

of the Oboin-gol, passed Dash-obo, and stopped for a while at Baishing, where CHANGEROP MERIN's headquarters were. He and his staff of twenty-four lamas had eight yurts. Two of the tents stood inside a mud wall and attracted our attention. One was a temple-yurt, whose enormous cupola was supported by eight red-painted wooden columns; its interior was arranged like that of an ordinary temple, and the lamas sat there on cushions chanting their prayers. We listened for a time to the curious service, at once melodious and mystical. The other yurt was the *merin's* reception-yurt, in which we were given tea and cakes. See Plate 14.

We reached the left bank of the Eḍsen-gol at Manin-tsaghan a few kilometers south of Tsondol, the site of our headquarters in 1927, where our first meteorological station had carried on its work for two years. At Manin-tsaghan, where it runs in a single channel, the river was 117 m wide and was covered with a layer of ice half a meter thick. This was the place where a bridge should be built. From here BERGMAN resumed his mapping activities.

We went on W. S. W. over hard, sterile *gobi* of fine black gravel. Three of the lorries were far ahead. The mirage made them hover a little above the horizon, so that they looked like aeroplanes which had just taken off. Sometimes they formed three triangles, point downwards and base uppermost; but they were continually changing form and position, and it was most amusing to watch them.

We passed a long line of ruined watch-towers where BERGMAN in 1930—31 had discovered so many Chinese records on wood, from the time of the Han dynasty; and soon afterwards we crossed the dry channel of the Narin-köl.

### THE MÖREN-GOL

Driving swiftly, we soon reached the eastern arm of the Mören-gol, a river which branches off from the Eḍsen-gol in the region of Bayan-bogdo and terminates in Ghashun-nor. The eastern arm of the Mören-gol was 161 m wide, but the ice-covered stream measured only 107 m in width. The greatest depth was only 1.25 m, of which 0.8 was ice. One could see how this ice had been formed by new water flowing down over the older ice, layer above layer.

The western arm is three kilometers away, and is larger than the eastern one. The width of the bed was 187 m, that of the ice-crust 162 m. The maximum depth measured was 1.3 m.

Camp no. 22 was pitched on the bank of the left arm; and here we stayed over a day, as certain preparations had to be made for the crossing of the Black Gobi. Not the least important task to be carried out was to break up ice with axes and picks and fill nine bags with it — our water supply for the desert.

Our camp was situated on the main caravan road to Hami and about ten kilometers to the north of the Western Temple or Eḍsen-lamain-sume.