and again Dr. Hedin has gone out on new geographical explorations in Central Asia and continuously he returns happy and well with new great results, to the honour of himself, his fatherland and science [...]

Other travellers have been there before in this Innermost Asia, but it is Hedin whose indefatigable energy has kept alive the interest in research on Central Asia, and it is to his credit that countries such as East Turkestan and Tibet ... now appear in their true size and relief on the part of the globe which was before almost as blank as a chicken's egg (Olufsen 1910, 54).

The "other travelers" mentioned by Olufsen included the British Aurel Stein, the French Paul Pelliot, the German Albert Le Coq, and some of the Russian explorers previously mentioned, Koslov and Przevalsky in particular. Along with Hedin, they were considered to belong to the club of celebrity explorers – or by some as belonging to the "noto-

rious" group of men (Hopkirk 1987) who on behalf of the native countries during the "Great Game of Asia" explored, mapped, deciphered (and often removed) treasures from the forgotten cities along the Silk Road and from the region known as East Turkestan.⁴³ For these deeds they were honoured worldwide, as they were for their contributions to Central Asian and Chinese studies in the years to come. For the Chinese, on whose territories most of the pillaging took place, these activities were always contentious.

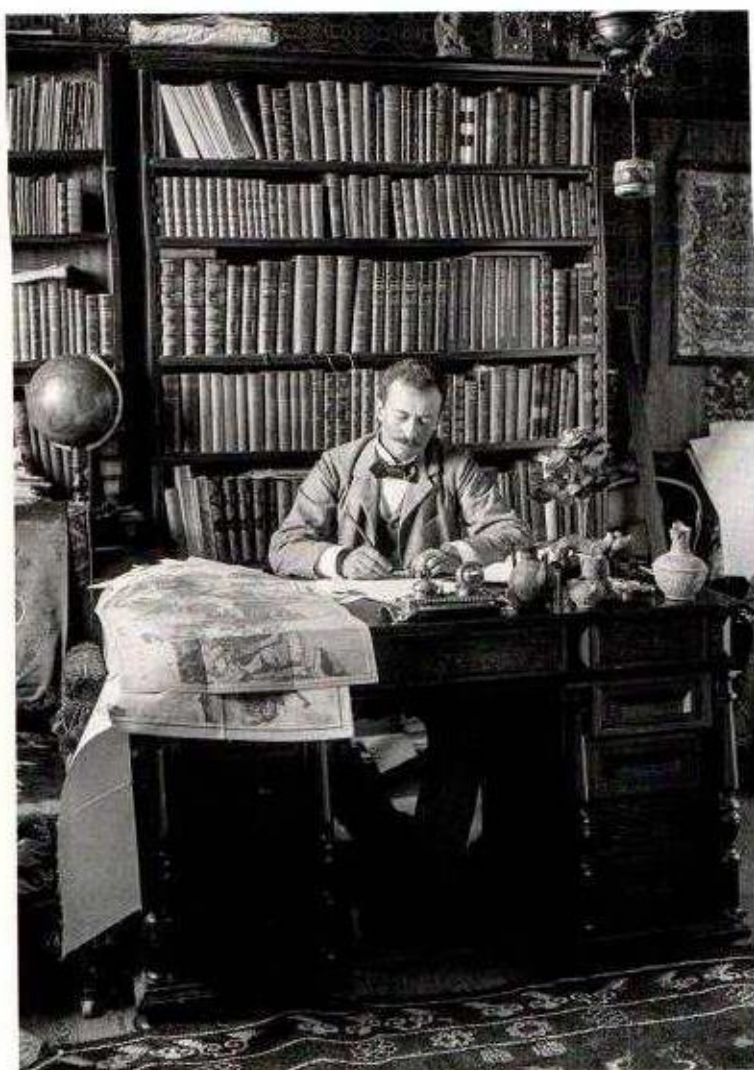
Hedin was in many ways a controversial figure, not only in scientific circles. His active interest in society combined with his ultra-conservative views led to public controversies at home with several prominent Swedes.⁴⁴ Siding with Germany after World War I, he reported from the western front to Swedish newspapers, openly proclaiming his sympathy with what he called the "German cause", i.e. the loss of large land territories after the German defeat and expressing his admiration for the leader of the Nazi Party, Adolf Hitler. Hedin's growing sympathies created ambivalence towards him both at home and internationally, and from this period on and throughout World War II Hedin was branded by the general public as a *persona non grata*. However, the scientists formerly employed on his Sino-Swedish expedition stayed faithful to the publishing project which continued during the war years, and t

in's authority in it, but they also strongly disagreed with him politically and distanced themselves from him during periods, including his most loyal editor of the scientific proceedings, Gösta Montell. The physician David Odelberg, the archaeologist Folke Bergmann and Haslund likewise marked their distance from Hedin and engaged in resistance movements in Denmark and Norway while at the same time managing to fulfil their obligations to the scientific proceedings (Odelberg 2008, 547, 571).

Dedicated to the fate of Sweden in what he anticipated would be a German-ruled Europe, Hedin travelled to Berlin before and during the war years many times and met prominent politicians of the Nazi party, among them Hitler himself, and reported on these meetings in Swedish newspapers - and secretly to the Swedish Government. Although he was roundly criticized in the press, he was never rejected in Sweden, as we shall see in the following; from the end of the war in 1945 he withdrew from the public view until his death in 1952. From his large desk in a prominent apartment in Norr Mäbler-Strand in Stockholm, where he lived with his three sisters, he devoted his time to the publication of the scholarly results of the Sino-Swedish expedition. The relationship with his fellow scholars on the expedition, mentioned above, was partly rekindled, especially with Gösta Montell, who faithfully continued with the publication project. Hedin and the Swedish scholars continuously received funding for their scientific publications from the Swedish Royal Court and the State until 1943, after which private donors took over.

Despite the many disputes, prior to his open sympathy for Hitler, Hedin had received the highest honorary titles for his scientific reports, and the noble title of Baron in his homeland. To the general public in Sweden (and Europe) Hedin's early image personified the individual explorer's struggle and genius - a cherished ideal in the early twentieth century. He became a popular figure, a hero, and received enthusiastic admiration from his readers. His ability to combine "scientific credibility with accessibility" (Sörlin 2006, 209) throughout his extensive works made him a personifying national figure and an object of financial support from both Parliament and the Royal Court.

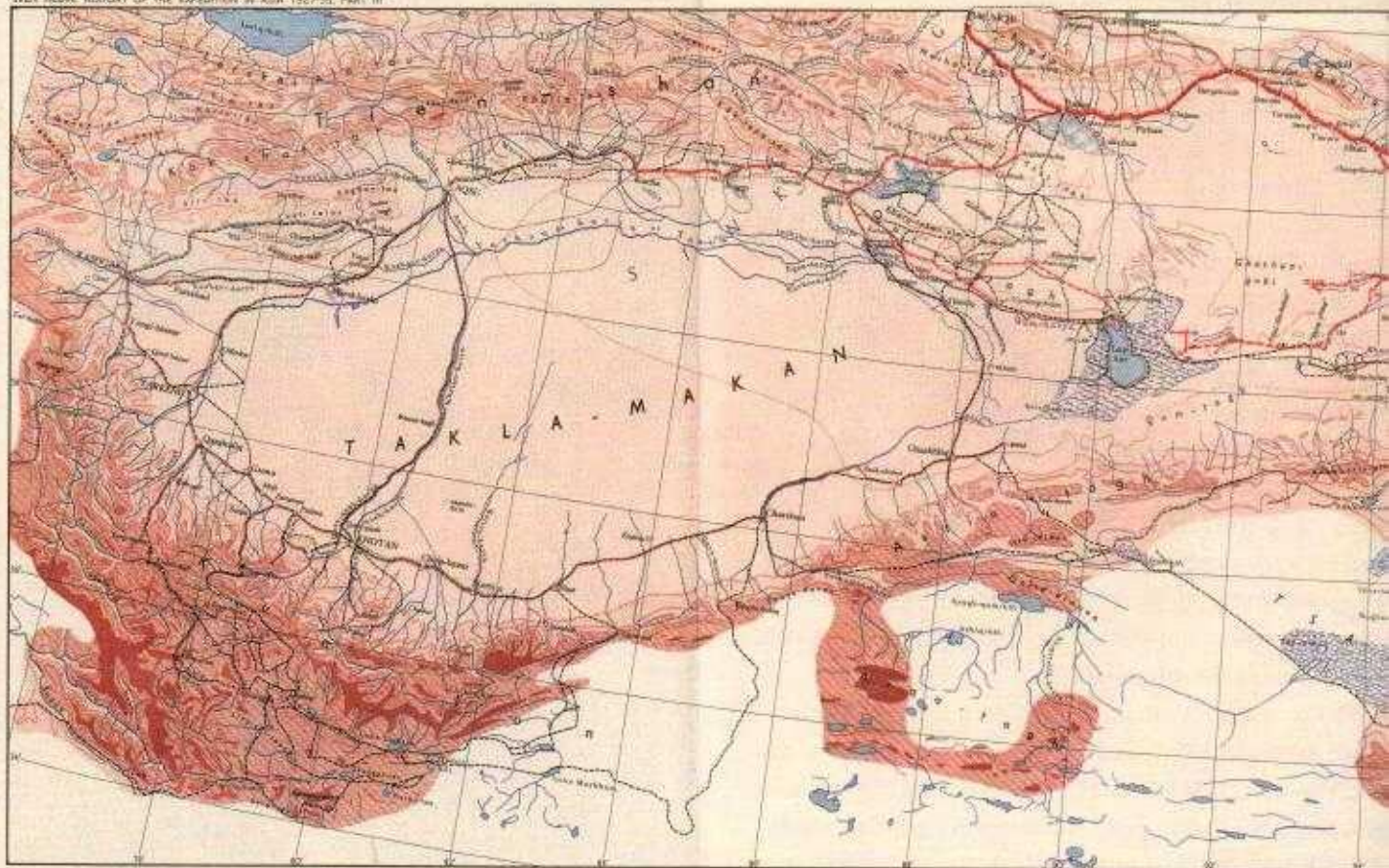
Hedin was extremely hard-working and published numerous books and articles on his travels. The results of his expeditions to Tibet, for example, appeared in nine volumes between 1917 and 1922, and proved one of the most comprehensive scientific publications ever produced in Sweden (Montell 1965, 18). While his travel accounts were



Hedin behind his desk in his private home in Stockholm. The desk is today exhibited in the library of the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm. Hedin's work effort was enormous. He published around 60 books, amounting to about 25,000 printed pages. Add to this about 50,000 letters and thousands of maps and drawings, most of which are located at the Sven Hedin Foundation in the Swedish National Archives in Stockholm. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

appreciated by scholars and laymen for their mixture of scientific description, excitement and travel lore, Hedin's scholarly results were questioned by many people in his time (Sörlin 2006). A recent thesis which examines the Sino-Swedish collaborations during the first third of the twentieth century has given Hedin's controversial scholarly image a more positive profile (Romgaard 2013). As part of the general attention of Chinese scholars in the 1990s to the results of Western explorers in the beginning of the century in China, Romgaard argues, Hedin's works became the object of serious academic interest. Hedin's explor-

SVEN HEDIN: HISTORY OF THE EXPEDITION IN ASIA 1927-35, PART III



The official map of the routes made on the Sino-Swedish Expedition from 1927-1935, the largest and most comprehensive expedition in its time through Inner Mongolia, China proper and Tibet in 1927-1935. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

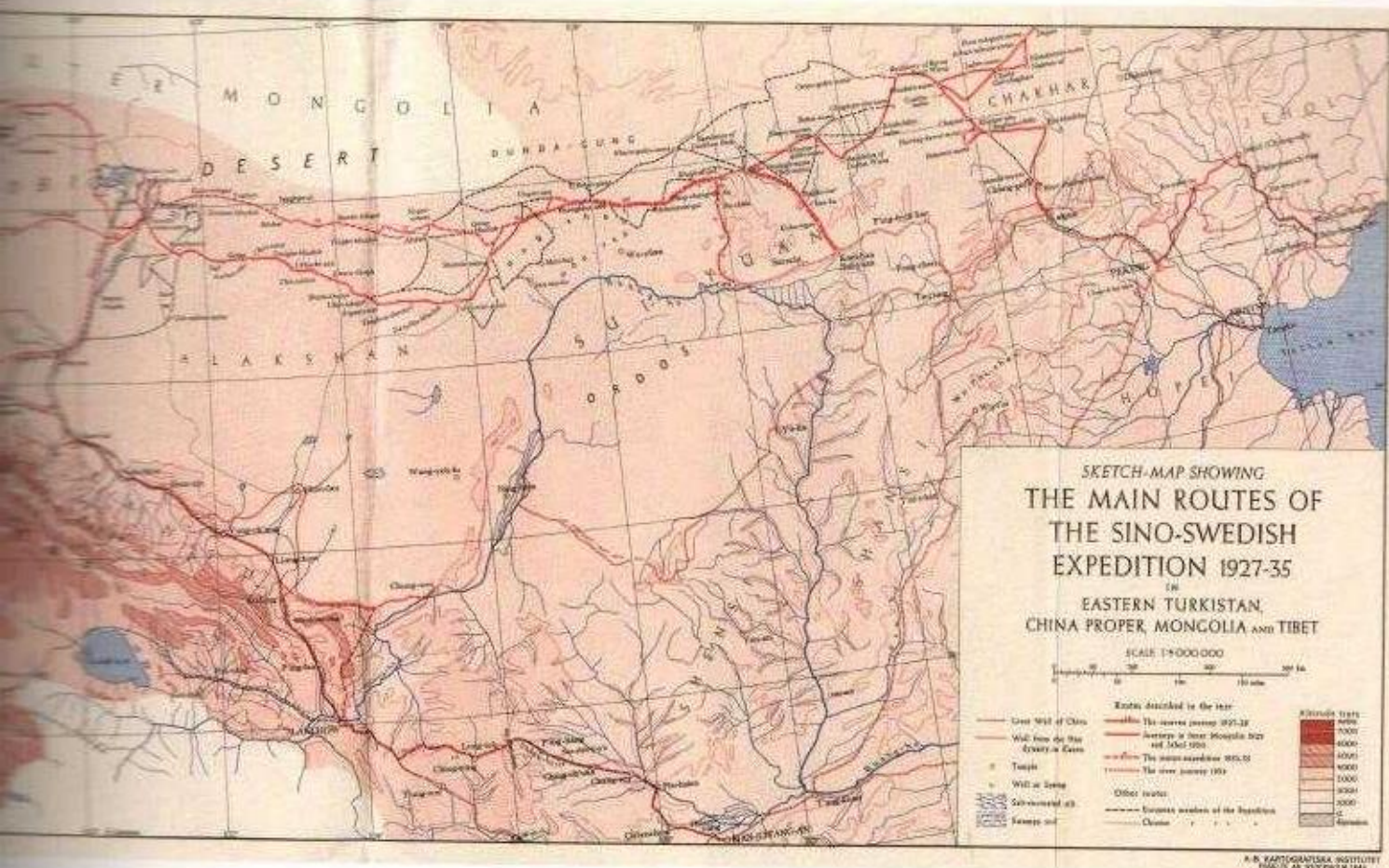
ations of the archaeology and geology of the country in particular were critically examined and this led to the translation of large numbers of his books and reports into Chinese, as well as several biographies of Hedin (Romgard 2013, 34).

The Sino-Swedish expedition⁴⁵

In 1926 Hedin returned to China to prepare for a new expedition after 18 years of absence from Asia, almost 30 years after his first visit to Peking in 1897. Hedin had been back for a short sojourn in 1923, however, passing through China and Mongolia on his return trip from America in 1922-1923. On this occasion Hedin discussed his plans for a caravan expedition with Frans August Larson, who offered Hedin a lift in his car up to Urga and confirmed that he would be at Hedin's service in his planning. Hedin's aspiration to lead a large-scale interdisciplinary expedition to

Inner Asia had developed over the years after World War I. The basic ideas and scholarly schemes did not come out of the blue; they should be seen as Hedin's aspirations to form a role for himself within the larger picture of existing Sino-Swedish scientific relations, and to use the good will anticipated from the Chinese government for such an endeavour founded on the Sino-Swedish scientific relations that had existed since the turn of the century (Romgard 2013).

In China the Swedish geologist J. G. Andersson, the very successful head of the Geological Survey of China since 1916, had plans to lead an archaeological expedition to the west after his involvement with the survey in 1926. Upon Hedin's arrival in Peking, however, he decided to abort his own plans and to back Hedin instead by actively supporting his position (and the interests of Andersson's important Chinese fellow scholars) in the demanding negotiations with the Chinese Government. As pointed out by Romgard, Hedin's expedition plans not only originated within



Sven Hedin with sketchbook. On his expeditions to Eastern Turkestan and Tibet before and after the turn of the twentieth century, Hedin travelled alone as was customary among explorers at the time. Assisted by local servants and guides, the tasks were multifaceted and besides mapping, which was his primary subject, included a sea of observations on botanical, geographical and ethnographical fields. Hedin preferred sketching to photography when it came to landscapes and peoples along his way. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.



The Batkhalaag Monastery (in written Mongolian Batu-khagalgai, meaning "the monastery of the strong gate"; in Chinese: Pai-ling-miao, meaning "the temple of the larks") from afar, the enormous and impressive temple-and-monastery city, which according to Haslund housed more than 1500 monks at the time. During the expedition, while waiting at Hodjertai-gol, the members explored the vicinity and visited the Batkhalaag Monastery during the Maidari Festivals, the celebrations of the Buddhist Messiah. Photographer unknown.

Jolros Lama Hutuktu, the living Buddha, in his reception room at Batkhalaag Monastery. On their departure from the monastery, the expedition, and Haslund in particular, were blessed by the Hutuktu with good luck wishes for their continued journey, and with *zajag* "destiny" or "happiness of travel". Haslund later named his travel book of the journey with this concept. Photo: Paul Lieberentz, 1922. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

overall framework of existing Sino-Swedish scholarly relations, but were to be seen as a continuation of the existing collaborations (2013, 174ff). In Hedin's field reports, which are the main source for the Sino-Swedish expedition, this particular affiliation is not elaborated, but played down somewhat, as one might expect.

During Hedin's intensive travel in Germany in the years following World War I, he tried to muster interest in and funding for his ideas by cultivating his personal relationships with German scientists and potential donors. He found both in Professor Hugo Junkers, a specialist in aviation, and in Deutsche Lufthansa, which wanted to examine the possibilities for opening a flight route between Berlin and Peking-Shanghai.

Organizing a scientific expedition in the decade following World War I, Hedin realized, would be an entirely different matter from his earlier expeditions, the latest of which had gone to Tibet (1906-1908). By about the turn of

the century, the age of the great discoveries was in general over, as was the mapping of unknown territories, Hedin's main task with his earlier expeditions. Like most geographical explorers up to this time, Hedin had conducted his expeditions alone, assisted by local servants and guides. As was the practice, mapping was followed up by observations and surveys in numerous other fields. This was quite a burden for the lone explorer:

On my earlier expeditions I was always the sole European, and I was obliged to make all the scholarly observations and collections myself. [...] My work then comprised mapping; the collection of petrographic samples and plants; astronomical observations; the keeping of a meteorological journal; questioning the population about the geography of the country, its products, its commerce, roads and other details; the measurement of altitudes with aneroid and hypsometer; and finally the photographing and drawing of panoramas.



The audience waits for the *Zam* dances in the great assembly courtyard of the Batkhalaag Monastery, a kind of religious theatre with monks dressed up in magnificent costumes and frightening masks, symbolising gods or aspects of gods and "good and evil", a popular performance, originating in a mix of pre-Buddhist and Buddhist traditions. They perform a vivid dance, accompanied by energetic sounds of drums, cymbals and trumpets, while the audience watches in excitement and awe. The climax of the *Zam* performances was the entrance of the *gurtum*, half shaman and half Buddhist priest. Although always a layman, a monastery often has a resident *gurtum*, and like the *gurtum* at Batkhalaag, he is the most feared and dangerous figure at the *Zam* dances. Photos: Paul Lieberentz, 1927. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

mas, landscapes, temples, racial types, and so on (Hedin 1943a).

Moreover, with the growing specialization of the natural sciences after World War I, a one-man expedition was no longer adequate to the many, varied research tasks, and he had to adapt accordingly. Large-scale expeditions required experts in areas like geography, geology, meteorology, archaeology, botany, ethnography and others, and researchers in such disciplines were engaged, primarily in Sweden.

The expedition route was to go from Peking to Urumqi in the province of Sinkiang in North West China, an area

relatively well described by earlier travellers, particularly the Russian explorers; only this time there would be more specific research in the region, and the many participants would be able to cover large areas. Besides the many local inhabitants hired as camel men, cooks and servants, counting 21 Mongolian caravan men and 43 servants of mixed indigenous origin in the first year, over the eight-year period of the expedition, 1927-1935, Hedin employed a total of 45 participants in the field (14 Swedes, 2 Danes, 1 Russian, 1 Estonian, 12 Germans and 15 Chinese), more than 30 of whom were acknowledged scholars. The expedition's full title was *The Sino-Swedish Scientific Expedition to the North West*



The expedition by the river Edsingol, in the homeland of the Edsina Torgut Mongols. They stayed for almost 5 weeks as guests of the Torgut royal family on the edge of the Black Gobi and conducted many observations. Haslund assisted Hedin and the scholars in their explorations on and near the river. Haslund, in fact, built the boat and he was credited with it by Hedin. The Torgut Prince with his characteristic round cap watches from the riverbank. Photo: Paul Lieberentz, 1927. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

Territories of China, popularly known as “the wandering university” and was the single most comprehensive expedition of its kind in China at the time.

For the first time, Hedin was not alone. As previously said, the urgent need for organization changed Hedin’s role from lone explorer to incontestable leader and ever-present coordinator: “I was the headquarters, and at various times the headquarters was in Urumchi and Peking, in Nanking, in Chicago or Stockholm, twice on the Pacific and twice on the Atlantic Ocean. But the telegraph, wherever it existed, enabled me to be in constant contact with the various parts of the expedition” (Hedin 1942, 308). The true coordinator, however, was Hedin’s sister Alma, who saw to it that telegrams, letters, reports and plans were distributed to all the expedition members and “headquarters” Hedin; she was also in charge of the expedition’s expenses as a vital, strict bookkeeper presiding over each and every manoeuvre of the expedition from the Hedin family home in Stockholm.

The expedition operation fell into three main parts: Part I took place in 1927–1928, and its main objective was to examine the conditions for founding an airline between Berlin and Peking, for which the expedition received funding from Deutsche Lufthansa. This involved 11 German aviation specialists (pilots and technicians) with a military background. The route ran from Peking in the east to Urumqi in the west – via the Gobi Desert – and was traversed by a traditional camel caravan. Along the way, geological, archaeological, meteorological, topographical, and physical anthropology surveys were conducted by a mix of Chinese and Swedish members (Hedin 1943a; Skottsborg 1951, 163–164). The 15 Chinese scientists were enrolled in the

expedition by order of the Chinese Government, which had strongly opposed the expedition and its aviation objectives in the first place; in fact they had regarded the plan, which involved the precise mapping of suitable locations for fuel depots along the future flight route, as untimely foreign intervention or sheer espionage. Hedin, aided by Andersson, was forced to engage in critical day-to-day negotiations with the government over a period of six months which postponed the start of the expedition by the same amount of time. The growing mistrust of the Chinese politicians and leading Chinese scholars forced Hedin seriously to discuss a demand for Chinese ownership of the entire expedition. Finally, student riots broke out against Hedin in Peking, with accusations of Bolshevism (sic!) and finally led to the intervention of Sweden via the Swedish ambassador. The drama ended with Hedin’s acceptance of the “mission” (the term “expedition” was dismissed as imperialistic and denigrating) as a joint venture of Chinese and Swedish scholars – and of a leadership shared by Sven Hedin and the Professor of History Siu Ping-ch’ang as stipulated in the contract. In other words, it was dubbed a joint “mission-expedition”, the results of which were later to be examined by a committee in Peking. The finding would go primarily to Chinese scholarly institutions and secondarily to Sweden for further examination, and duplicates or copies could be taken, if possible, to Sweden. The costs of the expedition, including the salaries of the Chinese scholars, were the responsibility of Hedin (Hedin 1943a; Skottsborg 1951, 165–166; Romgard 2013, 211ff).

The second part of the expedition, Part II, took place in 1928–1933, with the field work largely carried out by Swe-

ish scholars, but with a fair number of Chinese scholars participating. The Chinese Government had finally aborted the aviation project altogether, and had sent the Germans home, and with them the funding from Deutsche Luft Hansa. The costs for this period were secured first by the Swedish State and King, and thereafter by private donors, among them a Swedish-American millionaire, Vincent Bendix, from Chicago, whose liberal donations secured the expedition's comprehensive collection of ethnographic objects, later to benefit the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm (Montell 1951; Linée 1965). Over a period of five years scholarly fieldwork was carried out from Tibet and Xinjiang in the west, over the Edsingol on the edge of the Gobi Desert in central north China, to Peking in the east. This was definitely the expedition's most fruitful period, although greatly affected from time to time by the tense political situation between the Chinese national government and its governors in Xinjiang, who regularly opposed the expedition and Republican China by all means possible. (Cf. Millward & Perdue 2004, 57-62. Lattimore 1962, 151-154).

The last part, Part III, took the original route of Part I, from Peking to Urumqi through the Gobi, but this time by automobile and supported by the (new) Chinese Government headed by Chiang Kai-shek. The aim was "to investigate and then submit to the Government in Nanking proposals concerning the laying of two motor-car roads between China proper and the province of Sinkiang" (Hedin 1943a). Besides this, many research tasks were undertaken by a joint staff of Swedes and Chinese, among these the comprehensive collection of religious artefacts and the initial scientific work on this material. After sixteen months the expedition party returned to Nanking in February 1935, and this marked the end of the expedition. The further work on the research material was carried out in China during many months in cooperation with Chinese, Tibetan, and Mongolian specialists, as were the comprehensive logistical tasks with regard to the collections and their further transport to Sweden. The wide-ranging collections of ethnographic objects included thousands of objects related to Lamaism, and daily objects as well as ritual objects from China, Mongolia, Tibet and Turkestan. These were transferred to the State Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm, where they were processed by specialists over the years ahead (Montell 1951, 177).⁴⁶

The subsequent publication project was ambitious, and extraordinary in its kind. The series *Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North Western Provinces of China under the Lead-*

ership of Dr. Sven Hedin was to comprise fifty-six volumes divided into the following themes: Geography I, Geodesy II, Geology III, Palaeobotany IV, Invertebrate Palaeontology V, Vertebrate Palaeontology VI, Archaeology VII, Ethnography VIII, Meteorology IX, Zoology X, and Botany XI. Within each theme more publications were issued. By 1951 (one year before Hedin's death), thirty-five of the planned volumes were available (Montell 1951, 178-181) and in 1997 the series was completed with the appearance of the last volume (56) (Jarring 1997). The first funding came from the Swedish Academy of Sciences and was the result of a recommendation from the Swedish King to the Academy, which finally disbursed half the requested amount, SSK 300,000, over a period of six years. Additional support after 1943, when the public sources had been exhausted, came from a number of private donors in Sweden and America, from individual grants from the Swedish Research Council and the corresponding research council of the Danish state, the Rask-Ørsted Foundation, which supported the publication of volume 21, VIII (Ethnography): *The Music of the Mongols*, the sound recordings and attending documentation collected by Haslund on his first expedition to Eastern Mongolia in 1936-1937, his so-called Collection II of recorded music. Besides Haslund's weighty chapter "On the Trail of Ancient Mongol Tunes" and an introduction by Hedin, the volume has contributions from the musicologist Ernst Emsheimer and the philologist Kaare Grønbech. The recordings made on the Sino-Swedish expedition between 1928 and 1929, Haslund's Collection I, was worked on by him and others upon his return to Sweden as we shall see in chapter 3. It was never published.

The official travel accounts of the expedition, based on correspondence, diaries and field reports, were incorporated into the series in volumes 23-26, the first three of which Hedin himself edited (Hedin 1943a, 1943b and 1944), while the archaeologist Folke Bergman edited volume 26 (1945) including the field reports on Archaeology (Folke Bergman), Geology (Gerhard Bexell), Palaeontology (Birger Bohlin), and Ethnography (Gösta Montell). Individual travel accounts appeared after some years and to the official, scholarly field reports we can add the personal contributions, such as Haslund's *Zajagan* (1935) [Men and Gods in Mongolia 1935], Gösta Montell's *Våra vänner på stäppen* [Our Friends on the Steppe] (1934), Fritz Mühlenweg's *Mit Sven Hedin zu den Torgut-Mongolen* [With Sven Hedin to the Torgut-Mongols] (1935), Georg Söderbom's *Bortom kinesiska muren* [Beyond the Chinese wall] (1954), and Frans August Larson's *Bland vargar*





Against the perfect background of two beautiful Mongolian travel tents, Haslund assists the German film photographer Paul Lieberentz at the camera in the making of the documentary of the expedition. Photo: Paul Lieberentz, 1927. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

...were I Mongoliet [Among Wolves and Robbers in Mongolia] (1952). Hedin himself contributed to the genre with *Åter till Asien - min expedition* [Back to Asia - my Expedition] (1927-1930) and *Gobiörkenens gåtor* [The Riddles of the Gobi Desert] (1930a).

From caravan man to research assistant

During the first year of the expedition, Haslund stood the best as caravan man: the opportunities for his particular qualities – practicality, logistical skills and courage – were plentiful. On several occasions he was tasked with organising the caravan and leading it through terrain that was both geographically and politically critical. The most dangerous undertaking was the journey out of Edsingol through the Black Gobi to Hami. The passage was organised in three columns: the largest, with 127 camels, was to advance along the northern edge of the desert, led by Larsson; the second column, with 30 camels, led by the Swedish scholars Bergman and Norin, was to follow the southern edge of the desert; and finally, the third column was to pass through the very heart of the desert, and was Haslund's responsibility. Accompanied by the German meteorologists Maude, Dettemann, Hempel, and Kaul, whose tasks were

to make astronomical observations for the aviation project, this crossing was regarded as the most problematic, in terms of both the climatic conditions and the scarcity of water. Haslund carefully laid a plan and decided to use only 24 camels and no servants except two Mongolian pathfinders. From each camel he removed 50 kilos of load and replaced this with camel food. Haslund anticipated that the crossing would take 25 days, but the route was unfamiliar, with only two waterholes along the road of whose precise location they had no knowledge. The crossing was rougher than expected, but after 28 days they safely reached the outskirts of Hami – only to be arrested by a group of soldiers belonging to the ruling Governor Yang Tseng-Hsien (Yang Zengxin) of Xinjiang. Although he was relieved to have come through, the situation was critical, as Haslund wrote to Hedin:

Dear Doctor,

We arrived here at Hami on 11 December after having been detained at the village of Miao Goe [...] we had a long argument about our weapons and finally reached a compromise: that all weapons and ammunition were to be packed in a chest guarded by the Mongol soldiers here in our compound in Hami [...] the few letters we have received have all been censored [...] Everybody seems very friendly, yet one feels that something is wrong and we are not wanted here [...] Information from two days ago has it that the authorities' mistrust is towards our Chinese members – but when the Doctor arrives, I'm sure everything will be fine.⁴⁷

The Sino-Swedish expedition was a considerable operation: to accommodate the 45 field scholars employed over the years, it took 21 Mongolian caravan men and 43 servants, plus a varying number of locally employed cooks and camel men. The helpers were paid in the currency of the day, Mexican dollars. Hedin and dog waits behind the box of money for the workers to come and collect their wages. He is flanked by Söderbom and Larson to the right and Hummel and Haslund to the left. Photo: Paul Lieberentz, 1927. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

The physical struggles of the journey through the Black Gobi were soon overshadowed by the massive resistance from the local Chinese authorities. After some weeks of patience and diplomatic ingenuity on the part of the expedi-

tion – for which Haslund deserved a fair part of the credit – the parties were reconciled for a while, which gave the expedition a breathing space and time to work. However, the political tensions in the region were a constant threat to the agenda of the expedition. These were caused by the unstable relationships between Xinjiang's various ethnic groups, who had rebelled against the "imperialism" of the new nationalist China from the start, and the Chinese authorities. Although Governor Yang had managed so far to balance the conflicts among the ethnic groups, the fear of an outbreak of civil war and uprisings made him exercise strict control:

[He] proved skillful [...] at balancing the many interests in Xinjiang through cronyism and surveillance. He played off the ethnic groups of Kazaks, Mongols, Tungans and Uyghurs and regional cliques [...] against one another [and] kept an eye on everyone through a wide-ranging system of informants (Millward & Tursun 2004, 70-71).

The very existence of a large group of mixed Chinese and foreign scholars – heavily armed too – with permission from the central government to engage in scholarly research all over Xinjiang was bound to cause suspicion. After one month's captivity, Haslund and his column were escorted by Yang's soldiers out of Hami to Urumqi, where they came under the direct protection (and control) of the Governor; as indicated above, the parties came to a certain understanding, and from that time onwards Yang supported the expedition until his assassination in July 1928⁴⁸ (Haslund 1935, 118). For Yang, no doubt, his attitude of ac-



The 62-year old Hedin suffered from time to time of kidney stone attacks after which he needed rest and care. Hedin receives a local dignitary in his travel tent while Haslund waits on them. Photo: Paul Lieberentz, 1927. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

ceptance may also have been a way to contain the activities of the expedition. It is obvious from the correspondence of the expedition members that their letters were constantly censored, and that their movements were closely monitored by Yang's soldiers. After Yang's death in July 1928, his successor Jin Shuren became a far more difficult counterpart, who constantly tried to obstruct the expedition plans, which finally led to their departure from Xinjiang in the autumn of 1929 (Hedin 1943a, 28-30).

By the end of February 1928 the expedition members



Standing in the centre surrounded by his officials is Governor Yang Tseng-Hsien, the Chinese head official of Xinjiang between 1912 and 1928, welcoming the Hedin expedition to Urumqi. After severe initial problems, Yang supported Hedin's expedition and its members. To the right Hedin's profile is just visible and to the left Haslund, wearing a hat. Xinjiang was loaded with tensions from the conflicts between the many different ethnic groups in the province, but Yang managed to balance the power struggles, not necessarily with diplomacy. He was loyal to Chinese authority on the outside, but ran the province independently as an autocracy after his own fashion, according to Millward & Tursun 2004, 68-69. Photo: Paul Lieberentz, 1927. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.



Haslund and Bergman resting in front of their travel tent. Haslund assisted Swedish archaeologist Folke Bergman on his special archeological mission, a journey of more than six months' surveys across the Tarim Basin and further on to the northern plateau of Tibet in the foothills of the Altyn Tag Mountains. It was a tough and dangerous travel route which brought the two men close together. Photo: Folke Bergman, 1928. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

gathered again in Urumqi, and Governor Yang granted permission for the expedition to initiate work. Soon the members scattered in different directions in pursuit of new tasks. With a renewal of his contract and a small raise, Haslund left Urumqi on 13 March to accompany the Swedish archaeologist Folke Bergman on a survey to the northern plateau of Tibet in the foothills of the Altyn Tag Mountains.

This was a journey of nearly six months, during which the two men were brought closely together. From Bergman's field report (1945, 27-70) and Haslund's *Zajagan* (1935, 1945), we have the account of the physical ordeals they underwent: the exhausting marches through the Tarim Basin and the desert beyond, and the equally tough and

dangerous ascent to the village of Temerlik at the lake Cas Nor on the Tibetan plateau. Although he suffered from serious breathing problems in the thin air, Haslund was described by Bergman as "a first-class pathfinder and a good organizer of tricky caravans in the mountains" (1945, 47-48). In the small oasis villages along the way in Singer, Shindi, and Charkhliq, where they enjoyed longer stays, they were hospitably received by the local "Sarts" (the present-days Uyghurs),⁴⁹ and immersed themselves in the romance of quiet oasis life: "We were totally enchanted by the place (...) so we put the tired camels out to grass in the nearby mountains to the south and enjoyed the feeling of long-gone times far from civilization" (Haslund 1935, 133).

Along the way Haslund carried out anthropometrical

Haslund and Bergman in the "Turk" village of Charkhliq. The village elder (with beard) and the Chinese official and secretary are flanked on the right by Haslund and Bergman, and on the left by a Turkic-speaking Muslim population of the village, like many of the other villages they visited along the way, was denoted Sarts, a name used by explorers at the time; in fact they were Uyghurs, people of Turkic background. "The people in East Turkestan are very becoming in many respects, and you feel that they are more closely related to our own race than the Chinese. Many of the women are very beautiful and could pass for northern Europeans", Haslund wrote to Ingeborg, 10 May 1928. Photo: Folke Bergman, 1928.



measurements on available locals, a task in which he had been originally instructed by the expedition's physician David Hummel who was the main responsible member for these undertakings of the mission. Bergman's diary informs us that these attempts were mostly met with reluctance, especially among the Mongols; but at the oasis of Charkhliq, he seems to have had better luck. Haslund offered medicines from their well-assorted travel pharmacy to the locals and in return asked them to have their measurements taken. These experiences gave rise to the following rather astonishing statements from Haslund:

It was easy to distinguish totally different racial types among the native population. Some were tall with Aryan facial traits, light brown eyes, red-brown skin colour and often reddish hair. Some were more than two metres tall and their beardless faces did not remind me of any other race I have seen in Central Asia. In the wild Mongol types, who differed greatly from the Sarts, we could trace descendants of twenty Mongol women who were brought here a generation ago as war booty from the nomadic Mongol group the Dede in northeastern Tibet (Haslund 1935, 133).

We must presume that Haslund's knowledge of anthropometrics was rather limited, and most likely the above information on the alleged relationship between the various "wild" Mongol groups in the village and beyond comes from other sources than anthropometrical measurements. Anthropometrics was on the expedition's agenda, as it was standard procedure among Western explorers at the time when they operated in non-Western societies, and was a generally accepted method of establishing so-called "folk types", their descent and historical interrelationships. The procedures involved comprehensive external measurements of head and face as well as blood tests.⁵⁰

The measurements from Xinjiang were later handed over to Paul Stevenson, Professor of Anatomy at Peking Medical College, and a collaborator of the expedition, who was convinced that "merely using the methods of physical anthropology one could determine the mutual relationships of the present tribes and folk-groups in Central Asia and their descent from the famous Mongol hordes" (Haslund 1943, 15). Such goals were on the expedition's list of tasks, and Haslund offered his assistance. There is no evidence, however, that the material was ever incorporated into the expedition's publications. When Haslund took up anthropometrical measurement at the beginning of his

first expedition some years later, he obviously did so for conventional scientific reasons more than a belief in the method's capacity to "achieve satisfactory results" (Haslund 1943, 15), and he soon discarded the method altogether. His rejection of the use of anthropometrics then, however, appears to have been due less to its scientific flaws in labelling ethnic groups as "pure" or "mixed" (or plainly "bastard"), as many anthropologists did at the time, an assumption he did not question, than to the belief that such ideas were alien to his goal, namely to establish historical cultural relationships among different Mongol groups through a comparison of their songs and legends (*ibid.*, 16).

In 1928, however, in the first working year of the Swedish expedition, Haslund was a learner, and he enthusiastically accepted the taking of measurements – like other tasks he had as an assistant. Gradually his performance of such duties established a basis of self-confidence and mutual acknowledgement between him and his expedition partners, and obviously between him and Hedberg. Most of all, working as an assistant to the scientists offered Haslund a perfect opportunity to become involved in "science", and to get a glimpse of scientific methods. Being part of a scientific endeavour, he gradually realized, involved interaction with the native population, and doing so proved meaningful. Through such interactions, which Haslund was well equipped linguistically, he was induced to take a deeper, more personal interest in the whereabouts of the Mongol groups in the area, and to understand their cultural life and history. He was particularly attracted by the Torguts, who lived as a minority in Xinjiang scattered among the majority of Han Chinese and Turkic-speaking peoples, and were the remains of the relocated Kalmyks or Torguts from the Volga region. Haslund's first encounter with the Torguts was at Edsina where he accompanied Hummel on his botanical excursions up the River Edsina to make contact with the Edsinian Torguts. During their five weeks' stay they established good relationships with the tribal establishment and enjoyed overwhelming hospitality from the tribal court. Recurrent encounters in Urumqi with other confederated Oirat groups, such as the Khoshut, who were recruited as soldiers in General Yang's army, only stimulated Haslund's interest in the current situation of the existing remnants of the formerly powerful federation of West Mongolian tribes, the Oirat. On the Tibetan plateau Haslund encountered the nomadic Dede, descendants of the Khoshut, who had conquered the northern Tibetan territories centuries earlier.



(Haslund 1935, 144). The final and significant meeting, however, came with Haslund's journey to the Khara Shar Torguts.⁵¹

In the late summer of 1928 Haslund took his leave of Bergman at the oasis of Cherchen, where the latter had decided to devote some time to archaeological investigations. After almost six months it was difficult for Haslund to part from "the best travelling companion on a difficult excursion" (Haslund 1935, 145). For Bergman too, who wrote in his diary: "It was with a heavy heart that I parted from this splendid comrade and manliest of friends" (Bergman 1945, 70). By 1 October Hedin had made Haslund the practical coordinator of communications between "headquarters" Hedin and the two field workers, geologist Erik Norin and archaeologist Folke Bergman during their explorations of the region between the Turfan Depression and the Altyn Tagh mountains. At first Haslund was sent to Öreget (near the present Yanqi), a location in the foothills of the Tien Shan Mountains where the Khara Shar Torguts lived, to buy up camels for Hedin's planned journey through the Taklamakan Desert. The expected short stay was prolonged by weeks because of political tension in the region. During this time he was introduced to the political and spiritual leader Sin Chin Cegen Hutukhtu⁵² who permitted him to stay and introduced him to his court. The buying of camels was soon abandoned as a result of the increasing gravity of the political situation. The Khara Shar officials offered him protection for some weeks, and the leader was receptive to Haslund's wishes and allowed him to make anthropometrical measurements and record songs on his small Edison phonograph:

The Prince was very interested in the recordings and sent riders out around the area to bring in good singers. I am myself very satisfied with the results, which apart from their scientific importance [...] is also material for a musical person to make a beautiful musical score for our film.⁵³

The correspondence between Haslund and Hedin⁵⁴ documents the political turmoil in the area, and to avoid cen-

Anthropometric measurements were on the expedition's agenda, including comprehensive external measurements of head and face, demonstrated here. The procedures were conducted by David Hummel, Hedin's physician, and assisted by Haslund, who took notes. The German military member van Kaul is watching. Photo: Paul Lieberentz, 1927-1928. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.



Soldiers of the Khoshut Mongols. Haslund encountered different Mongolian groups of the earlier Öret confederation, such as the Khushut, the related nomadic Dede Mongols, and the Tsagechin Beile group; all of which nurtured his interest in their history and interrelationships. Photographer unknown.

sorship Haslund sent the letters by courier. Sin Chin Gegen's spies had reported on movements of Chinese troops in the region, and as things grew more critical, the Khara Shar leader no longer dared offer refuge, and ordered Haslund to return to headquarters in Urumqi along with the other members of the expedition under his responsibility. After Governor Yang's death the political situation had worsened considerably, and the political balance was fragile: "All the officials here are extremely kind, but they are afraid to do anything to upset the Governor (Jin Shuren)".⁵⁵ In mid-November Haslund was finally forced to return to Urumqi. The music recordings from the Khara Shar were well received by Hedin:

That November night in Urumshi the young Danish singer and I decided that it was to be his task in the expedition to collect and preserve as much as possible of the musical treasures of Mongolia as had not yet been obliterated by time or forgotten by the new generations (Hedin 1943a, 7).

Consequently, after Christmas, when Haslund returned to Öreget, he was determined to pursue recordings of songs and to obtain information on the history of the tribe;



The chief of the Dede Mongols in his yurt. Haslund was received by him during his stay with Bergman on the Tibetan plateau in 1928. Photo: Folke Bergman, 1928.

They were somewhat annoyed that I didn't show any interest in the current political issues, but as I got them to recognize my sincere interest in the history of the Torgut Mongols and my respect for their lore and traditions, their suspicion disappeared (Haslund 1935, 174).

The stay lasted three months and was a personal breakthrough for Haslund. He made sixty recordings on wax cylinders (some of which were lost in an accident in 1935) and make up what Haslund named his Collection I; this thoroughly founded his future work on sound recording on his coming expeditions.⁵⁶ Historical data were collected from interviews with important figures at the court of Sin Chin Gegen and beyond, and from his participation with the inhabitants of the palace city of Khoten Sume, in everyday and ceremonial activities. This was information about tribal legends, traditions and social organization and the type of knowledge that was stored in the minds of storytellers, elderly lamas and "old patriarchs whose words still carry a strong impression, but who soon all die out, and with each and every one of them some of the old knowledge is irrevocably lost" (Haslund 1941).⁵⁷ This material was incorporated into his book *Zajagan* (1935) as part of his account of the tribal history, movements and political organization of the Torguts over the previous two centuries.



Sin Chin Gegen
Hutukhtu, Chief of the
Khara Shar Torguts and
living Buddha. During
Haslund's stay in Khara
Shar the two became
close friends. Haslund
received considerable
privileges as a field
worker among the
Torguts and initiated his
collection of music
recordings. Photog-
rapher unknown.



Haslund hand in hand with the chief of the Tsagechin Beile Mongols
and his consort in Urumqi. With the agency of Haslund, the chief
presented a series of fine ethnographic objects to the expedition.
These were later included in the collection at the museum in Stock-
holm. Photographer unknown.

There is no evidence in Haslund's books of how he worked
in the field and what he actually did to obtain the informa-
tion, that is, no specification of the method applied. Still, it
is fair to say though that during his stay at the Khara Shar,
Haslund partook in participant observation with the local
craftsmen and singers as "ethnographic informants"; in
other words, Haslund practiced what we would character-
ize today as ethnographic field work. This was not a term
used by Haslund or his fellow expedition members, but the
actual collecting involved close observations of and inter-
actions with the native population. The decision to become



Torgut women of the royal lineage, dressed up for religious cere-
monies. The photo may be from outside the chief's palace in the
city of Khoteen Sume where Haslund stayed for some months in
early 1929. Photographer unknown.

the chronicler of the Torgut Mongols, however – as he did
in his book – was the result of a later discovery, based on
studies of the collected material and the interpretation of
the sources after his return to Europe.

Haslund left the Khara Shar in early April 1929, and one
month later he took his leave of the expedition and left
Xinjiang for Stockholm via Russia. In appreciation of the
support of Hedin and the Sino-Swedish Expedition for Sin
Chin Gegen – and as a token of the personal friendship be-
tween Haslund and the Torgut leader – Haslund was of-
fered an extraordinary farewell gift to be presented to the
Swedish King Gustav V: a temple yurt completely equipped
with ceremonial objects.⁵⁹ The yurt was transported to
Sweden by Haslund in May 1929 and presented to the King
in a ceremony at the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm
on 8 September 1929.

Splitting up with Hedin

After his sojourn in Stockholm and Copenhagen over the
summer, Haslund returned to Mongolia in September 1929
with a new contract in his pocket, specifically stating that
he was engaged for "the tasks of purchasing ethnographic
and cult objects".⁶⁰ Hedin had also been back in Stockholm
over the summer and met a promising young graduate in



From the interior of the temple yurt when it was erected and furnished in Urumqi. The yurt was donated by Sin Chin Gegen as a token of friendship to the Swedish King Gustav V. It was brought to Urumqi from Khoten Sume by Haslund, and later on, to Stockholm. Photo: Paul Lieberentz, 1929. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

ethnography, Gösta Montell, who had been recommended to him by Hedin's friend Erland Nordenskjöld of the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm. Montell was immediately recruited. Accompanied by Hedin and Hummel, Montell arrived in Tiensien in October and was introduced to the Scandinavian members of the expedition at their base camp in Batkhalaag. Frans August Larson and Haslund were ready to accompany the group on a planned tour through south-western Inner Mongolia with the purpose of purchasing a temple for the expedition's American sponsor Vincent Bendix. With the newly engaged Dane Bent Friis-Johansen as driver⁶¹ and the missionary Joel Eriksson as guide, the expedition's ethnographer Gösta Montell was in good hands and had high expectations of this first important journey into the region (Montell 1945, 332–333). The so-called "temple tour" in November 1929 was the last time Haslund participated in the expedition activities. Soon afterwards he fell ill and was diagnosed with a serious infection. Stuck by himself at the Imperial Hotel in Tiensien over a period of almost two months, Haslund became more and more isolated from the rest of the group who were gathered in Larson's house in Kalgan over Christmas. On 7 January 1930 he assured Hedin in a letter that he would be fit again after another ten days.⁶² However, alternative arrangements must have been made, as documented by the following entry in Hedin's expedition diary one month later:

Haslund leaves the expedition. Haslund [...] was at the time more or less idle. He had periods of illness and had been unable during the winter to participate in the work of the expedition as much as he would have wished. As he planned to marry, he needed to look for a more secure and permanent job than the expedition was able to offer him, and was therefore agreed that he should wind up his connection with us after the good three years during which he had been in our service. On 7 February he left for Calcutta and Karachi to take up a post connected with the commerce between British India and Eastern Turkestan (Hedin 1943b, Part 89).

Was Haslund dismissed by Hedin – or was he in fact leaving at his own wish? We do not know for sure. What was there to take up for him in British India, as Hedin mentions, and was the further mention of Turkestan related in some way to Haslund's experience and contact in Xinjiang? The documents inform us that the expedition work did come to a temporary standstill at the time due to lack of funds, but also that Hedin had engaged Montell to be the ethnographer of the expedition in spite of the fact that Haslund's contract (of October 1929) stipulated that he was engaged to contribute in this area. Would Haslund have left in the way – or had there been disagreements between Haslund and Hedin? On the other hand, the fact that Haslund had become engaged to be married to Inga Mathilde Lindstrøm, to whom he was introduced by the Hedin family,

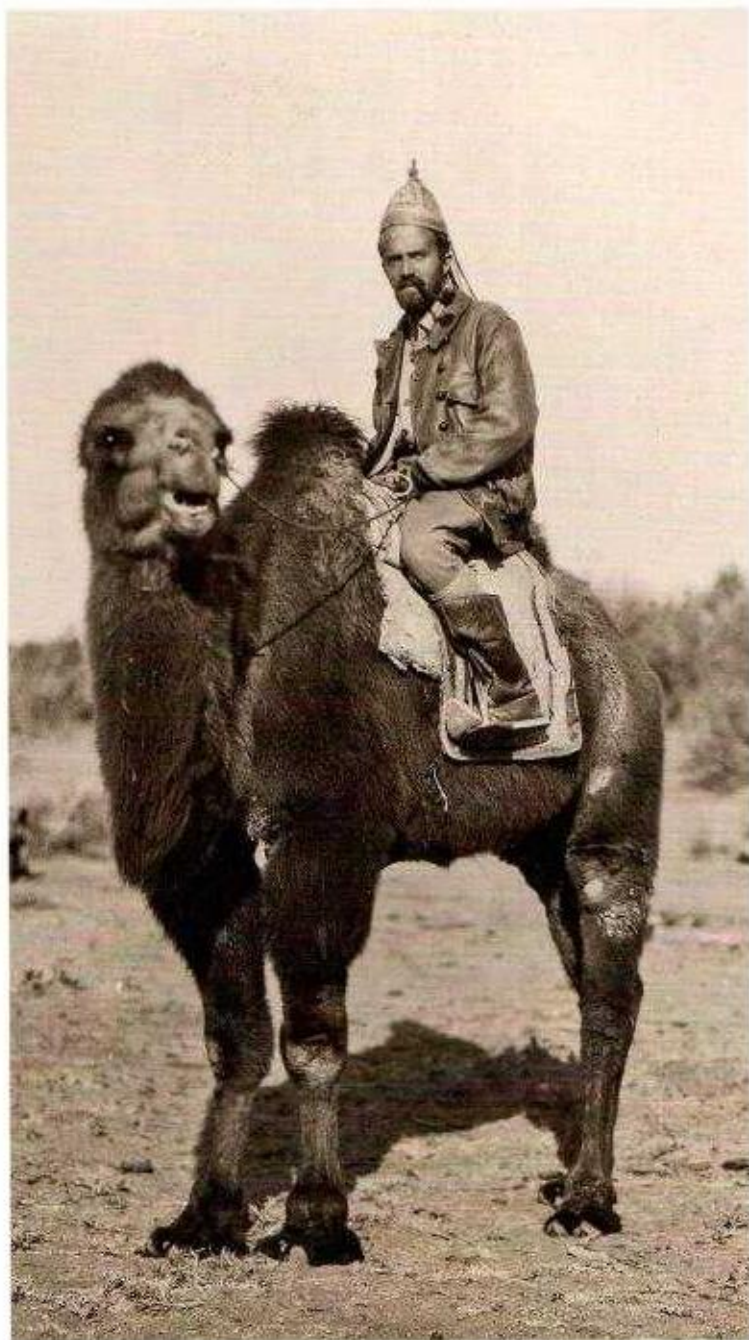


The royal reception of the temple yurt at the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm in 1929. Swedish King Gustav V with Hedin and Haslund on his left side. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

... during his stay in Stockholm in the summer of 1929, ... must have given Haslund food for thought. More than anything this event must have forced Haslund to consider his situation seriously with regard to ensuring a permanent income for the future. Still, something must have happened to harm Haslund's position. He complained about his situation in a letter to Alma Hedin, which we do not have, unfortunately, we only know Alma's reply. The dismissal is certainly confirmed in the letter from Alma, and although she was aware that it had been difficult for Haslund to accept Hedin's decision, she also tried to set things right:

As for the rumour that Sven had to let you go because of your illness, and the way this was interpreted by some of your fellow countrymen, you should rest easy on this account. As the case was, and still is, with this endless waiting for money and permission which haven't arrived yet, and where everything has worked counter to the expectations we had in the summer, Sven cannot possibly spend Bendix's money to keep someone lying idle, perhaps for months. Larson has returned to his place in Kalgan, and will only return when Sven needs him again [...] It is at the top of my wish list that you will find a good position soon, and that you and Mammie will marry soon and be endlessly happy.⁶³

From Haslund's correspondence with Mammie, his wife to be, during his stay in India afterwards, it is obvious,



Gösta Montell (1899-1975) during field work among the Edsina Torgut Mongols. Montell stayed with the Sino-Swedish expedition from 1929 to 1932. He carried out extensive field work among the Edsina Torguts in 1930-1931 (Montell 1934; 1940). In 1931-1933 he assisted the sinologist Professor Ferdinand Lessing in the collection of Lamaist-Buddhist cult objects in Peking (Montell 1945; Lessing 1942). Montell became the ethnographer *par excellence* of the Sino-Swedish expedition, and after its termination he became the expedition's administrator, antiquarian, and leader of the publication project until his death. Upon his return from the expedition, he was employed as curator of the Asiatic Collections at the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm (cf. Montell 1932; 1935; 1951; Odelberg 2008; Johansson 2012; Romgard 2013). SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.



Haslund's wife-to-be, Inga Marit Lindström or Mammie, was a dear and close friend of the Hedin family. Later on, after she had married Haslund, the close relationship with the strong Hedin family was both a gift and a burden. Here the Hedin's are gathered on the steps of their summer cottage: in the backrow Inga Marit is linking arms with Emma and Clara, next to Alma and Gerda. In the front from the left are Carl, Anna Mia Sundström (born Hedin), her daughter Märta Sundström and Sven. Possibly from the late 1920s. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

though, that Haslund felt strong resentment against Hedin. That Haslund had made arrangements to work with the British authorities in Kashmir, in either politics or business, may very well have led to arguments between them, given Hedin's strong anti-British feelings. But again this is speculation or at best qualified guesses. Haslund had difficulty letting go of the feeling of having been the object of some sort of fraud, as he wrote to Mammie: "When I return to Sweden I shall meet Sven and be able to

contradict his lies. When I left him in Peking he was kindness and sweetness and promised all sorts of things] after having travelled with him for almost three years know him very well and I say calmly that I do not trust him".⁶⁴

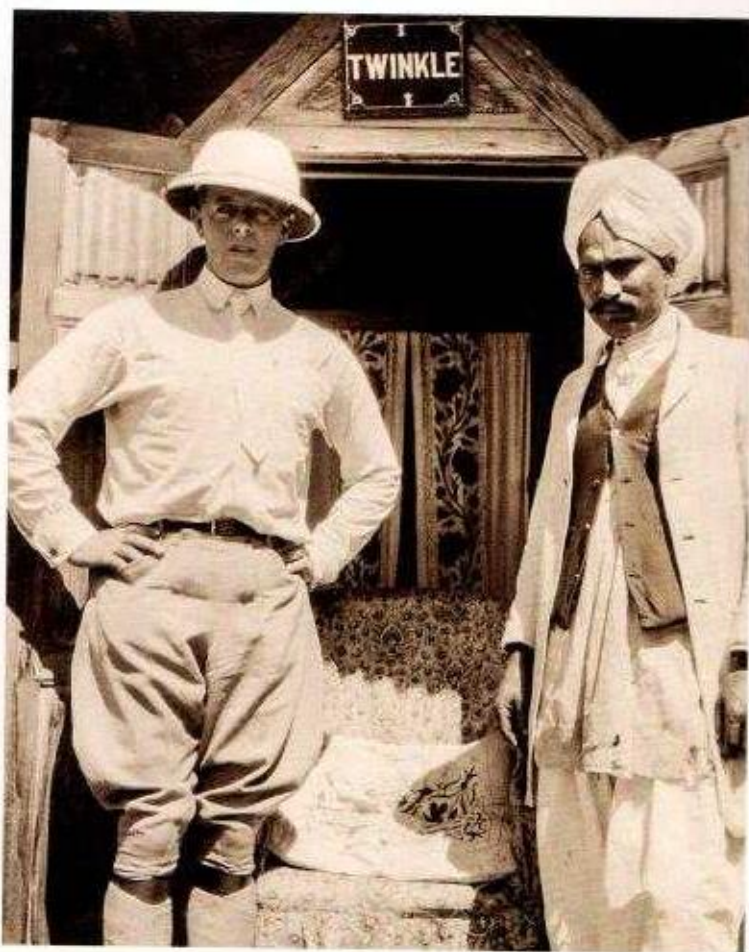
A Himalayan interlude: Trade routes or British intelligence?

With regard to taking up a post in British India, it appears from his personal notes and letters that for some time Haslund had in fact been making plans to open a trade route between Kashmir in British India and Kashgar in Xinjiang, with a point of departure in Srinagar, and with this purpose in mind he had listed several companies, presumably to be contacted in order to obtain the agencies for Central Asia.⁶⁵ He arrived in India in March 1930 and contacted the British authorities, who had shown interest in his trade project. The situation, however, remained unclear and no definite jobs were available to Haslund. In a letter to Hedin he admitted that although he was ready for new adventures, leaving his expedition had been difficult: "Day by day it becomes easier to let go of the gloomy thoughts of upset plans and dreams of Mongolia and to focus on new plans, the new country and on a future life for me and Mammie".⁶⁶

Haslund's stay in Kashmir lasted approximately one year. He reported to Mammie on how, after months of hard work, he finally managed to send off his first caravan on 1 May from Srinagar to Turkestan (Xinjiang), which also carried important letters to his princely friends beyond the passes.⁶⁷ In June he obtained several concessions for trade goods, from among others the American British Tobacco Company (BAT) and Burmah Shell, and had contacted possible British investors in Kashmir. Haslund looked forward to discussing his plans with Colonel R. C. F. Schomberg with whom he had been in contact and who was on his way to take up the post as British Political Agent in Kashmir: "I am anxious to hear his suggestions and [...] how they may be of a kind which will enable me to fetch you here, darling. [...] For the time being I am busy writing a report concerning my experiences and impressions since I came out here, which is to be sent to London after Colonel Schomberg has seen it".⁶⁸ However, it appears that the unsettled times in India made the authorities lose interest in investing in his company. Instead, the British authorities suggested he should take charge of a series of transports



Haslund in Ladakh with his dog Sif. The photo was duplicated and sent to friends, colleagues and family with dedication and date: 9 November, 1930. Photographer unknown.



Haslund and his servant in front of his houseboat "Twinkle" in Srinagar. "If everything goes well I reckon on being back in Srinagar by May. If the result of this first year's work is good, then I have one month's work ahead of me sending a new caravan off to Turkestan and can then return home [to Stockholm] by the beginning of July. And bring you here my darling" Haslund wrote to Mammie 15 July 1930. Haslund's stay in Kashmir lasted about one year, during which he tried to establish a transport business between Kashmir and Xinjiang. Photographer unknown, 1930.

Xinjiang, comprising 2000 pony loads that the British Government was planning to deliver to Kashgar: "But as they are of a political nature, I do not think as a Dane it is a good thing. These transports are so large that they will paralyse all commercial transport for two years. If I take the job, I will be offered a post as trade agent in Leh afterwards".⁷⁰ In the same letter he continued: "Finally, Colonel Schomberg has left for Ladakh and gone on to Xinjiang, and his last words to me were to stick to my own plans."

As to whether Haslund followed Schomberg's advice or not – or whether he let himself be involved with, or came close to engaging in alleged illicit (weapons) trading in Xin-

jiang, or had other dealings with the British Intelligence Service in Kashmir – Haslund is silent and so are the sources. According to his first biographer Lennart Edelberg, Haslund sent information to the Danish social register KRAK's Blue Book in 1936⁷¹ which stated: "Representative of the British Government in Leh during the negotiations with the Central Asian authorities in 1930-31." Edelberg confirms that Haslund indeed participated as the British-Indian Government's representative in Leh during a session of negotiations with Central Asian authorities, but in October 1930 only. Working on Haslund's biography, Edelberg wrote to his colleague at the National Museum of his



View of the Himalaya from Ladakh, the region through which Haslund planned a caravan route. Photo: Haslund, 1930.

finds in London: "... concerning HHC's journey from India to Sinkiang in 1930-31 I was informed that all records in the India Office Records of 24 August 1931 were destroyed.⁷³

Between passes

Haslund had no luck with his caravan business. The first caravan sent off in May never arrived at its destination, and the second, which left Leh on 2 December 1930, he was informed, had encountered serious trouble due to harsh weather, which had caused the death of a young Swede, Polycarpus Lindqvist, whom Haslund had permitted to accompany the caravan.⁷⁴ Haslund decided to send out a rescue caravan and to lead it himself. "I am now between the two passes of Tragbar and Burzil," he wrote to Mammie on 11 January 1931. "We've had snow for three days and all passes are closed [...] After this last very tragic loss I could not go home [to Sweden], nor could I sit quiet in Srinagar, so I decided to go to Kashgar myself. Of all the three passes

here – Tragbal, Burzil and Mintaka – Burzil is the most difficult and it has kept me here for three days [...] I have two good Tibetan servants and 11 coolies with me; we follow the route of the telegraph line where there is less snow [...] it is impossible to say when we can start. I assure you I'll be very cautious".⁷⁵ Such letters would hardly have been reassuring, and fortunately for his family the letters never reached Mammie until after his return to Sweden.

Two days later, on 13 January 1931, Haslund continued in the same letter: "Still here, bad weather, but we stay tonight. Restless. Cannot sleep". On 24 January it went on: "I've had bad luck, and now I lie with a broken femur." The letter, which obviously took the form of a diary, continued on 14 February: "Now one month has passed since my bad luck. Unfortunately my leg has been repaired badly". In this letter – or diary – the cause of his "bad luck" was never mentioned. The actual cause, however, was that Haslund and most of his caravan had been buried under an avalanche that had swept them down into the valley below.



Haslund's caravan of Tibetan helpers resting, presumably in the Tragbal pass, just before they were struck by an avalanche in January 1931.
 From Haslund, 1931.

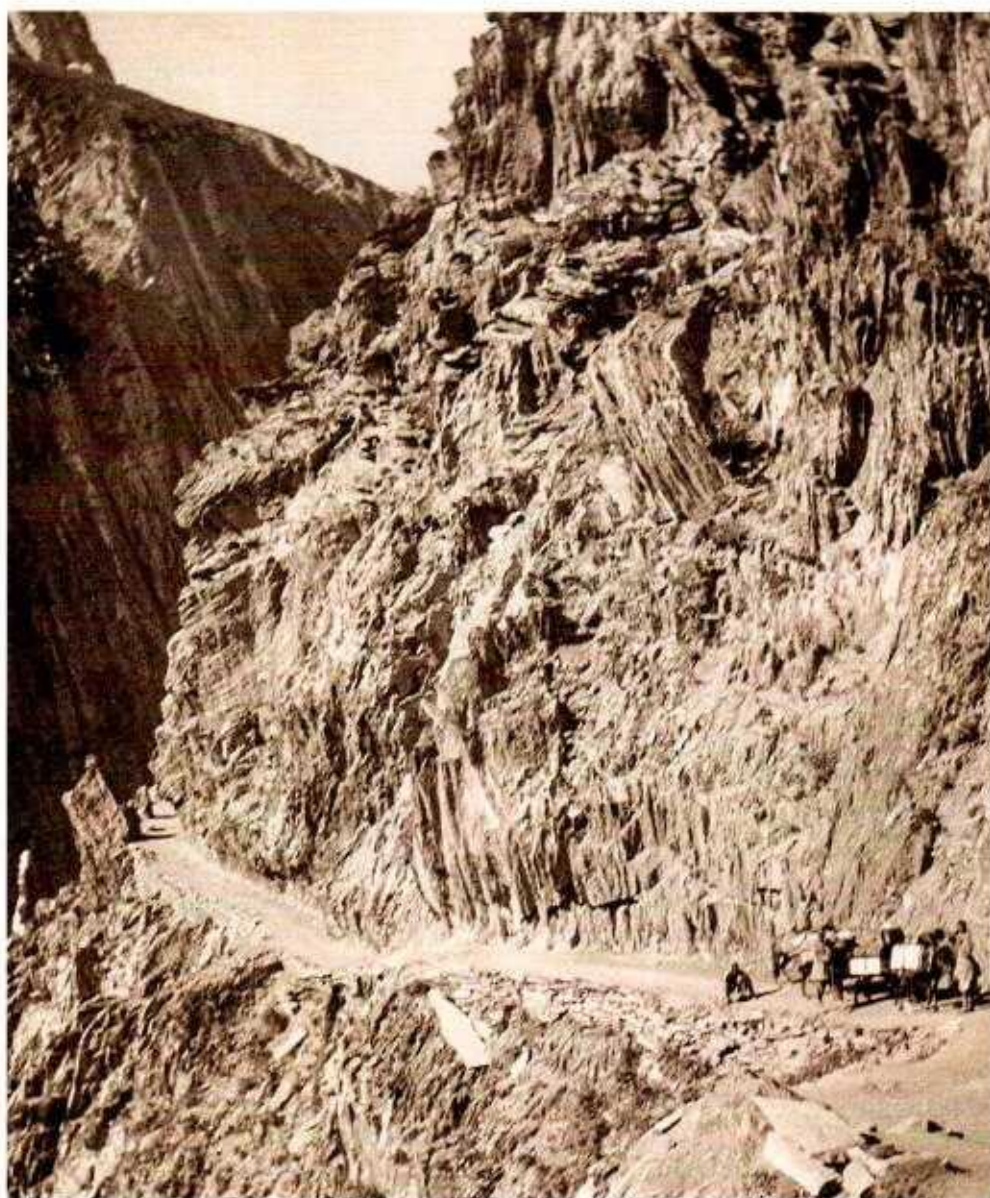
in his continued reporting on the incident in the letter to Mammie, we learn how he was rescued by one of his Tibetan helpers who noticed Haslund's hiking stick protruding right up into the air through the snow. One month after his assistants had sent for help and with the intervention of an Indian physician, who helped with a temporary setting of the fracture, it was arranged that Haslund would be carried down the mountain on a sledge and taken to the hospital in Srinagar. In his last entry in the letter to Mammie on 3 March 1931, before he was transported to Sweden in the air, he painstakingly recounted the details of the difficult passage ahead of him before his safe arrival in Srinagar.

We stay in a rest house (built and owned by Great Northern) 10 miles outside Srinagar. We cannot get hold of any food here, and the coolies have gone away. We started on 27 February and covered the distance in three days [...] I expect 40 miles to turn up from the other side of the Tragbal pass,

but they have not appeared. I so hoped they would arrive today. From here to the foot of the pass it is 4 miles through a narrow riverbed with steep mountainsides on both sides. This stretch is the most dangerous of all, and avalanches often happen here. When we have covered the four miles, I shall be relieved.⁷⁵

Approximately one month later Haslund returned to Stockholm. It is worth noticing that the stay in Kashmir and beyond and his activities there were recorded in his collected travel experiences and marked on his map of expedition routes in *Zagajan*. In retrospect, it is interesting to note that Haslund's sojourn in India also merited the following entry in Hedin's official travel diary, published in 1943 despite the fact that Haslund had left his expedition in 1931:

In April Henning Haslund-Christensen arrived in Sweden [...] On 13 January 1931 in the course of his journey with his first caravan he met with a terrible accident. His caravan



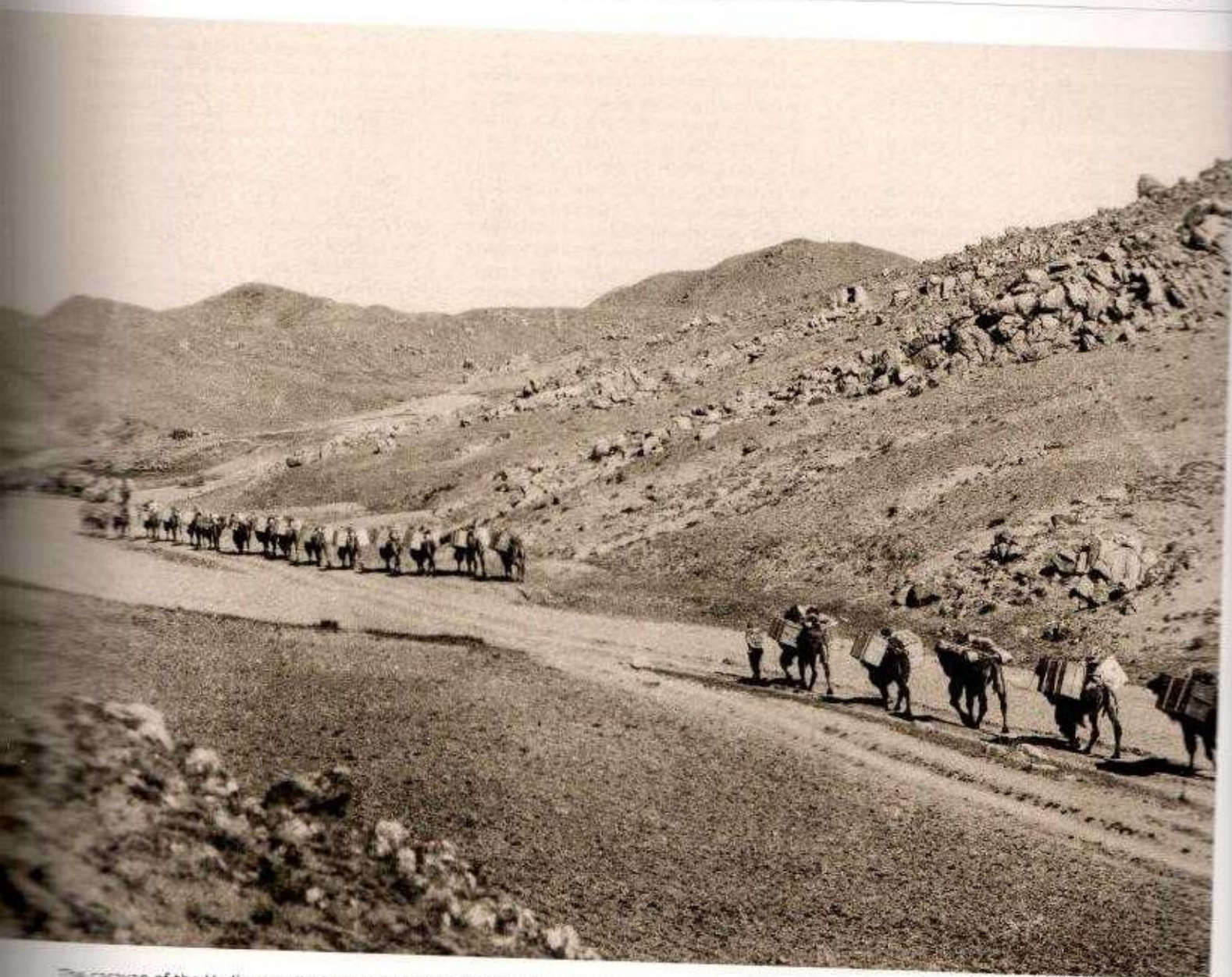
The winding and dangerous mountain road by which Haslund was presumably carried down to Srinagar one month after his accident. Photo: Haslund, 1931.

was buried under an avalanche, and [...] Haslund sustained a severe fracture of the right femur. He was fetched by aeroplane and returned to India; but with the broken bone knitted in the wrong position, and he was obliged to go back to Europe [...] During the summer of 1931 he lay in hospital in Stockholm (Hedin 1943b, Part II, 179).

Upon Haslund's recovery, the relationship between him and Hedin took a new turn, affected in some degree by Haslund's marriage in 1932 to Mammie who was a close friend of the Hedin family. This brought the two families close together, and over the years a kind of father-and-son

relationship developed between the two men, disrupted at intervals when Haslund distanced himself from Hedin's extreme political views. Above all, Haslund was deeply grateful for the opportunity offered to him on the Sino-Swedish expedition, for the experiences obtained during these years, and for Hedin's confidence and good advice with regard to his future plans.

The Sino-Swedish expedition was an enormous undertaking and its conclusion marked the end of the age of the great expeditions to Inner Asia for a long time to come. The remaining group of Scandinavians stayed in China with the Sino-Swedish expedition until the end, when the motor cars



The caravan of the Hedin expedition heading west in 1927. Photo: Paul Lieberentz, 1927. SMVK & Sven Hedin Foundation.

expedition reached Nanking in February 1935. Some of the researchers stayed in Peking throughout the year, while Söderbom and Larson returned to their homes in Khukhot and Kalgan. Except for Haslund, none of the Scandinavian participants, including Hedin, ever returned to Mongolia.

During the summer of 1929, when Haslund came back to deliver the temple yurt in Stockholm, he paid a visit to Thomas Thomsen, Head of the Ethnographic Department at the Danish National Museum. On this occasion Haslund donated eight temple scrolls, so-called *thangkas*, to the museum. The donation was mentioned in the annual report

of 1929 for the Department, to which Thomsen added: "Our compatriot, who is the Swedish explorer Sven Hedin's companion on his Central Asian expedition [...] expressed the hope that the day may come when he could return to Asia with an expedition under the Danish flag. He wanted this hope to be realized before the distinctive culture of these regions disappeared" (Thomsen 1930, 68). Consequently, when Haslund approached Thomsen nearly six years later in the early spring of 1936, and repeated his wish, Thomsen was receptive and agreed to help find funds for an expedition.

NOTES

1. Carpini travelled in the years 1245-1246, Rubruk in 1253-1255 and Marco Polo between 1272 and 1295.
2. In Mongolia the era of "The Great Khans" refers to the time of Chinggis Khan and his successors; from 1206 when Genghis Khan united the Mongol tribes to about 1368, with the break-up of the (Mongol) Yuan Dynasty in China.
3. For the etymology of Kalmyks, Dzungarians and Ölet, see Veit 1989a, 81.
4. The Oirat (Oirad or Ölet) confederation of Western Mongols comprised four main tribal groups: the Torgut, the Khoshut (or Khoit), the Durbet (or Derbet) and the Jungar. From the last derives the name "Dzungaria", and at least four subgroups.
5. The book was published in English in an abridged version, translated by John R. Krueger in 1996 with the collaboration of Arash Bor-manshinov, *Among the Kalmyks of the steppes on horseback and by Troika: a journey made in 1890*. Publications of the American Mongolian Society; occasional papers.
6. Kaarsberg also brought back a collection of riding gear to Jakob Hegel's private collection, which was later transferred to the Royal Agricultural School in Copenhagen (Lefmann 1994).
7. The Danish investments in Russia for the year 1917-1918 comprised 400 million DKK, an amount equal to the Danish national budget of the same year.
8. In an undated manuscript on Danish travellers in Asia, Haslund celebrates H. C. Schiern's endeavour. See also Bruun 1925.
9. This period in Mongolia's political history is described by many sources. The following is first and foremost based on Bawden 1989, Jagchid 1999 and Baabar (Batbayar) 1999.
10. Between the Opium Wars in the mid-1840s and the World War I, China was forced to sign 23 so-called "unequal treaties" with Western countries, which all added to the growing humiliation and loss of sovereignty.
11. Cited in the report of the Danish Minister to China, H. Kauffmann, to the Danish Foreign Ministry in 1925 (The National Danish Archives, Ges. J. Nr. 173, R.1., p. 6).
12. The knowledge of the successful Japanese attack shook the West profoundly. The fact that a small and hitherto insignificant eastern country had actually defeated the impressive Russian fleet was shocking. The urgent need for information gave rise to a new newspaper in Denmark, *Ekstrabladet*.
13. Uriankai is a geographical and an ethnic label referring to the eastern and western areas of Lake Khövsgöl – and to category of peoples of predominantly Turkic ancestry (Díószegi 1961, 197) as well as some "Darhat Uriankai" (Pedersen 2011, 10; note 6).
14. Some of these owned the very companies that had made enormous fortunes on their transactions in Russia. In the Bolshevik Revolution some of their fortunes were lost, while others were lost as a result of the 1922 crash of the Danish bank Landmandsbanken which shook Danish society at all levels.
15. Part of the present province of Khövsgöl, Bulguntai is today called Erdenebulgan, and is located c. 132 km south east of the city of Khatgal, which was a Russian border town in 1923, incorporated into Mongolia after 1924.
16. The diaries of Arthur Bollerup-Sørensen were published posthumously by K. Grønbech in 1951.
17. The National Museum received a number of Albertsen's personal belongings from his time in Mongolia and a large collection of photos from 1921-1922 of which many are used throughout the book.
18. The expedition is particularly noted for its finds of the first fossil dinosaur egg ever to be located in the world.
19. The title is formed by taking the first syllable of the name followed by the title. In 1911 the same title was also given to the famous German traveller and writer Hermann Consten.
20. Haslund to Ingeborg, Urga 18 September 1923. ESBA.
21. Haslund transcribes the monastery as "Odogna Kure" (1932, 86). According to Soninbayar, the monastery is most highly synonymous with "Udgan Huree", now destroyed (see Tserendamba 2009, 746).
22. Haslund to Ingeborg, 3 February 1924, ESBA.
23. The mail service went via Russia and took about four months. At the beginning mail had to be retrieved by horse from Khatgal, a journey which itself took 3-6 weeks. Later, mail from Denmark was sent to the Great Northern's office in Irkutsk, and from there the Danish telegraphs forwarded it to Khatgal (the present Khatgal), a small colony of a dozen Russian houses at the south point of Lake Khövsgöl. Khatgal was 132 km from Bulguntai (and 600 km from Urga) (Haslund 1932, 100).
24. Haslund uses the Danish word "lamaise-ning" (lamaization).
25. Haslund to Ingeborg, *ibid.*
26. Unpublished manuscript for the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, 29 March 1940: "Bland shamaner i Mongoliet". (Among Shamans in Mongolia). H.-C.PP.
27. Haslund arrived from Inner Mongolia to assist Krebs in the negotiations with the authorities in Urga in the spring of 1926, the last time he returned to Outer Mongolia.
28. The era of the Great Purge was launched on 10 September 1937, initiating more than two years of terror directed first against the Buriats and the lama monks. Thousands were executed, and out of the almost 800 temples and monasteries, only 11 remained in 1938 (see further in Baabar (Batbayar) 1999, 356-370).
29. Kauffmann had already submitted one in March 1925 on the political situation in Mongolia, based on sources available to him in Peking. Kauffmann to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Denmark, Count C. P. O. Moltke. The Danish Legation, Peking, March and September 1925 J. Nr. 173, R.1. The National Danish Archives.
30. Kauffmann to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Denmark, Count C. P. O. Moltke, Peking 20 September 1925, p. 4. Det Danske Gestaadsskab i Peking. Ges. J. nr. 173, R.1. The National Danish Archives.
31. Haslund to Alma Hedin 23 November 1929 SHFA.
32. Since the beginning of the 1900s Danish, Swedish and Norwegian missionaries had operated through diverse Protestant Christian societies in the north of China and Inner Mongolia. The Danish Mission, Dansk Missions Selskab (DMS) was active in China since 1893, and in 1896 – along with Irish and Scottish Presbyterians – they settled in the eastern part of the Liaodong Peninsula at Lüshun (Port Arthur) and Ta'ian (Dairen) in the south east coastal area in then Manchuria. Later on – reaching into the era of (the Japanese) Manchukuo – the Danish Mission became the leading Christian Mission in the area from Dairen in the south Harbin in the north (Hviid Jensen 2005). The Danish Mission was only marginally in contact with the Danish explorers in Mongolia most probably due to their locations off the main scene of activities of the explorers which lay in and around Peking and the road out westward. The Norwegian mission operated primarily from Urga and before the 1924 revolution.
33. *Ljusglimtar* 1:8, 1930.
34. For details of the Swedish Mongol Mission J. M. Ollén 1921; F. A. Larson 1930; Ollén & Erikson 1943; Marthinsson 1985; Jagchid 1999, 267; Ohlberg 2002 and 2003; Odelberg 2003; Siden-vall 2009.
35. Haslund to Ingeborg, Ta-t'ung 24 January 1927. ESBA.
36. At the time 1 Mexican dollar was equivalent to c. 3 US dollars and 2 DKK.
37. Contract of Mr. Henning Haslund-Christensen, 1 March 1927 SHFA.
38. Haslund to Ingeborg, Pao-t'ou 3 March 1927. ESBA.
39. The principal biographies of Sven Hedin are Wennerholm 1978 and Odelberg 2008, both in Swedish. A short entry by Sörlin (2006) can be found in the Swedish National Encyclopedia. An English biography was published by C. K. K. in 1984. More biographies are appearing in Chinese (See Romgard 2013, 34).
40. The thesis was titled *Der Demavend nach eigener Beobachtung*, 1892.
41. Philippe Forêt offers the full story in his work *La véritable histoire d'une montagne plus grande que l'Himalaya* (2004) where he fully verifies Hedin's data.

The accounts of Olufsen's expeditions were published by Fihl (2002) in the present Carlsberg Foundation's Nomad Research Series.

During the nineteenth century Western travellers also named the region "Chinese Turkestan" or "Chinese Tartary".

Cf. Håkanson 2009.

The sources for the expedition are numerous, first and foremost the series of scholarly reports from the expedition as mentioned above. The following works offer fine abstracts of the preparations, the implementation and the results: Hedin 1942; Montell 1935; Montell 1936; Scottsberg 1951; Moberg 1951. Two recent works examine the role of the Sino-Swedish expedition: Johansson (2012) in relation to the history of sinology in Sweden; and Romgård (2012) which from a history-of-science perspective offers a comprehensive analysis of Sino-Swedish collaboration in the field disciplines in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Some of the results were made available in 1942 in the series *Ethnography* (VIII), Hedin-Christensen 1943 and Sylwan 1949. For ethnographic collections, see Wahlquist 1952.

Haslund to Hedin, Hami 18 December 1927. SHFA archives.

Yang was killed at a dinner party by a Chinese political opponent who strove for his position. He was followed by Jin Shuren (1928-1933), in many respects upset the ethnic and political balance that Yang had managed to uphold in the province since 1912. Jin's politics led to a rebellion in 1931-1932 and finally to his death in 1933 (Millward & Tursun 2004, 71).

Except for Hedin, none of the other members designated the Tungans or Uyghurs by their names; instead they referred to them as "Tatars" or "Türks", as was common practice among Westerners at the time. Both groups are of Turkic background, but with different origins (see Millward & Perdue 2004, 242-243).

50. It is worth noticing that anthropometrics was obligatory reading for anthropology students in Denmark until the early 1960s.

51. Haslund transcribed their locality as Khara Shar (1935), later as Qara Shar (1943).

52. The title "Gegen Hutukthu" signifies that Sin Chin (sometimes written by Haslund as "Setsen Gegen") was the reincarnation of a deity, in the case the fifth incarnation of the Tiger god, and - moreover - son of Akhe Khan, the mythical ancestor of all Torgut Mongols. In *Zajagan* (1935) Haslund also refers to Sin Chin Cegen as "Töjn lama" or "Töjn gegen", "the noble and reincarnated lama". Sin Chin Cegen was killed by Chinese soldiers in 1933 during the rebellious years 1932-1934.

53. Haslund to Hedin 11 November 1928. SHFA.

54. Letters from Haslund to Hedin: 28 October, 3 November, and 11 November, 1928. SHFA. See also Hedin 1943a, 29.

55. Haslund to Hedin, 11 November 1928. SHFA.

56. The Collection I is located at the State Sound and Image Archive in Stockholm (see Erler 2001, 165).

57. Manuscript for lecture 21 March 1941.

58. See reviews by Hedin (1935a) and Nielsen (1935).

59. Inv. No. 1929.21.1-144 at the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm. For a detailed description of the temple yurt and the related 144 objects, see Montell 1932 - which is a catalogue of the first exhibition displaying the collections of the Sino-Swedish expedition in Stockholm in 1932.

60. Contract of 9 September 1929. SHFA.

61. Bent Friis-Johansen was engaged in the expedition in 1929-1931.

62. Letter from Haslund to Hedin, Tlensien 7 January 1930. See also letters from Haslund to Hedin 25 December and 27 December 1929. SHFA.

63. Letter from Alma to Haslund 24 April 1930. SHFA.

64. Haslund to Mammie, 1 March 1930. H-C.PP.

65. Handwritten lists found in H-C.PP.

66. From Haslund to Hedin, 3 March, 1930. SHFA.

67. Haslund to Mammie 30 May 1930. H-C.PP.

68. Officer and political agent in Kashmir in the 1930s Schomberg was later known as author of series of books on his exploratory travels in the Himalayas. Haslund was obviously acquainted with Schomberg, but whether their relationship was based on a recent correspondence, or whether they had actually met in England in the early 1920s prior to Haslund departure to Mongolia, is not certain. Their relationship lasted all through Haslund's life.

69. Haslund to Mammie 30 May 1930. H-C.PP.

70. Haslund to Hedin 15 July 1930. SHFA.

71. A Danish yearbook with CVs of prominent Danes.

72. Lennart Edelberg to Rolf Gilberg, 26 October 1978, ESBA. Cf. Frederiksen 2001, 128-129.

73. For Haslund's account of the event, see Haslund-Christensen 1945, 237-250.

74. Haslund to Mammie, 11 January 1931. H-C.PP.

75. Haslund to Mammie 3 March 1931. H-C.PP.

a. Equivalent to c. DKK 150,000.

b. See also Baabar (Batbayar), 1999, 99 for present-day borders in relation to the "Uriankhain Frontier Region". For reference to the border strife, see *ibid.*, 145-146. The area was considered an "Eldorado" for the Russians living there, and after 1924 it was claimed as a Russian colony.

c. The diaries were published in the journal of the Danish Mongolian Society, *Ger* nos. 65-69, 2008-2009.

d. Peking September 25, 1925. *Ces. J. Nr.* 17, D.1.