

and larger than the others. Inside and at a long table out in the open all meals were taken: breakfast whenever desired, lunch at one o'clock, tea at five and supper at eight.

Nearest to the mess-tent was the kitchen and the tent of the Chinese boys, large and white — though the white was already beginning to turn into grey. And finally followed the Chinese quarter with ordinary blue tents. At the extreme end was the huge blue tent in which the Chinese students slept.

In the light of day the row of tents bore a certain resemblance to some of the blue mountain-chains of the Transhimalayas. The white ornaments that were sewn on the canvas in curious quirks and flourishes on either side of the tent-ridges reminded one of the eternally white-shimmering snow on the crests of the mountains. But they were not merely meaningless decorative patterns; they had a profound signification. On my own tent, which had richer ornamentations than the others, were sewn on the two lower corners of the long sides the ideogram *shou* (long life). In the middle of the canvas the same sign recurred in stylized form as a circle. Hovering around this with outspread wings fluttered five bats, *fu*, meaning »bliss». At the top, just under the tent-ridge, flew another bat with »bliss» under its wings, flanked on either side by stylized clouds.

Some of the tents were set up outside and to the south of the long tent-street. The first of these was that in which the pilot-balloons were filled; and this was also used in the evenings as a photographic dark-room. Then there were the Mongol tent and Dr HAUDE's tent — the latter filled and surrounded with all sorts of instrument-chests and boxes.

Outside HAUDE's tent stood on high wooden poles the cage containing the meteorological instruments, and fenced about as a holy of holies to keep over-curious Mongolian vagabonds at a distance. There, too, were planted the two metal masts, over ten meters in height, which bore the wireless antenna upon which we were dependent for the time-signals by which we were enabled to determine our longitudes — as long as our dry batteries held out.

Between the last-mentioned tents and the »street» were stacked the provision-chests and other baggage.

The camp was a splendid and impressive sight when viewed from one of the neighbouring hills to the south.

Near the kitchen-tent we had a real iron range with stove-pipe under the open sky. As long as we had SÖDERBOM with us in the main camp it was he who answered for the kitchen and the menu — a job which subsequently was taken over by KAULL. HUMMEL started by inspecting this section of the camp daily, coming down on the kitchen staff like a thousand of bricks if he found a tea-towel that was not quite clean, or a plate or cup not properly washed. But soon even the energetic doctor realized the hopelessness of such inspection, and it gradually lapsed of itself. And no-one was any the worse.