

II. B A C K T O S I N K I A N G

ARRANGEMENTS IN SWEDEN

I took occasion during my two months' stay in Sweden to apply to the government for financial support for the expedition, that now, since we had been obliged to shelve our aviation and more than half of the German members had returned to Germany, had a purely scientific program. I was now desirous of further extending this program, and wished also to be in a position to rely wholly on Swedish support.

After our expedition had started out in the spring of 1927, our Chinese committee in Peking had agreed that our Swedish staff might include, besides the members mentioned in our contract, also an astronomer and a philologist. These were to join the expedition in Urumchi. Already in the autumn of 1927 the young astronomer NILS P. AMBOLT of Lund had been appointed; he proceeded to Berlin and at the Geodätisches Institut in Potsdam underwent an eight months' course of training in geodesy, in order to be able to carry out pendulum observations for the determinations of gravity in Central Asia, where such work had never been performed.¹ AMBOLT was now to accompany me to Sinkiang. Not least for his account, but also for those members who were already working in the field, many new and expensive instruments were purchased, and our general equipment was supplemented in various ways.

For Governor-General YANG I had employed two Swedish car-mechanics who spoke Russian, Messrs CARLSON and LAGERBÄCK, and had also bought the four cars YANG had asked for as well as a set of tools for a whole engineering workshop.

As regards the philologist mentioned, the choice had already at an early stage fallen upon Dr HANNES SKÖLD, of Lund. Dr SKÖLD was master of several oriental languages, and it was originally intended that he should join us in Urumchi; but owing to various difficulties he actually never did join our »Wandering University». And finally, when all the obstacles that the great expedition met with on arrival at the border of Sinkiang became known, he returned to Sweden from Moscow, where he had for a long time been waiting for word to set off on his eastbound journey. From the European horizon our difficulties seemed so overwhelming that there appeared to be no hope of our being able to enter Sinkiang. Later on, SKÖLD was granted a travelling scholarship for a linguistic journey in the Pamirs in the summer of 1928; but this had no connection with our expedition.