

P R E F A C E

Between the years 1885 and 1909 I made three shorter trips and as many longer journeys of exploration in Asia, spending, in the course of these twenty-four years, no fewer than twelve and a half years on Asiatic soil. In the intermediate years between the expeditions I wrote descriptions of my journeys and reports of scientific results. On my return from the first journey, in the autumn of 1886, I was enrolled at the University of Stockholm, where for a couple of years I studied geology under Professor W. C. BRÖGGER, physics under Professor KNUT ÅNGSTRÖM and zoology under Professor WILHELM LECHE. For one term I was a pupil of Professor A. G. HÖGBOM in Uppsala, where I graduated with geology as my main subject and physical geography and zoology as secondary subjects. In the autumn of 1889 I was enrolled as a student at the University of Berlin, to study physical geography under the famous China-explorer and Asiatic expert Baron FERDINAND VON RICHTHOFEN, historical geography under Professor HEINRICH KIEPERT and palaeontology under Professor DAMES. On my return home from my second journey, which took me through northern Persia and Russian Turkistan to Kashgar in Chinese Turkistan, I resumed my studies with VON RICHTHOFEN, to prepare myself under his enlightened and inspiring guidance for a first big expedition to Central Asia and Tibet.

In consequence of these early journeys, following on each other's heels at such close intervals, my academic schooling was all too short and inadequate. My exploration of innermost Asia was thus rather the work of a pioneer than that of a well-schooled scientist. During the three bigger expeditions I made it my chief task to chart the remaining unknown parts of Inner Asia and especially Tibet as accurately as time permitted. On the expeditions of 1893—97, 1899—1902 and 1904—09 I was always the sole European, and I was thus obliged to make all the scientific observations and collections myself. On the expedition of 1899—02, however, when I took with me an escort of four Siberian Cossacks, and during a part of my Transhimalayan journey, when an Eurasian from India was a member of my staff, I had great help from these men. My work then comprised mapping; the collection of petrographic samples and plants; the making of astronomical ob-