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GUSTAV JOHN RAMSTEDT

SEVEN JOURNEYS EASTWARD

1898-1912

Among the Cheremis, Kalmyks,
Mongols and in Turkestan
and to Afghanistan

With 52 Photographs by the Author

Translated from the Swedish & Edited

by

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PERMISSIONS

The Finnish publishing house, Werner Söderström Co., granted permission to use the photographs of their original Finnish edition. The three surviving Ramstedt children (Elma, Erdem, Sedkil) kindly gave permission for the issuance of the English translation. To all these, thanks.

PUBLICATION HISTORY AND
TRANSLATOR'S REMARKS

Ramstedt's work was originally issued in Finnish under the title Seitsemän retkeä itään, "Seven Trips to the Orient" (Helsinki-Porvoo, W. Söderström Co., 1944 and 1946, 244 pages plus illustrations and map; 2nd ed., 1953, 3rd ed., 1961). The last section was composed of a translation of various Mongolian songs. A Swedish translation by Mary Numelin under the title Sju resor i östern 1898-1912 was published in 1961 (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 217 pp.) but without the illustrations. This also contained a brief preface by Professor Björn Collinder, and concluded with his translation into Swedish of Ramstedt's Finnish version of one Mongolian folk tune, but omitting the others. All of these are omitted here.

The English translation has been made from the Swedish translation, after which it was reviewed and compared with the Finnish original by my long-time friend and colleague, Professor Alo Raun, as an additional check for accuracy. I express my thanks to him here for this labor. Dr. Raun advises that the Finnish edition contains a few paragraphs and sentences that were dropped from the Swedish version. These are tacitly restored without special notation to their original position. It does not seem called for to make commentary on the differences between the Finnish printings, but the Swedish translation occasionally contains phrases and words not in the Finnish, as well as occasional unimportant mistakes. I make these remarks for the sake of any reader who might use the Finnish or Swedish texts. I have probably made some mistakes of my own, but will trust that they do not concern crucial matters. Some corrections by P. Aalto of minor mis-identifications (mostly in the final chapter about 1912) have been incorporated directly into the translation without special

note, as part of the editorial process. I have also transferred some of the narration of Chapter 3 into Chapter 2, where I think it better belongs; otherwise, the divisions remain as made by the author.

The complete text of the book is translated, though there are some slow-moving and over-long incidents, especially in the sixth chapter, which might be dropped entirely on the grounds of contributing little to the knowledge of Asia, but I did not feel it my place to make these judgments, and wished to preserve the integrity of the original work as written. This is quite a lively and interesting account by one of the great linguistic investigators of Altaic peoples, and it should find a good reception among students of Finno-Ugric peoples as well of those interested in Central Asian Turks and Mongols.

I must thank Professor Pentti Aalto for assistance and encouragement. Dr. Aalto states that the book was dictated to a stenographer of the publisher, around Christmas, 1943, without the use of any notes, the year Ramstedt retired from University teaching at the age of 70. I owe thanks to fil. dr. Lars-Erik Nyman (Lund) for securing me a copy to use. Mr. Robert G. Service gave the manuscript a long critical reading, and made recommendations for many stylistic improvements. He removed a lot of "translatorese" which remained in my style despite my re-readings. Finally, thanks to Alicia J. Campi, who performed the final typing. All responsibility for errors remains with me.

September 7, 1977

John R. Krueger