

X. SIX MONTHS IN PEKING

Now followed for my own part six months in Peking, during which I had no time to undertake any journeys, a period that was crowded with organizing work, writing, conferences and studies. The various sub-expeditions were scattered in Sinkiang and Mongolia. At first I had HUMMEL, MONTTELL, LARSON and HASLUND with me more or less constantly; but these members, too, were gradually to disperse in various directions.

It is hard work and a great responsibility to lead an enterprise of such dimensions and such widely ramifying activity as our expedition. One feels torn between the different groups in the field and would like to be with all of them at once. But it was impossible even to inspect them once in a while, as the distances between the different groups amounted to several thousand kilometers. From Peking, however, I could reach them all more easily than from any other place. By means of admittedly defective telegraph and postal communications and by caravans and special messengers I was able to send them instructions, information and post, instruments and money. Here, too, the Chinese authorities, with whom I now and then had conferences in the interests of the expedition, were near at hand. And finally, from Peking I had easy communication with Stockholm, which was and remained our real anchoring-place.

The main motive for my long stay in the old capital was, however, the acquisition of the two lama temples for Chicago and Stockholm for the moneys that VINCENT BENDIX had placed at my disposition, an enterprise that proved exceedingly tedious on account of external and in part quite irrelevant circumstances.

TEMPLE NEGOTIATIONS

Of the many conferences that were held in connection with the acquisition of the two temples I will give only a few samples at random. CHANG CHI, the chairman of the Society for the Preservation of Cultural Objects and a high dignitary in the Kuomintang party, promised me in the course of a conversation that we