self-respect of the Mongol people. In Houho, I had a chance of inspecting the newly founded officers' school of the Mengchiang army to which the graduates of the now three-year-old cadet's school are being transferred. At the time of my visit, twenty young Mongols were being trained as company commanders. All of them were of excellent physique and comparatively tall. After three years of training they will join the regular army units as lieutenants. Specially qualified graduates will be given an opportunity to continue their military training at one of the military academies in Japan. The head of the officers' school is a Mongol major general, while the instruction officers are Japanese. The cleanliness and tidiness of the inmates' living quarters could hardly be surpassed. In the courtyard of the barracks I was shown a Genghis Khan altar in front of which the future officers pay homage twice a day.

* * *

The people of Mengchiang, although still under Japanese guardianship, are now enjoying the very things to which Roosevelt is only paying lip service, namely, freedom from want and freedom from fear. They have every reason to look to the future with full confidence and to continue their preparations for Mengchiang's role of becoming a useful member in the society of East Asia's states. This may be regarded as the underlying idea of Japan's policy in Mengchiang, where the Japanese Army authorities have recently handed over to the civil government all administrative affairs of a not strictly military character. It is perfectly natural that Japan's policy should also serve the interests of Japan herself; but the beneficiaries of this policy will at the same time be the people of Mengchiang and, in the last analysis, the community of East Asia's nations.

"In the spirit of virtue and justice"
(written for this article by Li Shou-hsin, commander in chief of the Mongolian army)

LAMAISM IN MONGOLIA

By HERMANN CONSTEN

No other religion has given rise in the mind of the average person to such fantastic ideas as has Lamaism; partly because it is indeed a strange religion, and partly because the literature on this subject is either incomprehensible to the layman —being written for the specialist only—or the product of an adventurous and wild imagination, appealing to the reader's desire for excitement rather than his thirst for knowledge. The following pages give the layman a factual and interesting account of Lamaism in Mongolia, of its development and present state, followed by a brief summary of the so-called "direct way" of Lamaism.

The author has lived many years in Mongolia, where he has personally known many of the high lamas and Khubilgans; he has mapped Outer Mongolia and has published a book entitled "Weideplätze der Mongolen" (Mongol Pastures). The photos he supplied for this article have never been published before. As there is no standard transcription of Mongol words into English, the author has used the most common forms.—K.M.

SOME centuries after the death of the Buddha, there occurred a split within Buddhism into two branches, Mahayana and Hinayana. The difference between these two, as described in *The XXth Century* of March 1942 (p.178), is mainly to be found in the fact that in Hinayana the ultimate goal of the individual's efforts is the attainment of liberation—Nirvana—for himself. In Mahayana, on the other hand, the saint is supposed to renounce his right to enter

Nirvana—which he has gained in many hardships and sacrifices through countless former existences—in order to help other creatures to reach the same goal. He becomes a Boddhisatta, a being who has reached the penultimate state before Full Awakening.

Mahayana Buddhism quickly merged with pre-Buddhist religious ideas and practices, many of them of a very primitive kind, and developed a huge pantheon of gods. As it expanded northward to the tribes of Central Asia it adopted many of their crude paraphernalia of witchcraft and sorcery. The merging of an already corrupted Mahayana Buddhism with the native Tibetan religions, the Bon religion, and Shamanism (Bon probably means doctrine; Shamans are the medicine men in Central and Northern Asia) is what is commonly known as popular Lamaism.

THE PIOUS QUEENS

About 632 A.D., King Srong-Tsan-Gampo of Tibet (629-650) sent one of his viziers to India to fetch sacred books and ritual pictures and to arrange an alphabet for the Tibetan language. This the vizier did, bringing back with him a degenerate form of Mahayana Buddhism and inventing an alphabet for the Tibetan language on the model of a North Indian alphabet. To the Mongols this Tibetan writing is the holy script of their church, which every lama must know.

The Chinese emperor T'ai Tsung (627-649) gave a princess in marriage to the mighty Tibetan monarch, who had erected a huge kingdom in Central Asia. The princess joined a previously acquired Nepalese wife of Srong-Tsan-Gampo in her enthusiasm for Mahayana Buddhism, an enthusiasm which was also shared by their king. Owing to the influence of these two women the newly imported Buddhism gained ground in Tibet—slowly but steadily, in spite of the opposition of Bon Shamanism and the warrior caste which clung to the old faith. Both queens play an important part in Lamaist iconography up to the present day and are said to be reincarnations of the goddesses White Tara and Green Tara.

BAD TIMES AND BAD SAINTS

For some time after the death of King Srong-Tsan-Gampo, the new creed declined. A revival came under one of his successors, who summoned the famous Tantrist Padma Sambhava from India. Only after his arrival in Lhasa in 747 can we really speak of Lamaism as a separate Buddhist faith.

Padma Sambhava was one of the worst criminals among the many shady characters which the corruption of Buddhism has produced. He was an adventurer rather than an apostle, a bragging quack doctor and magician. He was also a true priest of the demons. He would never pass up an adventure or love affair—preferably with a princess—or refrain from murder for selfish or political reasons. Finally, one of the queens, who was an ardent adherent of Shamanism, succeeded by a Potipharian intrigue in chasing him and his closest collaborators out of the country.

But Padma Sambhava had succeeded in corrupting Lamaism by mixing the questionable traits of a degenerate Indian religion and demonology with black magic of the worst kind and a bit of renunciation of the world for decoy. All this was permeated by the practices of the native shamans. Buddhism is hardly the name for this queer form of religion, even if it is constantly on the lips of the lamas.

MAGIC AND EROTIC

Tantra is a term used in India for certain magic scriptures and magic practices largely connected with sex. The adherents of Tantrism believe these to have been transmitted to one of the patriarchs of their sect by Maidari (Pali: Metteyya; Sanskrit: Maitreya; Chinese: Mileifo), the coming Buddha. To the Tibetans and Mongols, Tantra means all literature on magic. Such books teach the Dharanis—mystic formulas which are supposed to have the power to conjure a god. A Dharani contains especially powerful magic syllables, called Mantras. After either meditation or self-induced ecstasy brought about by Dharanis,

mystic gestures (Mudra) and music, a Tantrist lama claims to be able to conjure a deity and receive from him the desired magic faculties.

In its earliest stages, Tantrism was permeated by Shaktism, a religion of the Indian aborigines which had entered into the Aryan cults. Shakti (or Sakti) is the female principle, the personification of the fertile mother of the world. The erotic elements were stressed in this cult. This appealed to the adventurers who corrupted the Lamaist mode of thought.

As the worship of mighty female deities penetrated the cult, it became a matter of course that the Boddhisattas were paired with their female energies, the Shaktis. Thus the Boddhisatta Avalokitesvara (Chinese: Kwan-yin) was supposed to have created for himself a female energy, the goddess Tara, out of his tears. The representation of a Shakti in drastic embrace with her Boddhisatta is an outstanding feature of the secret teachings of Tantrism. Such erotic groups, the plastic representation of which we observe with astonishment in all lama temples, are called Yab-Yum by the Mongols, Yab meaning "Father" and Yum the "Chosen Mother."

The word "lama," from which the religion derives its name, is a honorific title for fully ordained monks. In the early stages of Lamaism in Tibet we can distinguish White Lamas, Black Hat Lamas, Red Cap Lamas, and—later—Yellow Cap Lamas. The first three were in reality offsprings of the Bon religion and sacrificed humans, a practice which we also find with the early Tantrists. The main representatives of the Red Cap Church were the Sakya Lamas. In spite of their vows of chastity, these lamas married, in order to have a son who could become their successor. The abbots bequeathed their power and position to their sons, and thus the Sakya hierarchy gained dynastic powers, while the actual royal power withered and finally crumbled in the blasts of the Mongol invasion under Genghis Khan.

Genghis Khan tolerated practically every form of religion except Islam. He himself remained faithful to Shamanism, but through his conquests the hitherto Shamanist Mongols came in contact with Tibetan Lamaism. In 1244 his grandson summoned the head of the Red Cap Lamas, so that he might cure him of a severe illness. During his stay in Mongolia this learned man made an attempt to adapt the Uigur writing to the Mongol language. But only a later Red Cap Lama succeeded.

"DIRTY RUFFIANS"

In the year 1261 Kublai Khan summoned the abbot of a Red Church monastery in Tibet to Khanbalik, as Peking was then called. Marco Polo gives us a description of the Lamaist Tantrists, who had come from Tibet and Kashmir to live at Kublai's court. He describes them as a lot of ruffians, dirty and with matted hair. To augment their evil magic powers, they devoured the roasted flesh of executed criminals. But, according to Marco Polo, the magic powers of these Red Cap Lamas seem to have made the greatest impression at court. Any beverage desired by the Khan, wine or fermented mare's milk, would fill the cups without human aid, and these would then float over a distance of ten feet into the outstretched hand of the Great Khan.

Though Kublai tolerated all creeds—his mother and one of his queens were Nestorian Christians—he himself fell for the Red Church. Lama monasteries were erected in Peking, the dilapidated Buddhist ones on the sacred mountains of Wutaishan were repaired for Lamaist use. The *Kandjur*, the collection of Tibetan sacred scriptures (108 volumes containing 689 works), was now translated into Mongolian. But this translation is hardly ever used today; the Tibetan edition constitutes the basic selection of sacred books and is found in every temple. Under Kublai's successors, lama temples sprang up like mushrooms, filled with countless vagabond mendicant monks, who fleeced the population like veritable racketeers. Yet it was a former Red Cap Lama who put an end to the Mongol rule over China by forcing the last Mongol emperor to retreat to Mongolia. This

FIG. 1 "Om A Hum," a Dharani (magic formula) in Tibetan letters, cut into a mountain near Urga and filled in with white

LAMAISM

FIG. 2 The mummy of the famous Jonsun Lama in the Choi-ge Lama Khürä. He was a Tibetan and the teacher of the last Khutuktu of Urga, whose portrait is seen at the right

FIG. 3 Tsagan Sigurtei, the "Goddess with the White Umbrella," a three-headed, eight-armed form of the goddess Tara which, with the White and the Green Tara, forms a trinity. Her white umbrella wards off all evil. Note the "Eight Offerings" on the altar

FIG. 4 Prayer whee inscribed with the magic syllables *"Om ma-ni pad-me hum"* ("O Jewel in the Lotus!")

FIG. 5 A ritual vessel (Gabala) made out of the skull of a nun who allegedly never smoked, drank, or loved. This makes it worthy of being used in the cult of the Tantra form of the Tara. (From the author's own collection)

FIG. 6 Lamas at work constructing a Mandala for a festival of Manla, the Buddha of medicine. The intricate design is made with different-colored rice flour. The colors are applied from a copper horn which must be held in the left hand. The flour is made to flow out of the horn by means of a rasping action by the right hand

ex-lama founded the national dynasty of the Ming in 1368. The Mongols, after returning to their steppes, temporarily reverted to Shamanism.

"THOU SHALT NOT KILL"

The sorely needed reformation of Lamaism in Tibet was brought about by a Red Cap Lama, Tsongkhapa (1357-1417), a man of great learning, noble ideals, and a pure life.

Tsongkhapa's church is called the Yellow Church because he reintroduced the yellow beggar's robe of original Buddhism and the high, curved cap, also yellow, in order to distinguish his followers from the other lamas. He reinstated the mendicant orders with strict Buddhist discipline; he demanded celibacy and chastity. He gave the monk's life the original stern routine and discipline. He condemned black magic and all its rites and abolished the witchcraft of Tantra practices. He also abolished blood sacrifices of any kind as being contrary to the Buddha's foremost commandment: "Thou shalt not kill."

Legend narrates: During a dispute between the head of the Sakya Lamas and Tsongkhapa, the former, in the heat of the discussion, seized and crushed a louse. Tsongkhapa flung at his adversary: "Be silent! I hear between your fingernails the agonized cry of a dying creature." At this the Sakya Lama professed himself vanquished and acknowledged the new church.

If Tsongkhapa demanded much from his followers in the way of discipline and renunciation, he also lifted the Yellow Lamas high above the laymen. They ranked with the gods, and their church now ruled Tibet. Unfortunately, the high ideals of Tsongkhapa did not reach the masses, although they are still observed by all true Yellow Lamas. His third successor—the first rightfully to bear the title of Dalai Lama—was again an accomplished deceiver and conjuring magician. The hoof prints of his horse formed a Mantra, the six sacred magic syllables *"Om ma-ni pad-me hum"* (O Jewel in the Lotus!).

After the visit of this successor to Mongolia, a prince of Eastern Mongolia decreed the abolition of the Shamanist practice of blood sacrifices. No more living creatures—women, slaves, horses, dogs—were to follow the deceased into his grave to serve him in another existence. Such sacrifices should be replaced by presents to the lamas, whose duty it was, in return, to pray for the salvation of the deceased's soul and for his well-being in the other world.

When the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet, he left as a compensation the incarnation of the Boddhisatta of Wisdom in Mongolia, who is reborn in the Dongkor Khutuktu, the highest Lamaist functionary of Inner Mongolia. Thus, with the help of the idea of the migration of souls, the new Mongol Church could be effectively linked with the mother church in Tibet.

GODS IN HUMAN FORM

The Aryan peoples of pre-Buddhist India already believed in the transcendent power of the Karma, i.e., the result of our deeds, which leads to rebirth. Lamaism evolved the doctrine of the Khubilgans. These are alleged reincarnations of a Buddha or of one of the many Boddhisattas, gods, or goddesses in Lamaism's well-stocked pantheon. Venerable dignitaries of the church, even famous princes or heroes, may reappear as Khubilgans. Some of these were given the title of Gegen by the Chinese emperor.

Some female deities are reborn in a female and a male Khubilgan simultaneously, the best known being the White Tara. She was reborn in the reigning empress of Russia; at the same time her male reincarnation appeared among the Mongols. If a Tsar ruled Russia, the female incarnation was found among a tribe in Tsungaria. This mystic connection of Lamaism with their imperial house was no small political aid to the Russians in their penetration of Central Asia and Outer Mongolia.

When a Khubilgan dies, his soul is supposed to enter a child born forty-nine days later. After about a year has

elapsed, the lamas set out in search of his reincarnation in a district designated by the dying Khubilgan as the place where he will reappear. They test every child of suitable age by showing it a number of articles, one of which belonged to the holy man. If the child grasps and holds this one article, it is thought to have recognized its former possession. Several such applicants are then brought before the high lamas for final decision. The chosen Khubilgan receives a careful, solely ecclesiastical education. Every day he hears tales of his deeds in former existences, until he becomes thoroughly familiar with the personality he is supposed to be. If he turns out badly, he is often quietly poisoned and another baby chosen. This may not always be simple. Some of the inferior Gegens, called Werewolf Khubilgans, know how to protect themselves. I have known such reincarnations to play an important part in Outer Mongolia by reason of their ruthlessness. The number of acknowledged Gegen varies, even in official lists. About two hundred, who enjoyed a greater or lesser degree of veneration, could be counted in Outer and Inner Mongolia around 1920.

In order to connect the Mongolian grasslands even closer with the Tibetan Yellow Church, one Dalai Lama was reborn in a Mongol prince. He was educated in Mongolia up to his fourteenth year by the Dongkor Khutuktu and then brought to Lhasa. For him, too, the Mongols desired a substitute, which they obtained in the reincarnation of the famous Tibetan historian Taranatha. He is the highest dignitary in the Lamaist hierarchy after the Dalai and the Panchen Lamas. This reincarnation resided from that time on in Urga (Outer Mongolia) and is called Maidari Khutuktu. The last Maidari Khutuktu of Urga was blind, but a great libertine and drunkard, aside from being married. In the course of the adventures of the Russian Baron Ungern-Sternberg, who planned a Mongol-Tibetan ecclesiastical state, he fell into the hands of the Soviets, when they occupied Urga, and died soon after. The Soviets, of course, did not allow the installation of a successor. The reincarnation—a Tibetan like his predecessor—has been living in Lhasa for many years, but his identity and whereabouts are kept a secret.

ATHEIST, MONOTHEIST, POLYTHEIST

Fundamentally, the higher lamas, especially the mystics, are atheists, for the Buddha denied the existence of a world creator or eternal ruler of the universe. Aside from the Buddha—who is not and never claimed to be a god in the ordinary sense of the word—they acknowledge no divine principle, no superior, grace-dispensing god. Yet as a follower of the Buddha the lama is monotheist; as a worshiper of the countless forms of divine apparition he is polytheist.

The mystics believe in the unreality and transitoriness of all existing forms. They believe and teach Voidness. They believe that the individual does not contain an ego but is merely a bundle of processes activated by the thirst for sentient existence. Since it is composed entirely of matter, the individual perishes in death. But all those processes which we can group under the three headings of speech, thought, and action give each individual a certain character. The fruition of these three manifestations is the deed, its moral outcome is called Karma. They believe in the transcendent powers of the deed, i.e., the Karma alone survives death.

The thirst for new life leads to rebirth in a new form, determined by Karma. The new individual, bearing within himself the characteristics of his own making in past lives, now harvests the results of his former deeds: he is burdened with his Karma as with "original sin."

To escape from this circle of rebirths into Nirvana, to reach the "not returning to life" by the extinction of all desires, the Buddha taught the Noble Eightfold Path. Meditation and instructive devotion are employed to attain this end.

From the adoration of the Buddha, there developed—starting with the cre-

mation of the Buddha's corpse—the cult of relics, the stupa, and later on the pictorial representation of the Buddha, of his mythical precursors, and of Maidari, the Buddha-to-come of the next world period. Those who wished to devote their entire life to their liberation joined a monastic order or entered a convent.

The Bolshevization of Outer Mongolia has destroyed its monastic life; the lamas scattered or became soldiers. The following statements about monasteries and their lamas, as far as Outer Mongolia is concerned, therefore refer to things of the past.

TEMPLES ON WHEELS

Outer Mongolia was divided into four Aimaks (dukedoms), these in 86 Koshuns, and these in several Sumuns according to their size. Each Koshun had at least one monastery of the Khürä type, and each Sumun one called a Sumä. A third category comprised independent monasteries called Khits.

Before the Mongols erected permanent temples they had transportable temple yurts; even their main temples were on wheels. Oxen or camels pulled them across the steppes. If camp was pitched on a grazing ground, lamas and laymen erected their tents in a circle around the temple. A camp of this kind was called a Khürä. One of the most famous Khürä was that of the Maidari Khutuktu. When, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, he settled down beside the Tola River, where Urga, the Ulan Bator (Red Hero) of the Soviets stands today, his group of temples retained the name Khürä. This example was soon followed by other migrant temple yurts. Their lamas lived in the vicinity of the now permanent "camp," called Da Khürä (great camp). They founded cities and cultural centers; but the name Khürä stuck to this type of monastery.

Sumä, a designation found in great numbers on maps of Mongolia, means nothing but temple. They are temples of fixed location in the steppes, but in their immediate neighborhood no monks live in yurts or cells. Their lamas live on their own. They lead a nomadic life with their families on the surrounding grazing grounds. The Sumun, an organized administration unit of a hundred to a hundred and fifty families, is responsible for the upkeep of its temple.

Only on great festivals are the desolation and solitude of the temple dispelled by yellow-capped lamas riding up in noisy groups. The rats scatter when the heavy red doors squeak and swing open. Small lamps light up the swept and dusted altars. They throw flickering lights on forgotten Buddhas and grimacing demons. The popular festival on horseback is on. Only for the prostrations do the visitors climb out of the saddle. When the festive noise has ceased, when the lights have gone out, when the recitative prayer with the shrill voices of the novices and the deep heavy bass of the lamas is no longer heard or the dull sound of the drums and the shrill trumpet of the World Elephant, when the victorious wrestler and the winning race horse have returned to camp and herd—then the Sumä lies once more forsaken and solitary. Only hares, marmots, and antelopes hear the tinkling of the temple bells in the evening wind. Rats and mice return to the temple; they skip over the altars and the blessing hands of the Buddha and play around the skull crowns of the Terrible Ones. In the night the howling of the wolves is answered by the war bark of distant dogs.

Nunneries are also found in Mongolia, though they are not numerous. Lamaism despises women as being the source of life and all the sufferings of a renewed existence. But it allows women to retire from the world and become nuns (Fig. 10), or remain in the world and be faithful lay members. A woman's saintly life would be rewarded by rebirth as a man—the next step toward salvation.

TRADE PROFITS AND NO TAXES

Monasteries wese founded with the help of princes and nobility. This prestige established Lamaism firmly in the social system of the Mongols. Shamanism was almost completely crowded out. Prom-

inent among all monasteries were the imperial ones, founded and kept up since Kang-hsi's time by the emperors of China. Their influence was ever on the increase through such temples depending on them. Nor was there ever a shortage of monks, because—following a practice introduced by Kang-hsi—every first-born son of a Mongol became a lama. In this way Chinese diplomacy simply and effectively checked the danger of a strong Mongol warrior caste.

The lama was put on the same social level with the nobility. He, too, was exempt from taxation. His influence on the leaders and—using their prestige—on the blindly believing people was strengthened by the doctrine of reincarnation. The sons of princes and noblemen became pupils in the monasteries; some of the pupils became abbots; the dead abbots were reborn in a child of the nobility. If a monastery is lucky enough to harbor a famous and popular incarnation, its prestige grows. His family will shower it with presents in herds and Shabinars. These are slaves of humble origin, who are presented to a monastery with their family and belongings as serfs. They formed a special class of Mongol people, were immune from ordinary taxes, and owed allegiance, service, and obedience to their monastery only; they felt it an honor to be part of its big community. The Khutuktu of Urga reigned over more than 20,000 Shabinar families. Strictly regulated tributes from these serfs guaranteed a minimum of existence to a monastery. The rule over them, as well as the administration of the monastery itself, lay in the hands of its secular revenue office.

Prince, nobleman, and lama fostered trade, and the Shabinars were indispensable to trade. The monastery was not only a center of Lamaist cult but also of secular trade. With the help of their Shabinars and the herds given to them, they carried on a well-organized transport business in gold, silver, tea, hides, camel hair, antlers of the maral stag, etc., and guaranteed against the loss of wares. The Shabinars convoyed such caravans. They would often be granted a certain percentage of share in the profit in return for the sumpter animals supplied by them; or they might even undertake the whole transport as a transaction of their own, if they paid the monastery a carefully calculated sum for this privilege.

Some attributes of Lamaist deities, including crown and hanging belt of human skulls; drum made of children's skulls; Vajra of two thunderbolts; and skull bowl

BENEVOLENT AND TERRIBLE GODS

Most monasteries are built of unbaked bricks and wood, surrounded by a stone wall or board fence. The style is a mixture of Tibetan and Chinese, or purely Chinese for imperial foundations.

On entering the temple one faces the main image set up against the back wall, for instance a statue of Tsongkhapa, or, more often, a trinity, varying according to the deity to whom the temple is dedicated. It is often a trinity of Tsongkhapa and his two favorite pupils, similar to the group of the Buddha with two disciples; or three forms of the goddess Tara (FIG. 3).

The figures of deities are of two kinds: the benevolent and the wrathful. The former sit with legs folded on the lotus throne or riding animals. Figures of famous incarnations sit in the meditation posture of the Buddha. The hands hold emblems or form one of the mystic finger positions called Mudra. The coming savior Maidari is often of huge size; he stands erect, with folded hands. Ariabolo (Sanskrit: Avalokitesvara; Chinese: Kwan-yin), with an aureole of a thousand hands holding emblems and dispensing blessings, is often found in Mongol temples, but not as commonly as in China.

To the wrathful group belong the Dokshit, the Terrible Ones. They defend the teachings of the Buddha against his en-

emies. These many-headed gods are almost always portrayed in a state of sexual excitement, alone, or with the Yum on their folded legs, or dancing with their Yum. A typical example of the fury of such figures is Yamantaka, who may be found in practically every Mongol temple and countless small bronzes, for this nine-headed god with thirty-four hands and pendants of skulls has tamed the god of death. His sixteen feet trample on a man, bull, elephant, donkey, camel, dog, sheep, fox, and several birds. He, too, embraces his Yum.

The Heroic Dokshit and the Terrible Dokshit resemble each other closely, as if the sickening imagination of Lamaism had at last spent itself in these horrors of distorted human muscularity. The former trample on demons or animals, the latter ride on their respective mounts: horse, mule, elephant, or tiger. Among the Eight Terrible Ones there is one female deity, Lhamo. She is the guardian of Lhasa and sits sideways on a mule led by an elephant-headed witch by reins made of living snakes. Another witch drives it over a field of blood and bones.

A detailed description of all the terrible aspects given to Buddhas and Bodhisattas would fill volumes. Visions and sexual inhibitions have contorted the artistic imagination and given these gods all the ugliness of exaggerated monstrosities, in order to make them able protectors of the Buddha's faith against imaginary enemies.

OFFERINGS AND THE MAGIC CIRCLE

The long table which serves as an altar stands before the main gods on the north wall. The gods face the southern entrance doors. Before them are placed the Eight Offerings:

1. Wheel: it leads to boundless perfection. Symbol of Buddha's teaching.
2. White conch shell: symbol of conversion and happiness therein.
3. White umbrella: it destroys wicked desires.
4. Pennant of salvation, in the shape of a round tent: red, yellow, and blue.
5. Two goldfish: they swim in the river of wealth and bliss.
6. Knot of happiness: symbol of the soul that has attained perfection.
7. White lotus: it is free from pollution and impurity, a symbol of Nirvana.
8. Vase of holy water: it contains all wishes.

Another group of symbols lined up on the altar are the Seven Precious Things. They are also regarded as offerings, though they really are the attributes of the Seven World Rulers, each of whom reigned in one world period as the secular counterpart to the Buddha. Between these objects are seven more offerings, bowls with saffron water, flowers, incense sticks, food, etc. In their midst stands the lamp with its eternal light and a receptacle for incense and its ashes. For different prayer services other offerings are added, e.g., a Mandala, a mirror, and sour milk—the latter in memory of a maiden who refreshed the Buddha with this beverage during his struggle for enlightenment under the Boddhi tree.

The Tantra Mandala was originally a magic circle outlined on the graveyard in order to conjure and hold some terrible god in it. This circle was then considered the abode of the deity and his or her retinue. As such it is subdivided into circles and squares filled with the symbols of the inhabiting deities. For special festivals such Mandalas are "built" with infinite labor and skill out of colored rice powder, in the temple of the god thus honored (FIG. 6). But there are also more durable Mandalas, temple fixtures painted, printed, or fashioned out of wood or metal. Following ritual rules, grains of rice are scattered on it, and by

The Eight Offerings

lifting it the lama offers up to the deity the whole world thus represented.

One of the most important instruments in Tantra rites is the magic dagger, Phurbu, with which the Mandala is outlined. It is often simply called the "Nail," as it nails down the conjured deity in the circle. It is three-edged; the handle is often a thunderbolt and—for conjuring purposes—the head of a three-eyed demon with a crown of skulls.

NOBODY TO PRAY TO

Early Buddhism had no prayer in our sense of the word. It did not acknowledge any gods, so there was nobody to pray to. The Buddha had entered Nirvana and terminated his existence. One could not pray to him either. The knowing may not molest the "completely extinguished" with profane requests. In prayer they should and would only achieve the purification of their hearts. Thus Mongol or Kalmuck Lamaism has no word for supplicating prayer because their prayers are not requests addressed to a certain god but rather avowals of faith, hymns of praise and glorification of the supreme Perfect One, recited in order to attain spiritual realization of a Buddha or Boddhisatta.

The temple's daily community prayer (Khural) is usually only attended by the lama pupils of from six to eighteen years of age. The higher lamas stay away from this regular service. The pupils, if they desire to become fully ordained monks, have to learn by heart all the commonly used Khurals. Like most religious books in Mongolia, these are in Tibetan, either handwritten or block-printed. Mongolian texts are rare and used only in a few monasteries. Some lamas know by heart the whole prayer service of thirty-nine Khurals, each lasting about an hour or even longer.

Three older lamas should always be present at the daily prayer service. One of them watches over the behavior of the pupils; if they fool around and play, he brings them to order with scolding or whipping. During prayer the lama pupils, or—in a great Khural—the fully ordained lamas, sit in a straight row in front of their prayer benches, their legs crossed under them. The position of hands, feet, and lama cloak must not deviate from strict rules, and they must be clean. It is forbidden to indulge in any nonsense, to laugh, chatter, quarrel, cough, spit, or blow the nose loudly. During recess, tea and food are passed round; the lama must not smack his lips or make any other sound while eating or drinking; he may not lick his cup, smoke, or keep his cap on his head. He must look straight ahead. He cannot leave without permission. Punishment is meted out to him who does not clap his hands at the correct moment during the prayer, or is late in beating the drum, blowing the conch shell, etc. The prayers should be intoned in a soft voice.

The ordained lamas join in the prayer on special days of fasting and prayer, or at festivals. One of the greatest holidays, not only for the lamas, but for the entire Mongol population, is the New Year festival, Tsagan Sara or "White Month." It is celebrated at the beginning of spring, from the first to the sixteenth day of the first month. The sixteen-days' service consists of a special New Year's prayer and fifteen daily prayers in commemoration of the Buddha's fifteen wondrous spiritual victories over the Brahman

The Seven Precious Things: The wheel as symbol of perfection in prayer; the magic gem which fulfills every wish; the queen jewel who rules by her beauty; the dignitary of the world ruler; the jewel elephant, symbol of the boundless extent of Buddhist teaching; the precious horse, symbol of succor in all needs; the general of the world ruler whose sword annihilates all scheming against the faith

adversaries of his new faith. There are also prayers in honor of the guardian deity of the temple.

Another great festive day is that of the procession in honor of Maidari, the Coming Buddha, when huge carts with large figures are pulled around the temple by pious laymen and lamas (FIG. 12). Still another festival with impressive prayer service is the Tsam, a ritual of exorcism (FIGS. 13 & 14), known as the "Devil's Dance" in Peking.

PRAYING IN RELAYS

Then there are the so-called "eternal prayers" (Gürüm). Relays of lamas pray from sunrise to sunset, from sunset to midnight, from midnight to sunrise, and so on, without the slightest interruption during replacement. Other eternal prayers are said if a prince or Gegen, a rich Mongol or his herds, is stricken with illness. Such special services can be quite expensive. There are Gürüm to ward off evil from a newly contracted marriage and to correct a woman's sterility. Others can grant more sons than daughters; others break the power of a wife over a henpecked husband.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CORRECT PROSTRATION

The lay Mongol ordinarily saves up the performance of his religious duties for a great festival Khural. But he may not take direct part in the prayer service or even enter the temple during it. He may only go around the temple from left to right and prostrate himself before the entrance. Every phase of this prostration has its special significance for the liberation of living beings from the circle of rebirth. He folds his hands in front of his chest as in prayer, lifts them over his head, opens them and folds them before his forehead, opens them again and lightly strokes mouth and chin. With hands folded before his chest the Mongol then kneels and throws himself flat, arms outstretched, face down, so that all limbs touch the ground. He rises making the same gestures in reverse order. Lamas and pilgrims often perform hundreds of these prostrations. Involuntarily they do them rhythmically—excellent gymnastics for the average Mongol, whose sole exercise otherwise is riding or wrestling, the only popular sport.

Pious Mongols make pilgrimages to their temples, sometimes miles from their yurts. Every three steps they prostrate themselves, and it may thus take them weeks to complete the trip. If the prostrations are not correctly executed, the pilgrim will be reborn as a camel; or, if the forehead is not properly pressed to the earth, the culprit is reborn in one of the hells where he hangs head downwards over scorching fires. With each prostration the Mongol prays for the disappearance of all sin, and that he as well as every living creature—not excluding lice and flees which might be bothering him at the moment—may attain Buddhahood. A drunken Mongol, dirty and clumsy but with the seriousness of the intoxicated, who—scared by the consequences of any incorrectness—tries properly to execute the prostrations in order to free himself and all creatures from rebirth and become a Buddha: that is indeed a grotesque spectacle.

But if such attempts at religious practices by uneducated and mentally incapable Mongols seem ridiculous, a nightly prayer service is truly imposing, especially when one enters the temple from the terrible cold of a dark winter night in the steppes. In front of every high lama, a fire of horse- or camel-droppings glows in a pierced iron receptacle. Its smoke weaves veils around the statuary, throws shadows over the gilded faces of the quiet Buddhas and Boddhisattas, and makes the grimaces of the many-headed Terrible Ones in their Yab and Yum dance seem even more horrible.

WEDDING, BIRTH, DEATH

Aside from these festive meetings there are, of course, other prayer forms and formulas, like the Yöröl (wishful prayers). One of these is the above-mentioned prayer for the liberation of all creatures. There are also Yörölls as blessings.

Then there are wedding Yöröls. While bride and groom sit on the threshold of the yurt, the Yöröls of those deities are read in whose years the bride and groom were born. This ceremony also reveals a remnant of Mongol matriarchy, which still lingers in practice if not officially: the highest of the lamas present undertakes the "veneration of the bride"; he recites the wedding Yöröl, which is called the "lineage of the bride."

Another Yöröl manifests primitive superstition. It is a protective prayer for the friends and relatives of a deceased against the harm his spirit might do them. A Yöröl is recited during the first bath of the newborn, which is often the one and only bath a Mongol ever gets. Of course, a people of riders like the Mongols also have Yöröls for their horses, for protection and blessing in the race and for the winning horse.

Death, too, has its Khural with Yöröls. A lama must come at once if he is called to a deathbed; not to come would be worse than murder. The lama enters the yurt without addressing or even looking at anybody. He sits down by the side of the patient and does not move until the dying person has become accustomed to the sight of him. Then he places his prayer book on the head of the sick person. Every fully ordained lama always carries this book with him under his left arm; with it he usually dispenses benedictions to laymen by placing it on the head of the applicant. The sick person now knows that he is about to die and listens eagerly to the death prayer by Padma Sambhava, which every lama must know by heart in Mongolian and Tibetan. It is a guide to the other world, mixed with Yöröls, which gives much-needed advice to the soul: how it is to behave before the different-colored, luminous emanations of Buddhas, gods, spirits, and nongods, and how to pass through all temptations. One of the Yöröls which the soul must recite in the other world runs as follows:

> O you Buddhas of the five varieties and all other mighties who appeared before me, you who possess the five kinds of wisdom—when I am reborn in the material world, deign to elevate me, and save me from the steep rocks of intermediate births.

The lama also reads three prayers of penitence on behalf of the dying, in order to calm his soul, for they contain the oath of Maidari Buddha to protect the soul from rebirth.

"I BELIEVE IN THE LAMAS . . ."

The most important prayer for everybody is the profession of faith, with which every sacred act begins. It begins:

> I believe in the most holy and holy lamas, who serve as the base of all virtues, which come from the body, as well as those coming from the tongues and the thoughts of my relatives, my forebears, all living beings which live in heaven, and all Buddhas of the ten corners of the earth and the three periods. I believe in the lamas . . . who act as prototype, root, and basis of the Khutuktu . . . . I take my refuge in Buddha, I take my refuge in the holy teachings, I take my refuge in the order [of lamas] . . . .

There is another prayer which plays an important part in the life of every Mongol and which he must know by heart, as the Christian knows the Lord's Prayer. It is the Miktshin prayer, a short, pious wish which must be uttered before entering a temple: "May I join in a worthy manner the gathering of lamas, the precious things, the teachers of religion, and the leaders on the road to Nirvana." This prayer is written or pasted on a revolving stand in front of the temple door (FIG. 9), so that those who cannot recite it by heart—either because they are too stupid or too young—may recite it mechanically by revolving the contraption. This is probably the origin of the prayer wheel and other devices of mechanical praying.

PRAYERS WHOLESALE

The prayer wheel supplies Mongols and Tibetans with prayers wholesale. It is a hollow cylinder closed top and bottom, with a central axis around which it revolves when set in motion by pushing a handle at the bottom (FIG. 4). It is filled to capacity with printed or written prayer formulas, as, for example, the well-known *Om ma-ni pad-me hum*; or it may contain sacred sutras and books, or even entire religious encyclopedias. These prayer wheels come in all sizes,

FIG. 7 A lama pilgrim setting in motion the row of prayer wheels at the Maidari Temple in Urga

FIG. 8 Lamas of the Maidari Temple in Urga in holiday garb with ceremonial hats

Some of the photographs reproduced here could only be obtained with great difficulty. For instance, the entire council of lamas had to meet before the author was permitted to photograph the construction of the mandala (FIG. 6). In another case, the author had to pay heavy bribes to be allowed to photograph some interiors, since glass coverings had to be removed which necessitated the pronouncing of magic spells to prevent the respective spirits from escaping. At the last moment, the lama on duty asked for more money. In spite of receiving this, he still refused permission to photograph. As a result of the author's complaint to the head lama of the temple, this particular lama was suspended from all temple activities for his misdemeanor.

PILGRIMS, MONKS, AND NUNS

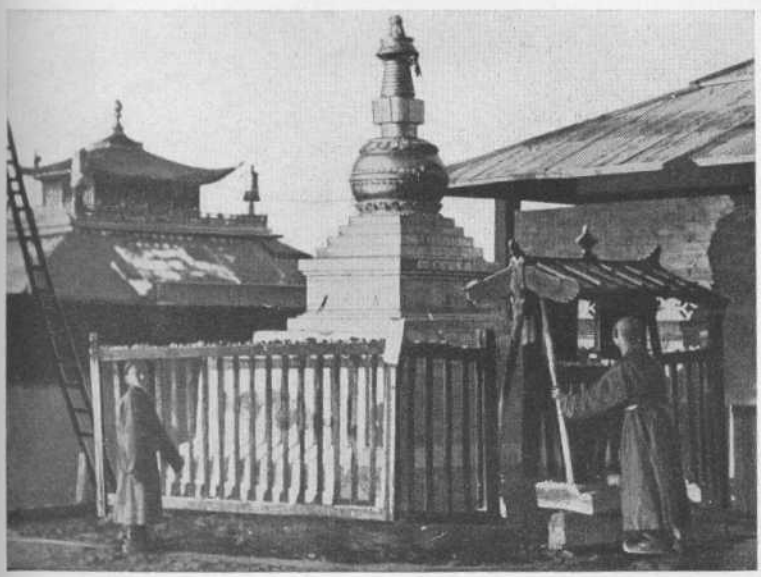

FIG. 9 The gilt stupa of the Dsun Khürä, Urga. At the temple gate a Mongol is reading the Miktshin prayer before entering

FIG. 10 A nun of Outer Mongolia in her yurt. But she is not a perfect saint—she smokes a pipe!

FIG. 11 The Khubilgan Manjushri Lama, who resided in the Manjushri Khit near Urga

FIG. 12 The carriage (float) of Maidari in the Maidari procession, Urga

FIG. 13 Two dancing skeletons in the Tsam (known in Peking as the "Devil's Dance") at Manjushri Khit

FIG. 14 Dance of Yamantaka, "who puts an end to death," in the Tsam at Manjushri Khit

from the tiny hand implement, set in motion by a flick of the wrist and kept going by the centrifugal force of small balls suspended from chains, to the giant drum turned by water. It requires a certain bodily exertion to set even one of the medium-sized prayer wheels in motion (FIG. 7). But, having done so, the entire contents of the cylinder are put down to one's credit, as if one had read and recited them personally one by one. Even wind and water may be pressed into service—water to turn the huge prayer wheels, wind to flutter the squares of cloth printed with prayers, many of which are joined and hung under the eaves of temples.

POWERFUL SYLLABLES

Related to prayers are the Mantras, mystic formulas without evident meaning. A Mantra is spoken at the beginning or in the middle of a Dharani. The lamas believe that the recitation of a Mantra such as *Om ma-ni pad-me hum* is extremely effective. Whoever understands these sacred, secret syllables and applies them correctly can bring about supernatural effects and conjure gods, spirits, and demons for service and succor, the Mantra being the "absolute, the eternal word."

Short Mantras of this kind are often represented in symbolical diagrams, and only the initiated can understand their meaning and effect. One of the oldest and most mystic is the Namchuwangdan. A wealth of writings has been devoted to this mysterious sign of the Ten Powerful Forms; all kinds of religious, astrological, even medical ideas have been superimposed in a vain effort to explain it.

The Namchuwangdan is used as an amulet and talisman; it protects house, hearth, and all belongings. We find it in almost every monastery of the Red and Yellow Church on doors and entrances in its ritual colors of blue, green, yellow, white, red, and black. It is printed or painted on prayer flags, carved in wood or chased in metal on book covers or amulet boxes. The frontal niche in the bulging part of the bottle pagoda often contains the Namchuwangdan in its ritual colors, on a lotus, against the background of a blue fig leaf with golden veins. Tantra calls it the "Viscera of the Earth Woman."

MASTERS OF THE DIRECT WAY

So far we have described the popular forms and cults of Mongol Lamaism. But the description would not be complete without adding something about other lamas in Mongolia. Although they are not numerous, they exist. In fact, if Lamaism were only all that we have said thus far, the natural question would arise as to how it is possible that such abject superstitions have acquired such dominion even over the educated few of Tibet and Mongolia.

Lamaism being derived from the teachings of the Buddha, there have from its very introduction into Mongolia been lamas who, disdaining popular renown or influence, devoted their lives exclusively to the attainment of the Noble Eightfold Path. These are recluses, living in complete retirement in the Khits (monasteries of recluses) far out in the steppe, on a sacred site or mountain. They are hermit lamas—Dajanchis.

An earthen wall usually encloses a small temple and a few yurts inhabited by the Dajanchis, a small number of superior Lamaist officials, lower, servile lamas, and monastery serfs (Shabinars). They live in a brotherhood without personal property. Their task is to supply the Dajanchis with the little food they require. A Khit has almost no income. There is no temple or prayer service. What is required for the modest upkeep is supplied by the Shabinars.

The Dajanchi lives in voluntary seclusion. He devotes himself solely to Samadhi. This is more than just meditation, which all lamas practice from time to time. Not every lama may enter a Khit, and few are eager to become "Masters of the Direct Way," though simple meditations are at times executed by every superior lama. In Mongolia there were hardly a hundred Dajanchis, who strove to grasp the mystic meaning of the void

through the practice of Absorption. This leads them to the limits of existence-nonexistence; and many a Dajanchi has thus passed away. A lama may not enter a Khit before completing his thirtieth year and not after his fortieth year. He must have studied at one of the great, famous universities of Lamaism, i.e., at Lhasa, Kunbum, or Urga. He must have mastered the highest knowledge of Lamaism, the science which teaches the essentials of wisdom in order to attain utmost cognition. This is achieved by a systematic study of the *Kandjur*. The lama entering a Khit must prove the extent of his knowledge in a short examination before the head of the monastery, who is not himself a Dajanchi. The choice of a teacher for the newcomer is left to chance. The first Dajanchi to awake from his Samadhi takes him on as his pupil. He guides him through a number of progressive absorptions. These recluses give up every sort of work or activity, every friendship and conversation with other lamas, except with their teacher. Even with the head of the monastery they only exchange a few words when absolutely necessary.

MASTERING DESIRE

During Samadhi, "the mood of non-thought-formation," the lama sits erect on a cushion in his simple yurt, an emaciated ascetic in the deathlike immobility of deepest absorption. His attitude is that of a Buddha. In his waxen hands he holds nothing but a rosary, but he does not move it. His sharp features are quiet and expressionless. His eyes are fixed on space. Not even the intake of the breath stirs the withered body.

Four degrees of common Lamaist meditation within the world of forms lead to four others in the formless worlds. From here, only the Masters of the Direct Way go on to a ninth degree. Practicing Samadhi, the lama is beyond consciousness and without perception; he rises into the Sphere of the Void. In a "meditative abstraction" that goes beyond mere meditation, in an "ecstatic equilibrium" in which not a single thought may be formed, powerful visions are created. "Nonmeditation plus nondistraction is the state of Samadhi. The lama is on the verge of form-destruction, or eternal rest, called Nirvana. But as his span of life has not yet been exhausted, the adept returns from this ninth stage into life until, at his death, he is forever freed from all forms of existence.

There are 116 progressive methods of practicing Samadhi, of which some help master the desires of the world. Some of these methods, when described exoterically, may horrify the reader. One of them shows the lama his own body falling apart in festering pieces; the skeleton bursts and splits, until all is finally consumed by a great flame. This Samadhi is a success if the Dajanchi sees rising out of his own skeleton a star with twenty-five to forty golden balls, and when a pearl appears on his forehead. In other terrifying Samadhis, the meditator finds himself amidst the devastating conflagration of the universe; horrible wild animals surround him; enormous, grimacing demons threaten him; snakes and dragons twist around his body—all projections of his own mind.

Another method serves as a protection against mental derangement. It is the Samadhi of the concentration on the Buddha. For seven days and seven nights the Dajanchi concentrates on the august image of the Buddha in the pure light of its beauty. He concentrates on this image and retains it in his mind to the exclusion of all else. First he concentrates on his forehead, from which flow an endless number of Buddhas, who then float back from all distances into his forehead. Then he concentrates on his heart. Again Buddhas appear, with thunderbolts of sapphire in their hands. Saints in the colored lights of their aureoles hover around these Buddhas, the last of whom stops before the Dajanchi and rests his staff on the meditator's heart; all the Buddhas and saints return into the heart. Concentration will cause Buddhas to emerge from all poses and return into them. Then the Dajanchi

concentrates thoughts and images on his navel. The navel extends, bursts, and out of it grows a wondrous lotus flower with golden leaves on a sapphire stem. A Buddha in all his glory is seated in the center of the blossom. Out of this Buddha's navel another lotus flower grows with another Buddha and so on until there are lotus flowers and Buddhas all around. Gradually they all return in reverse order into the lama's navel. In the Buddha Samadhi, the Dajanchi sees the earth as a transparent golden mirror, and feels himself getting as clear and transparent as the earth. When a Dajanchi dies, he is able to disregard the tempting or terrifying visions coming to meet him. Those with which he is already familiar through his Samadhis will have no power to detract him from the straight path to salvation.

MEN ABOVE GODS

The attraction of Lamaism for those who enter its order is not difficult to understand. No other highly developed religion grants its initiated servants quite that degree of power over men and gods, especially the gods. Theoretically, there is no limit to what the lama can do, because he forces the gods to perform miracles for and through him, according to the beliefs of the superstitious.

In Mongolia I have actually seen feats of magic and the control of forces unknown to us which science would have a hard time explaining. The superior lamas of the old school have always studied tirelessly and with the strictest spiritual discipline. Their knowledge, not only of texts and doctrine, but often also of men, medicine, and the affairs of the world, is remarkable. Western science will do away with many superstitions but will also destroy those realms of wisdom which no outsider has yet been able to contact, much less to enter.

To the average lay Mongol the existence of such powerful learning is known but not comprehended. He is content with the colorful outward manifestations, which to us seem extremely crude, even gross. Regarded critically from his point of vantage, it would seem a poor religion that cannot defend itself without terrorist gods who threaten its enemies with a cruelty condemned by the most fundamental morals. Only the altruistic efforts of the Boddhisattas to save all living beings, in which man joins in his prayers, commends the faith and gives it an ethical base of universal appeal :

BLESSING TO ALL