

sardines, ham from Stockholm with peas and other vegetables, rissoles with pea-pods and beans, preserved fruit, apricots, peaches and plums; and finally, Swedish *knäckebröd*, butter and cheese. Drinks were served — gin, lemonade, coffee and cognac — what more could one wish in the Gobi Desert?

The Mongolian chauffeurs and Chinese servants were called in and asked to sit down. A special speech was made to them, translated into Chinese by YEW and Mongol by GEORG. TSERAT made an excellent reply on behalf of himself and his comrades. He said that they all understood the importance of our expedition and declared that they were proud to be able to take part in it. We might rest assured that every one of them would do his duty.

The red candles burnt themselves out on the tree, and white candles were put on the table. That very day, Christmas Eve, we had completed the first main stage of our journey. YEW, KUNG and CHEN withdrew at midnight. We five Swedes remained seated at the table, reading poetry and listening to the gramophone until pretty late.

On Christmas morning the air was full of flying dust, and a vague semi-darkness surrounded us. Trees, bushes, dunes, tents and cars loomed through the mist like weird spectres. It was the first real dust-storm we had had since leaving Kuei-hua.

ROUND SOGHO-NOR

GEORG made an arrangement with a Chinese caravan to transport practically all our baggage, amounting to nearly ten tons, across the delta-region to the western shore of the Oboin-gol, where our next camp was to be pitched. With the almost empty cars we would make the detour round Lake Sogho-nor, a trackless route that was 85 km long and led over soft ground, impossible for loaded lorries.

So, on December 26th we drove northward, passing the spot where HÖRNER, HAUDE and CHEN had their camp at Christmas 1931, and where one of the Eurasia aeroplanes had landed. To the left was a fair-sized belt of barren dunes. The river disappeared here, but soon turned up again. Our route crossed a few isolated dunes, regularly formed, and shaped like half-moons or shields. It was here that HÖRNER and CHEN, the year before, had studied in detail the formation of the dunes and the laws by which they changed their shape when a strong wind blew over them. In one place we saw how a couple of isolated dunes had covered up the motor track made by the two lorries of the missionaries HUNTER and FISCHBACHER, who had passed here the previous year.

On a level, slightly undulating stretch covered with black gravel, the wheels sank in and the engines laboured. To the north-west Sogho-nor was visible in its entirety. It looks rather insignificant and is only 10 km across. I had navigated its clear salt-water in the autumn of 1927, together with HENNING HASLUND.