

scruple if they were needed, and the further we got away from the military centres the better.

The staff had been waiting since March 24th with a rising uneasiness for the final decision from Peking. Time had hung heavy on their hands. The prefect and the mayor had been friendly, and had granted them permission to go for rides in the immediate neighbourhood of the town. They refused, however, to take the responsibility for longer excursions, as the whole region was said to be too infested by robbers for safety.

Twenty-two members of the staff were present at our first common dinner. We were, as I said on this occasion, on the threshold of a great enterprise, and it should be a point of honour for each one of us to show the gloomy prophets in Peking that Europeans and Chinese could indeed live and work together in harmony, each striving to realize the same high aims.

For nine days we were obliged to remain in Pao-t'ou, chafing to be off. The hired camels could not be placed at our disposal before May 18th. In the meantime we busied ourselves with the innumerable practical matters and purchases that are always entailed in the equipment of a large caravan. It was at this time that GEORG SÖDERBOM was enrolled as assistant to LARSON. He was the son of a Swedish missionary, born in Kalgan, and only 23 years of age. He spoke Chinese fluently as well as Swedish and English, and also some Mongolian and German. As he had spent the whole of his life in this borderland between China and Mongolia he was a very valuable asset for the expedition, and he remained in my service nearly seven years.

We had no need to be idle. The provisions were re-packed in their four hundred boxes in such a way that only one box would need to be opened every day. Thus every box contained a selection of tinned food: soup, fish, corned beef, sardines, vegetables etc., as well as spices, biscuits, sugar, tea and coffee etc. Rice and flour were kept in stout sacks. Each member was responsible for his private belongings, clothes, books, writing material, photographic equipment, instruments and so on. The owners' names were painted on the wooden boxes so that they might be easily recognized at the camping-places.

As our courtyard was too small for the loading of the camels we moved on May 16th to an inn outside the town, just near the north-western town-gate. There we had room enough and to spare, and we preferred to set up our blue and white Mongolian tents rather than sleep in the dark and dirty little holes that the inn-keeper might have placed at our disposal. The four hundred boxes, the sacks and bundles containing tents, sleeping-bags, pillows and blankets were taken out through the town-gate in ox-carts. When three-quarters had already been transported the remaining carts were stopped by the sentries and the customs, who declared that we must pay *likin* or inland duty, a tax from which the Ministry of Finance in Peking had promised to exempt us. Professor SIU and