A Journey in Southern Siberia

THE MONGOLS, THEIR RELIGION
AND THEIR MYTHS

BY

JEREMIAH CURTIN


TRANSLATOR OF THE WORKS OF HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ

With a Map, and
Numerous Illustrations from Photographs

BOSTON

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

[1909]

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A Journey in Southern Siberia: Title Page

JEREMIAH CURTIN GOING UP THE STEPS OF MARS HILL TO THE PLACE WHERE ST.
PAUL ADDRESSED THE ATHENIANS. Frontispiece

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JEREMIAH CURTIN took the degree of Bachelor of Arts at Harvard College in 1863, having been a member of the last college class that studied their required mathematics under me as Assistant Professor. I found young Curtin's personal appearance and his mental processes unusual and interesting. He was a good scholar in general, with an extraordinary capacity for acquiring languages. In his autobiography (unpublished) he states that seven months and a half before he entered Harvard College he did not know one word of Latin or Greek, but at the admission examination he offered more of each language than was required. At the time of his death, 1906, he knew more than sixty languages and dialects, and spoke fluently every language of Europe and several of the languages of Asia. He was Secretary of Legation of the United States in Russia from 1864 to 1870, during which period he was acting consul-general for one year, 1865-1866. He was connected with the Bureau of Ethnology in the Smithsonian Institution from 1883 to 1891, and later was employed from time to time by the Bureau for special work.

In Siberia, during the journey which this volume describes, he studied the Buriat language with a Buriat who knew Russian, and hard as it was to acquire a strange language without the aid of books, he accomplished the feat in a few weeks. At sixty he learnt a new language as quickly as he did when a Harvard student. Having acquired a language, Curtin always wished to learn the history, principal achievements, myths, folk-lore, and religious beliefs and usages of the people who spoke that language. Hence his great learning, and his numerous publications on myths and folk-tales. Curtin is also known to the learned world by his translations from the Polish of Quo Vadis and eight other works of Henry Sienkiewicz. He published many valuable translations from the Russian and the Polish.
In the year 1900, between the 19th of July and the 15th of September, Curtin made the journey in southern Siberia which is the subject of the following volume, his object being to visit the birthplace of the Mongol race, and to see for himself the origins and survivals of a prepotent people which once subdued and ruled China, devastated Russia, conquered Burma and other lands east of India, overran Persia, established themselves in Asia Minor and Constantinople, and covered Hungary with blood and ashes, thus occupying at different epochs most of Asia and a large part of Europe.

The Buriats, who are the surviving Mongols of to-day, inhabit three sides of Lake Baikal and the only island therein. Lake Baikal is the largest body of fresh water in the Old World. From the regions south of Lake Baikal came Jinghis Khan and Tamerlane, the two greatest personages in the Mongol division of mankind.

The volume opens with a brief sketch of the physical features and the history of Siberia, a comparatively unknown and dreary country, which covers about one-ninth of the continental surface of the globe. The long journey in southern Siberia is then amply described, the landscape, the institutions, the dwellings, and the mode of life of the people he met being set forth with vividness and philosophic appreciation. An important section of the book relates to the customs of the Buriats—their customs and ceremonies at the birth of a child, at a marriage, and in sickness, and their burial rites. It then deals with the origin of the shamans or priests, with the sacred trees and groves, and with the gods of the Buriats. The myths connected with the Mongol religion are next recorded, just as Curtin heard them from the lips of living Buriats. A collection of folk-tales completes the volume. It is a book of very unusual character, which only an extraordinary linguist and scholar could have written, so difficult was the gathering of the material for it. The journey itself was one of considerable hardship and exposure; and the linguistic, historical, and anthropological knowledge required to produce the book has seldom, if ever before, been possessed by any single
The manuscript of this volume was finished a few months before Curtin's death, but it has been published posthumously without the advantage of his revision.

CHARLES W. ELIOT.

OCTOBER 20, 1909.
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THE BURIATS whose myth-tales I have collected, and whose beliefs, modes of worship, and customs I have studied at their source and describe in this volume, are Mongols in the strictest sense of the word as men use it. They inhabit three sides of Lake Baikal, as well as Olkhon its only island. The place and the people are noteworthy.

Lake Baikal is the largest body of fresh water in the Old World, being over four hundred miles long and from twenty-four to fifty-six miles broad, its total area covering about thirteen thousand square miles. The Buriats living west of that water, and those inhabiting the sacred island of Olkhon, are the only Mongols who have preserved their own race religion with its primitive usages, archaic beliefs, and philosophy, hence they are a people of great interest to science.

The region about that immense body of water, Lake Baikal, is of still greater interest in history, for from the mountain land south of the lake, and touching it, came Temudjin, known later as Jinghis Khan, and Tamerlane, or Timur Lenk (the Iron Limper), the two greatest personages in the Mongol division of mankind.

From the first of these two mighty man-slayers were descended the Mongol subduers of China and Russia. Among Jinghis Khan's many grandsons were Kublai Khan, the subjector of China, together with Burma and other lands east of India; Hulagu, who destroyed the Assassin Commonwealth of Persia, stormed Bagdad, and extinguished the Abbasid Kalifat; and Batu, who covered Russia with blood and ashes, mined Hungary, hunting its
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king to an island in the Adriatic, crushed

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German and other forces opposed to the Mongols at Liegnitz, and returned to the Volga region, where he established his chief headquarters.

Descendants of Jinghis Khan ruled in Russia for two centuries and almost five decades. In China they wielded power only sixty-eight years.

From Tamerlane, a more brilliant, if not a greater, leader than Jinghis, descended the Mongols of India, whose history is remarkable both in the rise and the fall of the empire which they founded.

These two Mongol conquerors had a common ancestor in Jinghis Khan's great-great-grandfather, Tuminai; hence both men were of the same blood and had the same land of origin,—the region south of Lake Baikal.

That Mongol power which began its career near Baikal covered all Asia, or most of it, and a large part of Europe, and lasted till destroyed by Russia and England. The histories of these struggles are world-wide in their meaning; they deserve the closest study, and in time will surely receive it.

When the descendants of Jinghis Khan had lost China, the only great conquest left them was Russia, and there, after a rule of two hundred and forty-four years, power was snatched from them.

The Grand Moguls, those masters of India, the descendants of Tamerlane, met with Great Britain, and were stripped of their empire in consequence.

The British conquest of India and its methods mark a new era in history,—the era of commercial invasion, the era of the "drummer" in politics; that drummer who, in addition to the wares which he offers, has statecraft behind him, and
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when the need comes he has also cold steel and hot cannon-balls.

The Grand Mogul and his counsellors could not suspect danger from this man. They considered him, at first, much as rich ladies in great country houses far from cities might consider a humble and toiling pack-peddler. But, though he might seem insignificant, this man was really a conqueror. The Grand Mogul, Jehargir, could not see, of course, that Hawkins and Roe would bring after them servants such as Clive, Warren Hastings, and others, who would take from his heirs whatsoever they valued,—land, dominion, and treasures.

Mongol rule was abolished in India by the British because it did not accord with their methods and objects. It was destroyed by the Russians because it was foreign, oppressive, and hateful. They simply freed their land from aliens. The conflict in Russia was what people call patriotic. It was carried on through sacrifices and struggles of many kinds.

There is a third Mongol history which affects greatly the actors in the two histories just mentioned. This history had its origin at Lake Baikal, though indirectly. When Jinghis Khan was hunting the Kwaresmian ruler, Shah Mohammed, to his death on an island in the Caspian, a group of Turks, or western Mongols, fled before him, and found refuge in Asia Minor. The time for them proved favorable. They fought; they obtained land, and prospered. They grew great by accretion, as does a snowball rolling down a long mountain slope, till at last they won the empire established by Constantine.

This Mongol group, four hundred and forty-four families in number, became known as the Ottomans, and after the destruction of the Kalifat at Bagdad they were the heirs of Mohammed, and a terror to Europe. In time, however, they weakened, and Great Britain came to be the defender-in-chief and mainstay of those western Mongols, and Russia
their main and chief attacker. So the spoilers of Tamerlane's
descendants in India became the active allies of the
Mongols on the Bosporus, and the enemy of that Russia
who had pushed Mongol rule out of northern Europe.

Had Jinghis Khan never lived, those Turks, or western
Mongols, known afterward as Ottomans, would never have
left Asia and ruled on the Bosporus.

The Mongols have played an immense part in the past, and
they bear in them at the present the great mystery of the
future,—a mystery of deep import to all men. The birthplace
of that mystery was the mountain region south of Lake
Baikal. In view of this I visited that central land of Siberia
where the family of Jinghis had its origin.

I think it well to give here a brief outline sketch of Siberia,

a country which covers an area of fourteen and one half
million square kilometres; that is, about one ninth of the
whole continental surface of the globe, but which to the
mind of most readers is an unknown, boundless, cold,
dreadful wonderland. I shall mention a few of the chief
events in the history of the country up to the time when the
Buriats first recognized Russian supremacy.

Though the name "Sibir" appears in Russian chronicles in
1407 for the first time, Russians knew the country east of
the Ural Mountains much earlier. Southern Siberia was
visited by Russian princes in the middle of the thirteenth
century, when they were forced to do homage to the Grand
Khan at Karakorum, his first capital, not very far to the
south of Lake Baikal.

Western Siberia was known as early as the eleventh century
to merchants of Novgorod, who had dealings with the
people of that region which they called Yugria or Ugri.
Those people had furs of various kinds which they were
ready to barter, and of all sources of income for Novgorod
the chief, and the richest in those days, was the fur trade.
That great territory between Novgorod and the Ural Mountains, and from the Volga to the Frozen Ocean was one vast preserve, one immense hunting ground for fur-bearing animals.

In the Middle Ages the wearing of furs was universal. Everyone wore them who had the wherewithal to purchase. Wealthy persons wore mantles and coats made of the most costly skins, and at that time Great Novgorod purveyed for all Europe—found furs for every one who would buy. This demand impelled Novgorod to subject, and in cases to colonize, places far north and east of its own territory.

At first fur-bearing animals abounded in all the lands under Novgorod, but in time they decreased in more western regions, and fur hunters searched through the forests on the Kama, Petchora, and northern Dwina, as well as on streams running into those rivers.

Furs were obtained both in payment of tribute and in return for goods furnished the natives. The government of Novgorod sent out its collectors at intervals. The tribute which they took was paid in furs usually, if not always. Traders also went from various points on the Volga to the Arctic, and besides furs they obtained whale and walrus oil, walrus tusks, sea fowls, tar, and potash, but fur was the chief and most valuable article of commerce. From Perm these men received also silver, but this silver had been brought from beyond the Ural Mountains, which in those days were called Kamenyet Poyas (the Stone Girdle).

Though the country west of the mountains was great in extent, the country east of them was enormously greater. It was also richer in furs of a high quality, and had besides the master metals,—gold and silver.

When regions west of the mountain range had become well known to collectors of tribute and to traders, men began to
seek wealth in regions east of it. The fame of that eastern land soon spread throughout all northern Russia, and in 1032 an expedition from Novgorod set out for the "Iron Gates," that is, a pass in the Ural, through which they intended to enter Yugria.

This expedition met failure and was crushed by the natives. Only a few of the men went back to Novgorod; most of them perished.

In 1096, sixty-four years after that first expedition, according to a statement in the Chronicle of Nestor, a Novgorod merchant named Rogóvitch sent a man first to the Petchora, where the natives paid tribute, and afterward to Yugria, "where the people are shut in by sky-touching mountains, in which there is a small gate with an opening. Through this gate men look out and talk from time to time, but no one understands them. If any person shows a knife or an axe to these people they offer furs in exchange for it. The Yugrians were confined in this region by Alexander of Macedon. While on his way to the sea, called 'The Sun's Place,' Alexander discovered these people, and, seeing their terrible uncleanness,—they did not bury their dead, they ate snakes, flies, and every other vile thing,—he feared lest they might increase and defile the whole earth by their practices, so he drove them to that great north-eastern corner and fenced them in firmly. He asked the Lord, and high mountains closed in on the Yugrians. Still the mountains did not meet altogether, a gap of twelve ells remained, and there a bronze gate was formed of such quality that fire cannot burn it, or iron cut it."

'Under the year 1114 it is noted in the Chronicle that "old men who had gone to Yugria saw a cloud touch the earth, and then fur-bearing animals came out of it, and rushed away through that country in myriads. Another cloud came down, and reindeer sprang out of it."
These tales are like those told by Pacific coast Indians. There are tribes on the Klamath River who tell of animals coming from the sky. I have several such myths which I took down in California. This account in Nestor's *Chronicle* is beyond doubt a Siberian myth-tale given to some Russian who told it at home as if he had been an eye-witness, or who was reported as so telling it.

Toward the end of the twelfth century Yugria paid tribute to Novgorod, though there was resistance at first, as there had been west of the mountains, where in 1187 one hundred men were killed while collecting tribute. In 1197 a party east of the Ural lost a still larger number.

After 1264 Yugria was counted by Novgorod as a possession of that republic, and tribute was collected there. In 1364 an expedition from Novgorod, made up of young people, sons of boyars, and volunteers, led by Alexander Abakúmovitch and Stephan Lyápa, reached the Ob River, one of the mighty rivers which embrace that vast plain called western Siberia. There they separated into two parties: one, sailing down to the mouth, conquered all tribes to the Frozen Ocean; the other, sailing up the river, was equally successful.

Forty-three years later, or in 1407, Tohtamish, once khan of the Golden Horde, the man who burned and ruined Moscow, was murdered in Sibir, a town on the Irtish some versts below its junction with the Toból. The name "Sibir" was used then for the first time, as the chronicler informs us.

In 1446 a new expedition to Yugria was made, but it failed; and this seems to have been the last expedition sent by Novgorod. Nineteen years later Ivan Veliki (the Great) of Moscow, afterward the conqueror of "Lord Novgorod," as the proud

people called their city, commanded Vassili Skryaba of Ustyug to subject Yugria. This was done, as it seemed for
the moment, since Kalpak and Tekich, princes of Yugria, were brought to Moscow, where Ivan Veliki confirmed their titles, and appointed a tribute which they were to pay for all Yugria. Thenceforth Ivan must have considered himself master of the country, for in 1488, when writing to the King of Bohemia, he added Yugorski to his other titles.

But in reality the northern part of Yugria showed no desire for subjection to Moscow. And years later three commanders, one of whom was Prince Kurbski, led five thousand men into northern Yugria and conquered it, capturing forty-one towns and taking, as prisoners, more than one thousand people, with fifty-eight princes or elders.

Fifteen years after this Vassili, son of Ivan Veliki, divided northern Yugria. The region on the Lower Ob he called Obdoria, and that on the river Konda, Kondia, and to his titles he added Prince Obdorski and Kondinski. A little later the southern part became known as Sibir, which was the name of the capital of the native khans, and in time became the name of the entire country.

In a letter, written in 1554, to Edward VI of England, Ivan the Terrible, as Karamzin states, entitled himself "Commander of all Sibir."

In 1558 Tsar Ivan granted Grigori Stróganoff unoccupied lands, one hundred and forty-six versts in length, on the Kama and Chusóva rivers. No taxes were to be paid on those lands for twenty years. Ten years later lands extending twenty versts along the Kama from the mouth of that river were granted to Grigori's brother, Yákov. These lands were to be free of taxes for ten years. In return the brothers were to build stockades and maintain troops at their own expense. On both these grants the Stróganoffs showed great activity.

In 1563 Khan Kuchum, said by some writers to be a Nogai, who lived near Lake Aral, and by others to be a simple Usbek, captured Sibir the capital, and after killing the ruling khan, Ediger, and Bekbúlat his brother, termed himself Tsar of Sibir, probably calling all the country in that region Sibir.
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that it belonged to his capital. When established firmly he subdued many northern tribes and refused to pay tribute to Moscow.

In 1569 Ivan the Terrible sent Kuchum a message reminding him of his duties as a vassal; and in 1571-72 Kuchum despatched two envoys, Tamas and Aisa, to Moscow with tribute, and a letter in which he asked to become a subject of the Tsar, and promised to pay the tribute in future.

The envoys took oath for Kuchum and his chief men, but not knowing how to write and having no seal they were unable to sign an oath paper; hence Ivan sent Chabúkoff, the son of a boyar, with envoys to Sibir, and there Kuchum and his chief men took the oath to Ivan, and put their seals to the oath papers.

Mahmet Kul, mentioned variously as son, brother, nephew, and relative of Kuchum, was enraged that his people should bend before Russians. He attacked those who were willing to pay tribute to Moscow, captured their wives and children, and ended by assaulting Chabúkoff while that envoy was returning to Moscow; but learning that troops on the Chusóva were preparing to attack him he fled.

In 1574 the Stróganoffs, Grigori and Yákov, were granted the privilege to build posts on the Toból and Takhcha rivers; to use guns and cannon; to enlist men and employ them in warfare; to restrain every uprising; to establish iron-works and fisheries; to cultivate land on the Toból and streams flowing into it. Settlers on those lands were freed for twenty years from taxes and services of all kinds. The Stróganoffs were to put down robbers, thieves, and vagrants; they were to protect native tribes and other people from Kuchum, and bring Kuchum and his subjects to true obedience.

In Moscow there was great complaint touching robberies on
the Volga, and in 1577 Ivan Grozney (the Terrible) sent a strong force with an order to capture Yermak, the chief ataman, with four other atamans, and send them in irons to Moscow, that he might make an example of them by a painful and ignominious death.

Some of the robbers, or Cossacks, as people called them, were captured and hanged straightway, but most of them scattered

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and saved themselves; among these was Yermak Timofieff, with his associate atamans, Ivan Koltsó, Yákov Mihailoff, Nikíta Pan, and Matvéi Mestcheryak, and other men to the number of five thousand, or five hundred as some historians state.

The following year these men reached the land of the Stróganoffs. Grigori and Yákov were dead; their heirs were Simeon, a third brother, Maksim, son of Yákov, and Nikíta, son of Grigori. There are in Russian Chronicles two versions of what happened at this time. One is that Yermak planned the subjection of Kuchum and the conquest of Sibir, and induced the Stróganoffs to aid him; the other is that the Stróganoffs planned the conquest and got Yermak to assist them in the undertaking. Either version may be true, or it may be that the Stróganoffs and Yermak had the same plan and agreed to co-operate. But the glory of being the first real conqueror of Siberia is given to Yermak, and he is therefore the popular hero of Siberia.

Kuchum had shown clearly that no success in Sibir was possible for the Stróganoffs or others till his power was crushed thoroughly. Yermak undertook to crush it.

Of Yermak and his origin accounts are also conflicting. One Chronicle calls him Vassili, and says that he was a native of the Ural country, who worked on a boat navigating the Kama and the Volga; that he was pot-boiler, that is, cook, for the boat-men. Yermak was the name of a company's pot on such boats, and instead of calling him Vassili the boatmen nicknamed him Yermak
Yermak was ambitious, hence he grew dissatisfied and restless, and, seeing a chance to win wealth on the Volga by robbery, he deserted his employers, formed a company of young, daring boatmen, put himself at the head of it, and began business. He did what he pleased, and above all what gave profit. At last he and Koltsó with a few of their associates grew so bold that they robbed the Tsar's envoy; and then came the order to bring him to Moscow. In another account Yermak is made a Cossack of the Don; and in a third, that of Kostomareff, he is described as an ataman in the Tsar's service on the Ural, and has no connection whatever with Don Cossacks or with robbery on the Volga.

Yermak's first hostile meeting with the natives of Sibir was with the Tartar prince, Epancha, whom he defeated. In a second battle, somewhat later, he captured Epancha's chief stronghold, which stood where the town of Tiumen is now situated. Yermak and his forces spent the winter of 1580—SI at this place. Early in the spring he sailed down the Tura. Near the mouth of the river hostile princes were awaiting him. A battle ensued, which after some days ended in the defeat of the native forces, and Yermak captured so much booty that he was forced to abandon a large part of it. He now entered the Toból River, and with ten hundred and sixty men, his whole army, sailed toward the Irtish.

In spite of continual attacks by the enemy the small army reached Isker, or Sibir, Kuchum's capital. At that place there was another engagement, and though few of Yermak's men were killed many were wounded. October 1st a battle was fought in which the Russians simply held their own, but on October 23d a merciless hand to hand conflict took place; Yermak lost one hundred and seven men, but he won a decisive victory. A few days later two tribes deserted Kuchum, and he fled with his troops to the steppes, taking with him everything that it was possible to carry.

October 26, 1581 is memorable in the history of Siberia, for on that day Yermak entered Sibir, the capital, as master. Four days later a chief of the Ostyaks appeared bringing provisions and tribute.
Early in 1582 Mahmet Kul was captured and taken to Moscow. Yermak now sent Ivan Koltsó to lay the Tsardom of all Sibir at the feet of Ivan Grozney. Koltsó was attended by fifty Cossacks, and took with him two thousand four hundred valuable skins, two black foxes, fifty beavers, and a letter from Yermak to the Tsar announcing his conquest.

The Tsar received Koltsó with honor, and so great was his gratitude that he sent Yermak a fur mantle from his own shoulders, a magnificent goblet, and two rich suits of armor, besides much money. He also sent one of his most valued leaders, Glúkhoff, to assist him.

Yermak now extended his authority in every direction. In September, 1583, a messenger came from Karacha, a murza who had formerly been devoted to Kuchum, begging Yermak for aid against Nogai Tartars. Yermak, not thinking of treachery, sent Koltsó with forty Cossacks. Karacha slaughtered the entire party.

In November came the first government officials to Siberia from Moscow, Prince Bolhovski, with two associates and five hundred sharpshooters. The following winter there was a terrible dearth of provisions. Prince Bolhovski and many of his men died from hardship and lack of food. While the Russians were in such straits Karacha tried to anticipate Yermak in action, and prevent him from taking revenge for the murder of Koltsó and his Cossacks. He invested Sibir, the capital; but the Russians made a sally, defeated him, and drove off his warriors, who fled, leaving their supply of provisions behind them.

During the summer of 1584 Yermak made his last expedition. He sailed up the Irtish to subdue the various tribes and force them to pay tribute, and to punish Karacha, if he could find him. With the tribes he succeeded, but Karacha eluded every search, and escaped.
Near the end of July Yermak returned to his capital, but in
August sailed again up the river to rescue, as he thought,
Bukhara traders, reports having reached him that Kuchum
had seized them on the Irtish. Finding that these reports
were false, he turned and sailed homeward.

One night, when it was so dark and stormy that Yermak
thought it unsafe to continue the journey, he stopped at an
island near the bank of the river. The weary Cossacks were
soon sleeping soundly. The enemy, who had followed very
sharply and cautiously, stole onto the island during the
rainstorm and darkness and killed or drove into the river
every man except one; that man escaped and carried the
tidings to Sibir.

Yermak was either killed by the natives or drowned. His
body was borne down the river and found, seven days later,
by a Tartar fisherman, named Yanish.

After Yermak's death Siberia was lost to Russia for a
season. In Moscow no one knew what had happened in far-
off Siberia. The entire force of men left there was one
hundred and fifty, the

remnant of Yermak's little army, and of those warriors who
had come with Bolhovski. They were under command of
Glúkhoff, who, fearing to remain in a hostile country with so
small a force, decided to return west of the Ural. He left
Sibir, and, not venturing to take the road by which Yermak
had entered the country, sailed down the Irtish and Ob
rivers, crossed the Ural Mountains well toward the north,
came out in the region of Archangel, and went thence to
Moscow.

Kuchum's son, Alei, entered Sibir, the capital, immediately
after Glúkhoff's departure, but was soon driven out by
Seidyak, a son of that Bekbúlat, whom Kuchum had killed
when he seized the place originally.

In 1585 Tsar Fedor, son and successor of Ivan Grozney,
knowing nothing of what had happened, sent Ivan Mansúroff to succeed Prince Bolhovski. When Mansúroff arrived in Sibir he found no Russians whatsoever. If a few were left in the country they had associated themselves with the natives, to escape destruction. It was impossible to return to Moscow for the cold season had come. Mansúroff was forced to remain in Siberia for the winter, hence with all expedition he raised a stockade and built houses on the right bank of the Ob, just opposite the mouth of the Irtish.

The Ostyaks made one attack, but were so frightened by the sound of the cannon that they fled. In the spring Mansúroff set out for home, going by the same road, through the Ural Mountains, which Glúkhoff had taken.

When Glúkhoff reached Moscow, and told his tale of defeat and disaster Tsar Fedor sent three hundred men to Sibir under two voevodas, Vassili Sukin and Ivan Myasnoi. Daniel Chulkóff, a secretary, was to follow. In July of that year, 1586, Sukin founded Tiumen on the Tura, and, not venturing to move farther on toward Sibir, he extended Moscow rule over tribes in the region around him. He was not too far from the Ural, hence safe. The position was good, geographically.

Early in 1587 five hundred men came from Moscow with Chulkóff, who brought to Sukin and Myasnoi a command, from the Tsar, to found a city on the right bank of the Irtish, near the mouth of the Toból—Tobólsk was founded.

Tiumen was the first Russian city built in Siberia. Tobólsk on the Toból followed quickly, but was soon transferred to the high bank of the Irtish. Chulkóff induced Seidyak, ruling then in Sibir, the town taken once by Yermak, to visit him at Tobólsk. Uzaz Makmen, Sultan of the Kaisak Horde, came also, and Karacha, who had slaughtered Koltsó and his Cossacks. Chulkóff seized all three of these men and sent them to Moscow. Then he attacked and captured Sibir, the capital. Its inhabitants fled, and the place was never reoccupied by any one.
In their advance toward the East the Russians did not meet with very serious resistance till near the Amoor River, generally the native tribes submitted to the Cossacks without a struggle and the Russian government gradually built forts which later on became towns.

In 1590, for the first time, colonists were sent to Siberia. Tobólsk was made the chief city and administrative center. New towns appeared, among others Pelym, which Prince Peter Gortchakoff founded. This place is notable as the first in Siberia to which exiles were sentenced. Many of the people of Uglitch, a place north of Moscow, were sent thither by Tsar Fedor because of the death in their town of his half-brother, the young son of Ivan the Terrible. Strangest exile of all was a church bell from Uglitch, sent to Tobólsk in 1591. The alarm had been sounded on that bell when the Tsar's son was killed. In Tobólsk it was hung in the tower of the church on the Market place, to strike the hours.

In this year Beriozoff was founded by Trahanistoff, a voevoda, and Surgut, on the river Ob by the Princes Lvoff and Volkonski.

From 1593 to 1598 there was immense activity in Siberia. Tara, Obdorsk, and many other towns were founded, and commerce began to flourish.

In 1598 Prince Masalski and Ivan Voyekoff set out with one thousand men to punish Kuchum for his pernicious activity, and for killing Koltsó. They met and crushed him. Kuchum lost his army and his family: five sons, eight wives, and eight daughters of his were sent to Moscow. The old man himself, though deaf and blind, did not yield to the Russians; he fled to the Nogai Tartars, who somewhat later killed him.

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And now Russia established itself firmly in Siberia.

The first exiles of distinction to be sent into the country
were sent to Pelym in 1599. They were Ivan and Vassili Románoff, who for acting against Boris Grodenof, now Tsar, were exiled from Russia. Their brother Fedor escaped exile by assuming the habit of a monk and the name Philaret, while his wife took the veil and the name Martha. From this monk and this nun sprang the founder of the Romanoff dynasty, Michael Romanoff.

The city of Tomsk was founded in 1604 by Gavrilo Pisemski and Vassili Tyrtoff. This city is now, in 1900, the educational center of northwestern Siberia. It has one of the largest Universities in the country, twenty-three Russian churches, two synagogues, and a large Catholic church. It is a wide-awake flourishing city in spite of a climate so cold that during winter the thermometer is about forty degrees below zero (Fahrenheit) for many days at a time, and the river Tom, on which the city is situated, is frozen quite half the year.

In 1620 it first became known to the world that in the far north, on the Lena River, lived a people who called themselves Yakuts. This information was given to officials in Tobólsk by the Mangazei Cossacks. In 1631 Martynoff sailed into the Lena by the Vilyno and discovered the Yakuts on whom he imposed tribute. The so-called Yakutsk Territory occupies the basin of the Lena River. Its climate is very severe, so severe in fact that agriculture is impossible, but the country is so rich in coal, iron, silver, and gold that within the past two centuries many and many thousands of convicts have been sent there to work in the mines, and because of this it has become known to the whole world.

In 1621 an event occurred of great importance for the future historians of Russia: Cyprian came as the first archbishop to Siberia. He was a scholar, and a man of remarkable foresight. His prescience has been of immense value to Russia. His earliest work was to find the few survivors of Yermak's forces and write down from their lips what they knew of that hero's expeditions and conquests. That information formed the basis of Siberian chronicles.

In 1622 the Russians first became acquainted with the
Yákov Hripunoff learned of their visiting the river Kan to get tribute, and he sent Kozloff, a Cossack, as an envoy to invite them to become Russian subjects. The result of this mission is unknown. We know, however, that in 1627 two expeditions were sent out, one under Bugór to explore the Lena River, the other under Perfilyeff, to force the Buriats to pay tribute.

Bugór reached the upper waters of the Lena, but Perfilyeff was unsuccessful; the Buriats would not surrender their independence.

In 1628 Piotr Beketoff, with a party of Cossacks, was sent against the Buriats on the Angara, but returned after reaching the mouth of the Oka River.

In 1632 Beketoff ascended the Angara and then the Ilim, crossed to the Lena, sailed down that river, and built a fort which he called Yakutsk. Later this fort was removed to the present Yakutsk, seventy versts higher up the river, and in 1638 Yakutsk was made the administrative center of northeastern Siberia. That same year Verhoyansk in the far North was founded, and in 1640 were discovered the rivers Indigirka and Alazli, both of which flow into the Frozen Ocean.

About this time an envoy, Vassili Starkoff, was sent to the Altyn Khan at Lake Ubsa. Among that khan's presents to Michael Romanoff was the first tea taken to Russia, two hundred packages, each weighing one pound and a quarter. Starkoff refused to take the tea, declaring that it was useless, and was difficult to carry, but the khan insisted and the envoy, not wishing to displease him, yielded. Tea taken thus to Moscow against the wishes of the envoy soon became a national drink among the Russians and has ever remained so.

Under the lead of Kurbat Ivanoff, a Cossack, the Russians
appeared, in 1643, on the western shore of Lake Baikal, and also on Olkhon Island. In 1646 the Buriats besieged Verhoyensk, a place founded in 1641 by Martin Vassilieff. Ivanoff, the officer commanding there, was reinforced by Bedaroff and together they defeated the Buriats and ravaged their villages. Soon after this Ivan Pohalioff, sent to collect tribute from the Buriats on the Irkūt, crossed Lake Baikal near its southern border, and then through the friendship of a petty prince, Turukai, reached Urga, the capital of Setsen Khan. As a result of this visit Setsen Khan, the year following, sent an embassy to Moscow.

In 1648 Bargúzin was founded near the eastern shore of Lake Baikal as a place to receive tribute from the Buriats. That same year an expedition was sent north under Dejneff, Ankudinoff, and Aleksaieff. Seven boats, each containing ten men, sailed eastward from the Kolyma, a river flowing into the Arctic Ocean. Four of the vessels disappeared during the voyage, and were never seen afterward. With those remaining the explorers doubled Shelag Point, which they named Svyatoi Nos (Holy Nose).

The vessel of Ankudinoff was wrecked there and he with his men were taken on to the other boats. After that they doubled Chukotchi, or Cape Chukchi, in which Dejneff describes beyond doubt the easternmost point of all Asia. In his report to the Yakutsk voevoda he explains how, in an encounter with the Chuchis, Aleksaiyeff was wounded and they put to sea at once. A frightful storm separated the vessels and they never met again. Dejneff was carried by the wind to the south of the Anadyr River. Thus he was the first man to show that there was a passage between the Arctic Ocean and the Pacific. To him in reality belongs the honor of discovering the straits which now bear the name of Bering, for they were seen by him eighty years earlier (in 1648) than by Bering. Cast upon the shore, near the mouth of the river Oliutora, Dejneff and his companions made their way to the Anadyr River. There they built a shelter for the winter, and soon after were rescued by traders.
Aleksaiyeff and Ankudinoff perished in Kamchatka. Though Dejneff's name is found in documents till 1654 his fate is unknown. He undoubtedly died during some expedition.

In 1650 there were several conflicts between Russians and Buriats, and only after much effort did the Russians assert their supremacy. During 1650 Yerofei Habaroff set out from Yakutsk with one hundred men, hunting for sable. He ascended the Olekma and the Tungar and reached the Amoor by the Ur and the Zeya. In two years he explored the whole river, and was the first man to launch a flotilla there. That year, 1650, the Buriats on the Oka withdrew up the Angara, and Nefedyeff, an official,

was sent with his men to bring them back to the place they had deserted.

In 1652 Pohakoff established the post of Irkutsk on Irkut River near its junction with the Angara. In 1661 it was removed to the right bank of the Angara, the present site of the city of Irkutsk, and twenty-one years later it was made an administrative center.

The same year that the Irkutsk post was established Ivan Robroff was sent from the Lena in search of a northern continent, but this expedition disappeared and no word ever came from it. In 1653 Fort Balazansk was established in the Buriat country and sixty Russian families were settled there. Two years later the Buriats were preparing to withdraw to the East of Lake Baikal, but, listening to the counsel of their wise men, they resolved to remain in their home country and submit to Russian rule. There were uprisings, however, and it was not till near the end of the seventeenth century that the Buriats, completely subdued, became peaceful Russian subjects.

Seventy-five years after Yermak crossed the Urals into the almost unknown land of Yugra, Russia had swept across Asia; her boundaries touched the frozen ocean in the north, and China in the south; and in 1697 Kamchatka was added
A Journey in Southern Siberia: Chapter I. The Birthplace of Mongol Activity

to her domains.
ON the morning of the 9th of July, 1900, the train on which I had traveled from Moscow came in sight of Irkutsk. I was greatly delighted with this capital of Eastern Siberia.

The city, as seen from the train which was nearing it swiftly, was extremely imposing, not only because of its size, and its many large churches, but also because the train approaches Irkutsk in such a direction that the front, and one side of the city, are presented together, as was the case with Grecian temples, the approaches to which were arranged toward the angle between the façade and one side of the structure.

Right in front of the city is the Angara, a deep, very clear and swift river which flows out of Lake Baikal, known as I have already stated, as the largest and by far the most beautiful body of fresh water in Asia. The Angara is the one outlet of Lake Baikal, which sends forth its waters through this river to the Yenissei, and thus they are borne on to the Arctic.

As the train nears Irkutsk the side view decreases, and the grade of the road is descending, hence the view becomes narrower and less striking each moment, and when the station is reached we are on the river bank.

Opposite the narrow front of Irkutsk, the façade, so to speak, the view is much reduced, very inferior to that seen from the train a little earlier. But, as a recompense, we have the Angara before us, that beautifully blue and mighty river gliding past irresistibly, smooth and silent.

It is said that the Angara never freezes till Christmas and freezes then in one night to the bottom. The great, blue current of Christmas eve has halted, and on Christmas morning stands motionless. That immense flow is chilled through and through.
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to the river-bed to the point just above freezing, and then becomes ice in one night, as if by magic. The magnificent river is dead till its resurrection, when the sun will break its bonds and lead to life again.

There is no city on earth which has such a river in front of it as has Irkutsk—blue, very deep, and moving with a speed that gives the idea of resistless power.

Irkutsk seems new except in some of its churches and government buildings. Its streets are wide and unpaved. Its houses mainly of wood, and in large number unpainted.

The most interesting and remarkable monument of the city is the triumphal arch to commemorate the winning of a way to the great ocean. That is, the acquisition of the Amoor River by Muravieff, who received the title of count for his exploit in giving communication with the Pacific, and was known thereafter as Count Muravieff Amoorski.

We drove through the city and stopped at the hotel Metripole. No one came to take the baggage; the driver got it in as best he could. There was but one vacant room. The furniture was soiled and shabby, the bed hard, the blankets of the coarsest wool. And this was the best hotel in Irkutsk! In the untidy dining-room I discovered that prices were a
third more than in St. Petersburg, that city celebrated for exorbitant prices.

In traveling through certain countries and among certain peoples the first requisite is to have letters and proper orders from those high in authority. The Russian Minister of Finance had given me a letter to each governor in Siberia. On delivering my letter to the governor of Irkutsk I was received not merely with much courtesy, but very cordially, and when I explained exactly what I wanted, namely, to study the Mongol language, customs, and religion among the Buriats in regions west and northwest of Lake Baikal, I was assured that every aid which the government could give would be given me. I was furnished with letters to district chiefs, and besides, though I did not know it till later, instructions were forwarded to officials along the road which I was to travel to help me in every way they could.

I considered Irkutsk as the starting-point of my investigations into the Mongol world, so far as the Buriat part of it was concerned.

Hence I decided to spend a few days in studying the city and gathering what information I could concerning the people whom I was about to visit.

I had letters from friends in St. Petersburg to residents of Irkutsk, and at the house of one of these gentlemen, Mr. Popoff, editor of *The Eastern Review*, I spent many pleasant and profitable hours. Years ago Mr. Popoff was exiled to Siberia for political reasons. When free to return to Russia he preferred to remain in Irkutsk. His wife, the daughter of a rich merchant of Kiachta, is a pleasant and cultivated woman, the only person I met in Siberia with whom I could speak English. Mr. Popoff is well acquainted with the country and gave me much valuable information. During my stay in the city I met many people who came to Siberia as exiles, served out their sentence, and are now honored, and, in many cases, wealthy citizens of Irkutsk.
At the house of a friend I met Dmitri Petrovich Pershin, then acting Curator of the Irkutsk Museum who, when I told him that I wished to go among, and become acquainted with, the Buriats, said that he knew just the man who could best aid me, a Buriat, who would be in the city in a few days, and that he would introduce us to each other. I visited the Museum, and Dmitri Petrovich showed me its excellent collection with great care. It is mainly devoted to Siberian and Mongolian exhibits. Later in the season I photographed the Curator in one of the most valued articles of the collection, the ceremonial dress of a Buriat Shaman.

Two days after my visit to the Museum I called upon Dmitri Petrovich and found that Andrei Mihailovitch Mihailoff, the Buriat, had arrived. Pershin introduced us, and, with a good deal of emphasis, told the old man that I wanted to become acquainted with his people, and that he must aid me in every way he could.

Andrei Mihailovitch was friendly and promised co-operation. but it seemed to me that he was guarded. Though outwardly cordial I thought that he made internal reserves, and would try to satisfy the governor, and also me, without giving much real assistance.

I had explained previously to Pershin, and he now told Andrei Mihailovitch, that the authorities in St. Petersburg were anxious that I should have every aid possible in getting at the language, ancient beliefs, and customs of the Buriats, and hence would view with favor any exhibition of good-will shown me by his people.

A few days after this conversation Dmitri Petrovitch informed me that Andrei Mihailovitch would give me good lodgings at his summer place and bring me in contact with people who could tell much touching Buriat religion and folklore.
"It is a splendid beginning," said Pershin, who was very enthusiastic. "This man can make you acquainted with all the Buriats. His word is weighty among them. He still adheres to the ancient religion of his people, and can himself tell you much regarding it."

This is very well," thought I. "We shall see how he does it. I shall hope for the best, but keep my eyes open."

Dmitri Petrovitch assisted me in finding a good carriage for hire during the time of my journey—a couple of months or more, and in providing an outfit.

A suitable carriage is of the utmost importance to any man traveling in Siberia. It must have four qualities: it must be roomy and easy, rainproof, and strong beyond breaking. These Siberian carriages are made on the system of the American buckboard, but instead of planks or boards, as a spring under the body of the vehicle, poles are used. When rightly constructed the carriage is commodious, there is a cover which can be up or down, and leather aprons which can be attached to the sides to keep the sun or rain out. Sleep in it is easy, and no better vehicle in the daytime is needed for traveling in that country. It is not too heavy, but is strong, and easily repaired. It is made ready for the road in the following manner: First cover the bottom inside with a coarse Siberian-made carpet; on that carpet place a firm mattress, which should cover the bottom of the vehicle entirely. Spread on the mattress a thin blanket to protect it. A seat is made with a soft leather trunk, a specialty of Siberia. This trunk should be as long as the inside width of the carriage body. A good supply of pillows for the back and a couple of heavy blankets complete the outfit.

It should be stated that when hired the carriage is perfectly empty. The body is a kind of box somewhat lower on the sides than in the middle. It has no seat whatever, except that for the driver, which is in front of the body. There is room
behind for a trunk to be strapped on; there is also some space with the driver.

Among the papers given me by the governor there was an order for private horses as well as post horses. Where there are no post stations the inhabitants are obliged to furnish beasts at the same rate as the post stations—three copecks (a cent and a half) a mile for each animal.

In due time I had made all preparations, purchased carpet, mattress, and provisions, and was ready to set out for the summer dwelling of Andrei Mihailovitch, which is about four versts nearer Irkutsk than the post station Usturdi, the latter being sixty versts distant.

At seven o'clock in the morning of July 23, after much effort, all things necessary were in the carriage and we were ready to move into the land of the Buriats. It was at least half an hour later than I had intended starting. The delay was caused by the Yamschik who came without the traces for the side horses of the troika, and had to go back for them. I learned then that tarnatasses are with and without traces, and that I ought to have mentioned the traces when ordering the horses.

The chief of the post station in Irkutsk had promised three good beasts, also an excellent driver, and he had kept his word faithfully.

The morning air was fresh, delicious, inspiriting. The horses moved at a gentle trot along the main street, "Great Street," out toward the rising and hilly country which surrounds the Siberian capital. Just beyond the city are broad low pastures where, near the banks of the Angara, immense herds were feeding.

From the rising road there are interesting views, one at least of these is very striking. The country is not grand, but is good looking.

I have commended the driver, whose name was Nikolai, and he deserves good mention. Had he lived in that age he
would have been worthy to compete in a chariot race in the Circus Maximus at Rome. When a couple of miles outside Irkutsk he stopped to loosen the bell on the bow of the middle horse in the troika. That moment the driver of a carriage behind

us urged his horses ahead suddenly at the foot of a long hill, and then drove at the pace he liked, which was somewhat slower than that of our carriage, hence annoying. He seemed to take pleasure in tormenting us.

Nikolai waited a few moments till the road widened sufficiently, then he turned and said in a low voice:

"I can go ahead of that scoundrel. Shall I do so?"

"I know you are a better man, but have you better horses?" I asked.

"I know my horses," answered Nikolai, and the next moment he had dashed toward the side of the equipage in advance of us; his horses' heads had reached beyond the hind wheels, when the enemy's horses were lashed, and sped up the hill at a great rate. Nikolai shouted to his horses and urged them forward.

It was the first race I had ever seen of the kind, a race up hill. Both equipages were drawn by three horses abreast, and the beasts gave a splendid example of exertion as they rose in great springs up that hill road.

Nikolai's horses were gaining gradually, but very surely, when the other man, at a point where the road was narrow a second time, guided his horses in such a way as to block the road to our animals. Nikolai was now angry. He made no secret of what he thought of that hostile driver, whose mother's family he declared to be of canine origin, beyond any doubt whatever.

He was resigned for the time since he had to be. He drove
on and waited till we reached a wide place in the road and were on the hilltop. His horses then sprang forward fiercely. In one moment our carriage was half its length in advance of the other.

"Scoundrel!" shouted Nikolai, as he turned and looked back. "I'll show thee how to meet decent people!"

The enemy urged on his horses, lashed them, but he could not win now. Nikolai gained on him steadily till the end of the level land was reached, when he was perhaps two lengths ahead. At that point the road descended very gently for a mile or more, and then rose with another hill. No man could

find, or construct a better race course. Nikolai turned for a moment to look at the other man, then with a series of shouts rising higher and higher, and with a deft use of his whip, he impelled those three horses down that road at full speed. The road was perfectly even so the carriage wheels went around like tops swiftly spinning. Down we went at the pace of wild runaways.

At last, and that last came very quickly, I looked around and saw our opponent about half way down the hill, and advancing at the usual pace of good traveling. I called to Nikolai to slacken speed, which he did, and then halted. I discovered at once that the king-bolt of the carriage was almost out; not more than one inch of it was left in the front axle. Had that inch slipped out in the race down the hill, the horses would have rushed away with the two front wheels and axle, what would have happened to us is unknown, nothing pleasant in any case.

A large stone was soon found to drive the king-bolt to its place, but it would not remain there till fastened, very clumsily, with ropes. The beaten man stopped his horses when down the hill, and seemed to be mending his harness. He did not approach us a second time.
At the first post station, which is called Homutooka, a blacksmith was found, who put a firm strip of iron through the lower end of the king-bolt and fixed it securely; for which he charged fifteen copecks (seven cents and a half).

Post stations are very interesting to the traveler and when well kept, which they are sometimes, are enjoyable places. There are usually a number of people waiting for horses to go in one direction or the other; some one is sure to be drinking tea, or lunching. The man in charge is obliged to furnish, at a fixed price, a samovar, that is a "self-boiler," an urn-shaped vessel with a tube running down through its center. At the lower end of this tube is a space with air holes. Charcoal is ignited in this space and the water in the urn is made to boil soon, since it is exposed to all sides of the tube, which is heated very quickly. Charcoal is added whenever the need comes, thus a good samovar gives boiling water for a long time. The excellency of tea in Russia comes in great part from the samovar,
as most people assure me, and I believe. The chief place for making samovars is Túla, a city famed for this work throughout Russia.

We met at this first station an interesting woman, and found that the driver whom we had defeated was bringing her baggage from Irkutsk, where she had passed the preceding night. She was not more than thirty, and had set out on a journey which many an experienced traveler would hesitate to undertake. With five children, the eldest ten and the youngest a baby, and a nurse, she had started for the Yakuts country in the far north, where her husband was a government official. Weeks would pass before she could reach him. First a long journey with horses, then by boat up the Lena River, and again with horses. Not intending to return she was obliged to change carriages at each station, to unpack and pack all of her luggage—a great task. This she looked after, while the nurse was getting food for the children. Though physically frail she was wonderfully courageous, and love for husband and children seemed to give her strength to overcome all the difficulties of the journey.

While the horses were being harnessed and attached to my carriage I had a few moments' conversation with a political exile, a marvelously ragged beggar, who was loitering around the station. He told me that he was the son of a Russian priest, and had been in exile for several years. He was a bright and intelligent young man, but broken in health.

I was tempted to drink tea at Homutooka, but something, I know not what, seemed to urge me on, and as soon as the horses were ready they were put to their paces. I was anxious to see how Andrei Mihailovitch lived among summer pastures. Above all I was anxious to learn how he would welcome me.
The towns we passed through are straggling and dreary. In most cases the houses are surrounded by a high board enclosure, again one end of a house is visible, the fence meeting it on both sides. The blinds and outside casings of the windows are painted white, the body of the house has never been painted and in most cases looks to be a hundred years old. Some houses have sunk till the bottoms of the windows are on the ground. There is a huge gate in the board enclosure. The entrance to the house is inside the yard. Everywhere in Siberia, no matter how poor or small the house is, the window sills are crowded with plants, usually geraniums, and set into the threshold of the principal door is an iron horseshoe, to bring good luck.

At Jerdovski, the next station, we found a samovar boiling, so tea was drunk before fresh horses were ready. The second driver, taken at Homutooka, was not like Nikolai—he was slow, he needed urging. The third driver was a rare person. He had a harelip and was so deaf that it was difficult to talk with him. He heard only a part of what people said, and only a part of what he said could reach the mind of any man. The good thing about him was this: He was a firm driver, and sent his beasts over the road expeditiously. We were crossing a broad plain, dry and treeless. There was no cultivation whatever, but here and there were herds of cows and horses. In the distance were low hills.

After some time, an hour and a half perhaps, the driver stopped on a sudden, and said that we had just passed one road by which we might reach the house of Andrei Mihailovitch. There was another road farther on. The first led over a place little traveled, but more picturesque and more difficult. The second road was the usual and easier one. For me, who had halted on the highway and was looking eastward toward the lands of Andrei Mihailovitch, it was the left-hand road. How was I, who had gathered lore among so many peoples, to take a left-hand road when going to look for primitive stories among Mongols?
I turned back and took the right-hand road, of course, and did so with good fortune, as we shall find, hurrying on toward the unknown. By that road we came to the rear of Mihailoff's village, instead of the front, which we should have reached by, the other road, and met there more quickly and often frequently one of the great facts of life among Buriats; the chained dogs, which make such an uproar and which are quite unappeasable. No sop to Cerberus is possible among Buriats. If food be thrown to a chained dog at a Buriat house he will gulp down in a flash what is given and then would tear to pieces the stranger who gave it if he could get at him.

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The carriage dashed through the village swiftly, dogs barking with fury, at one and another place. Each dog is chained to a fence or to a post driven into the earth very firmly. The beast is held to his place quite unsparingly. Whenever a team or some unknown person comes in sight, the dog rushes forward as if free; he springs furiously, reaches the end of his chain, and is jerked back with a force like that which he himself has expended. Each dog digs out, near his post, a great cavity with a ridge of fine earth all around it. He does this by his springing forward and being brought back, by the chain, toward his starting point. Dogs are always kept out of doors. When winter comes, some shelter is made over their posts, but this shelter is not very pleasant, or much protection from wind and storm. On the whole a stranger may justly infer that a dog's life among Buriats is by no means a sinecure.

After passing the ordeal of dogs we arrived at the front of my host's summer residence, composed of half a dozen houses enclosed by a high wooden wall, or board fence. After some effort the gate was swung open and we entered the enclosure. There was no one inside save the gate-keeper. So far as I could see the place was deserted. The gate-keeper informed me, however, that the master of the house was at home, and he pointed to the nearest building on the right, to which I went straightway. On the ground not far from the door was a man, whom I had not noted.
earlier. He was lying face downward, and, except by the stir of his sides, which showed breathing, made no motion whatever. He was, as I discovered later, intoxicated. I was astonished at the silence around us, since Andrei Mihailovotch had been informed that I would reach his summer dwelling on that day.

The gate-keeper announced me, and after waiting a few moments I entered. The master of the house was sitting at the edge of the central square space, in the middle of which the fire burns in every old-fashioned Buriat dwelling. On all the four sides of this space people were sitting and drinking arhi or tarasun. (The liquor is made of milk and distilled in each considerable house among Buriats.) They had the tarasun in a pail and passed it around in a large wooden cup or dipper.

Some of the women were beyond the stage of being happy or sad. My host, who was very serious, seated me beside himself with honor, offered me tarasun, and soon inquired if I had received the letter despatched by him to the last post station. I replied that I had not. He told me then that his elder son had died suddenly; he had been ill only a few hours; this was the day of his funeral. He added that the house would be in mourning for some time. First, according to Buriat custom, there was a period of nine days during which the family stayed at home strictly, and saw no one outside its own circle. He had informed me in the letter of this sudden calamity, and declared in it that it would be impossible for him to receive me. In other words he had written me to stay away, and had forgotten, in his grief, to help me to another lodging place.

The virtue of my right-hand road was now evident. Had I taken the left-hand way I should have met the messenger, and have been forced to sleep at the next post station, and shift for myself the following day as best I might be able.

When I explained to Mihailoff that I had come in by the right-hand road, he saw at once how I had failed to receive the letter. His man had taken the other, the usual road, and
thus missed me. The position was this: I was at a house not open on that day to visitors, but I was there unwittingly, in innocence; nay more, I was there by right, for I had been invited.

After thinking a moment or two my host rose and said, "You must come to my other house." We set out for the other house which stood on the opposite side of the broad enclosure. On the way he said: "First of all you must drink tea with me. I will order a samovar to be made ready."

We entered a neatly furnished house, built and furnished on the Russian plan, a samovar was brought in, and a table was soon covered with various small dainties.

"I wish you to eat some beef of my own rearing," said Mihailoff, who drank vodka freely and cheered up considerably.

In due time chopped steaks were placed on the table. My host drank more vodka, and we attacked the lunch cheerily.

The steak finished, we had tea a second time; the beverage was excellent, deserving all the praise which I could give it.

By the time the lunch was over Mihailoff had become much more cordial, and at the end embraced and lifted me off the floor, expressing himself as greatly satisfied with my friendship. Then he said that I could go to his son's house at Usturdi, the next station, and make my headquarters there as long as convenience would lead me to do so. His second son, Vassili, was taking care of the place. Then, as the highest mark of favor, he took me to his yurta and showed me his "Ongons" and "Burkans" (household gods), hung up on a rafter in a dark corner of the room, and said that in his time he had entertained three Russian governors but had not shown them his "sanctuary." He showed it now because he felt such a deep affection for me.

As the hour was inclining rather closely to evening, and the...
distance to Usturdi was somewhat more than three miles, I thought it well to leave my host to his family at the earliest. So the carriage was summoned and drawn up outside the gate where we were to enter it. The harelipped and deaf driver had received a good share of food and drink since his coming,—especially drink, so that it was still more difficult to understand what he said and be understood by him.

When we were ready to continue our journey and had taken our seats in the carriage, the horses, instead of going forward, turned on their hind legs, stood as erect as if they had been men, then suddenly plunged toward the station from which they had come.

The driver, much roused by milk liquor, became very angry when told to turn and drive three miles farther, to Usturdi. He obeyed but spent his rage on the horses, urging them over the open country at a furious pace. The road was simply a wagon track, a mark along a level field. On they rushed for a time in the fashion of runaways. I shouted at the deaf, hare-lipped driver to slacken the speed of his horses, but without result in the least degree. There was no way to stop the man except to seize and hold him. He was in a state not uncommon with Buriats,—he was exultant, beside himself. His mind was excited while his body seemed sober. So on went the carriage almost as swiftly as during the race of that morning. Presently we approached a broad, rather shallow river. No decrease of speed was apparent. In we dashed furiously. The water reached to the knees of the horses and the front axle of the carriage. I was alarmed, for I thought there might be stones or deep places to avoid, but the dripping horses and carriage soon rose on the opposite bank, and the wild shouts of the driver urged the beasts forward again over a gray, dry, grassless plain. On and on they sped untiringly. To one who believed in metamorphosis those three beasts might have seemed men who had been changed into horses and who, hunted by the Furies sitting there on the carriage box behind them in the person of that harelipped mad driver, were rushing on with all their might,
and in terror, to escape Divine vengeance. No one could tell whether the horses were running away or were driven to the utmost.

At last I saw near the roadside ahead of us the Russian—church outside Usturdi, the station to which we were hastening. Soon after the church was passed we thundered across a massive wooden bridge, and rushed into the main, and almost only street of the village. About two squares from the bridge stood the house in which Andrei Mihailovitch's late son had resided. Vassili, his only surviving son, was there in authority; in care of the place and the business. The father had given me a brief letter to Vassili, to insure a proper reception.

The house was two stories high, the best building in the village. Beyond, and belonging to it, was another house used for storage; behind the two was a deep courtyard entirely hidden by a very high fence and a gate with strong beams above it. A man, who stood near as we drove up, knocked at this gate for us, but we had to wait many minutes for an answer. Vassili, or Vassya, as he was called by every one, was occupied elsewhere, and had had no notice that guests were coming. It was necessary to wait till a servant inside could be found and the master informed that his presence was needed.

After a time Vassili came and opened the gate promptly. On hearing that I had come from his father with a letter he immediately put the upper part of the house at my disposal. It consisted of three rooms, and a glass enclosed balcony projecting over the street. From this balcony there were excellent views up and down the main road or street, and out over the broad fields, and beyond them to the range of mountains in front of us.

It was about seven o'clock and the samovar was made ready. That was all that we needed, for I had brought plenty of tea from Irkutsk, and a good supply of sukar, or rusks, which with tea are excellent. A couple of hours later
we had supper and Vassili conversed with me until eleven o'clock.

This young Buriat proved to be a very interesting person. He was at that time a student at the Irkutsk gymnasium. He had passed six years there, and intended to work still another year. Besides studying he had read a good deal, and knew something of great problems in science and also in history. He could talk about Darwin, and the descent of man, and had some knowledge of chemistry. Above all, and for me that was the main point, he knew considerable about his own people, the Buriats. I congratulated him very heartily on being one of a people who had preserved their primeval religion, and who still held to the customs and beliefs of their remote ancestors. I told him that the Buriats were the only Eastern Mongols who had done this, an act which might be considered an exploit and a service to science.

After supper Vassili asked me about my experiences of that day. I described the first race, and then the terrible driving of the harelipped isvoschik, at the rate of what Hungarians call "horse death speed."

Wearied greatly after that afternoon of racing and movement and many surprises, I was glad to lie down and rest. I slept till some time after dawn. Rising, I went at once to the balcony. The morning was delightful, the air clear and invigorating. In the fields opposite, perhaps a mile away, were herds of cattle and many sheep pasturing with remarkable activity.

During the early forenoon I saw from that balcony, for the first time, a party of mounted Buriats. This party was twenty-five in number. The men had their feet in short stirrups, and

sat leaning forward a little. The movement of Mongol horses is peculiar. Their steps, which seem short, are made quickly and the result is a more rapid advance than any one, not
knowing those horses, could imagine.

There are two modes of movement made by man-serving beasts which are highly deceptive to the eye that is unpractised: the stride of a pacing camel, and the trotting step of a Mongol saddle horse. As I was riding once on a donkey through the quarries of Assuan, near the first Cataract of the Nile, several camels appeared on a sudden. I noticed that they were pacing. Being occupied, I dropped them out of sight for the moment, but looked again a little later. They had gone a great distance considering the interval, and though they did not seem to exert themselves much they were moving over that sand field very swiftly. The land now rose before them gently, but rose enough to form a hill which covered the horizon of the plain beyond in such wise as to hide any animal from a man standing where I was. I looked at the moving camels, a little while later they were on the flat, wide hilltop, and soon after their legs seemed to enter the earth. I turned my eyes from them purposely now and waited. I waited some minutes, then looked again. The camels had vanished. On the hill there was nothing save two or three old stone structures, like gravestones in the sand.

That morning the Buriat horses were remarkable for quick stepping, but when near by their speed was not evident. The more they receded the more noticeable it was. I stepped in from the balcony, walked across the front room a few times and went out again; the horses had advanced a long distance, they were far away, growing smaller and smaller very rapidly. I watched and saw them diminish. At last, when very small, they turned to the right and vanished behind a building. I could not help thinking then and there of two wonderful animals, and the part which they have played in the history of mankind, namely, the Mongol horse and the Arabian camel.

What a mighty factor the Mongol horse has been! That horse which traversed all regions between the Amoor River and Burma, and all lands between the Yellow Sea and the Adriatic. No animal so enduring, no animal so easy to feed, has ever been
in man's service. It found its own living. Mongol movement and conquest would have been impossible without Mongol horses.

It is not without reason that in Mongol mythology the horse in many junctures is more sagacious than the hero who rides him. In the myths of that country, the horse, in addition to his service, often gives wise directions and saving counsels.

Without camels not only would life in the Arabian desert be impossible, but the religion of Mohammed would not have been founded, or if founded could not have been extended.

I turned now to Vassya for information touching those horse-men. Why had so many assembled and whither were they going? He replied that on that day there was to be a wedding, or more correctly the fraction of a wedding, since among Buriats a wedding requires several days for its completion, and sometimes there are even many months between the first and the final ceremony.

"Would you like to go to-day?" asked he. I replied that it would give me much pleasure to see a Buriat wedding, or even a part of it.

Horses were ordered at the post station, and in half an hour we were ready for the journey. It was a little later than ten o'clock. Because of his recent bereavement Vassya himself did not go, but his place was taken by his brother-in-law, Lazareff, who lived in Shavarok, the village where the first instalment of the wedding was given on that bright day in July, 1900.

Lazareff is a cross-eyed widower; a shrewd, self-concentrated man whose mind is turned altogether toward material questions. His wife, Vassya's sister, had been dead only a few months.

Three horses were put to my carriage and we dashed off
with all speed. Driving at this season of the year is very agreeable, especially in the morning. The speed of the horses is exhilarating and gives just the movement of air which is pleasant. The excitement and rush please me; there is nothing like it in America.

While on the way to the village of Shavarok, Lazareff explained many matters connected with marriage, and life among Buriats in general. That information, with more won from Vassya, I give later on in this volume.

The village is about four miles from Usturdi, and is very picturesque. Some distance up on a hillside is a level platform of land. On this platform stands Shavarok. Above is another slope extending to the top of the hill unbrokenly. From that point there is an extensive view. I counted fourteen villages.

Every one in Shavarok was rejoicing, the holiday was general. The people had but one object in view: to celebrate a part of the wedding, and spend the day in drinking and feasting. The houses, save that of the bride's father, were deserted. In his house there was a crowd of people. Just opposite the door sat the three matchmakers, old women, who looked as though they would have a good deal to say in affairs generally. An aged man stood in the center of the room. He was speaking, with face turned upward, imploring the gods to send happiness and prosperity to the bride and groom. After a time he threw tarasun up toward the central opening of the roof, spoke on, and then threw tarasun to the gods a second time.

Many people were sitting on the grassy slope above the village. The central space, devoted to hitching-posts for horses, had been turned into a temporary grove. Some dozens of young birch trees had been felled and thrust into the ground to give shade to the horses. The twenty-five which had passed Usturdi in the morning, and many others, were there.
After walking around for a time we went to the hillside and found there a multitude of people, not only from that village, but from many other villages in the region about. They were sitting on the ground in groups, disposed like three sides of a quadrangle, two sides of which lay up and down the hill, the third side connecting the other two at the top. The lower side was open and unoccupied. Through this open space people passed in and out, some bringing refreshments, which consisted mainly of tarasun (milk whiskey) and boiled mutton; others joined the feasters and sitting down on the hillside, talked, laughed, and amused themselves.

Meanwhile men bearing tarasun from group to group poured to each person who wished it. The people seemed to be tasting delight as they sat there. They were not noisy, or in any wise extravagant, but they talked and laughed as if that beautiful day and the event of it were giving them every good thing which they could wish for.

Gazing around, I saw on the ridge of the hill a flock of sheep followed by a man, who had a long white beard. I went up to look at the flock and found that the shepherd was a Russian. As usual when Russians are working for Buriats, he was an ex-convict, old, but strong. He was alone in the world, following those sheep for sustenance, living among strangers and waiting, there in Siberia, for his life to end.

When I had returned to the feasting people on the slope I was conducted again to the house of the bride's father, where in the upsodded yard we found a large company of young people dancing with might and main, dancing desperately, dancing as if the future happiness, not only of the young couple, but of all the Buriat people, depended on their energy. The air above and around them for some distance was filled with a cloud of dust, which was growing
denser and denser. It seemed to me that if their strength should continue and their swiftness increase they would in time become invisible in that wonderful dust cloud.

After I had watched them a few moments Lazareff took me to his yurta, or house, at the opposite end of the village. This village fronted the south, hence the single door of each house in it opened on the south.

Every Buriat house which is built in the old way is eight-sided, the door is in the middle of that side which faces the south directly. This house has a wooden floor, which is raised above the ground somewhat. In the center is a rectangular space where there is no floor, and where the earth appears. In this space the fire is made on the ground, and directly above, in the roof, is an opening, or smoke hole. There are no partitions in the building. The only privacy obtained is by means of curtains. Trunks or boxes are used as wardrobes and storerooms. The central fire is the great point of assembly. Though many Buriats, especially those who are wealthy, build in the Russian style, particularly winter houses, even they find most delight in the old-fashioned octagonal house, with its central fire, around which they sit on the edge of the raised floor with their feet on the earth space. There they assemble in the evening, or whenever it suits them, gossip, transact business, and talk of whatever interests those present. From time to time a great open vessel, or pail, holding a gallon or more of tarasun is passed from one to another. In this pail is a wooden dipper and each person helps himself to the liquor.

Lazareff's house was thoroughly Buriat in structure and arrangement, but it was remarkably neat, quite a pattern of tidiness. I saw a good many yurtas after that, but none as clean as was Lazareff's. An old Russian woman cared for his little son and had charge of the house. This no doubt explained the unusual neatness of the place. Tea of good quality was brought now and cakes to go with it. While we were drinking tea a sandy-haired Russian, an exile, came in, a pleasant, good-looking man. He said that his home was in
the Crimea but for political reasons he had been sent to live among the Buriats. At this time, however, he had only one year longer to remain. His eyes lighted up with happiness when he spoke of his approaching freedom.

In passing from Lazareff's yurta to the carriage there was a chance to finish my survey of the village. The earth was covered with dust which in the middle of the space occupied reached to the ankles as one walked through it. This stratum, thicker in some places, covered everything to the rim of the village, reaching to the outer houses and beyond them, growing thinner toward the open country till at last one could note it no longer. This dust is the dried and pulverized droppings of animals, such as sheep, horses, and horned cattle. In time of thaw and rain the droppings become a soft mud, in dry, warm weather they are turned into dust. When the days are calm the dust keeps its place and people wade through it; when the wind blows, it fills the air in all directions and is carried into each chink, cranny, and little crevice, into the smallest places. People breathe it, swallow it, drink it, eat it, live, move and have their being in it.

We returned now to Usturdi, leaving behind us that village on the hillside with its pursuits and its passions, which in the main are the same as those of man everywhere, namely: to call human life into existence, and when that new life is here to support it; or in some cases destroy it, in others live on it, in still others toil or even die for it. The motives are the same in all countries, only the details are different.
CHAPTER III

COLLECTING MYTHS

THE day following the wedding Andrei Mihailovitch came over from his summer place. He was supposed to remain at home for nine days, still he came. After a while he invited me to walk along the street with him. We went the whole length of the village. He met a number of people, who showed immense respect for him; he kissed one man, but there was much condescension in his kiss. The grandeur of the old Buriat as he led me, an American, on exhibition through the town, was truly fine.

We stood for a time on the long bridge across the Kudá, talked a little, and looked at the river, the country, and the Russian Mission Church.

"Bishops and priests," said Mihailovitch, "have asked me to be baptized, but I would not. I will stay with the beliefs into which I was born."

Just then a man appeared, racing on horseback at the highest speed. There seemed to be in the horse and man a peculiar impetus and internal force. Without decreasing the pace of the horse the man turned toward Andrei Mihailovitch, and, during the instant in which he was passing, saluted him with the highest respect. Soon the man was beyond the Mission Church, and next he was a speck on the horizon.

"Think," said I to my host as I watched the horseman, "of the time when Jinghis Khan had a cavalry of one hundred thousand men like that man and more than two hundred thousand horses swifter than that horse."

"Oh," replied he, "there was never on earth anything to equal the cavalry of Jinghis Khan. It swept everything down before it! What have we now?—Nothing. We were great
once, we conquered many countries, we ruled many peoples. China and Russia overpowered us, but our turn will come again."

We went back to the balcony and talked long over the question of finding men who could tell the ancient myths and explain the customs and beliefs of the Buriats. A list was made, and that afternoon the search began. Messengers were sent to surrounding villages to look for wise men. Those who were able were to be brought to Usturdi, if possible. In case they were old and decrepit I could go to them. The first and most important step was to find persons who knew what I wanted and would tell it.

The number found was small. Some had gone on visits to distant places and were inaccessible, others had known much years before, but had forgotten almost everything. In the first attempt only two old men were discovered. These two promised to come the following day. They came, gave some information, told one story, good as far as it went, but told too briefly. The story was of Esege Malan, or Father Bald Head (Father Bald Head is the highest heaven itself), and Ehé Tazar, Mother Earth. It is given farther on in this volume, with other myths.

Other men were found after those two, but none came who were at all satisfactory till Manshut appeared. He told three stories: Gesir Bogdo, Ashir Bogdo, and The Iron Hero.

When Manshut had finished these three stories he declared that he was forced to go home. I was greatly disappointed, for I was convinced that he knew more myths. Though he promised earnestly to come again and tell me all that he could remember I was doubtful about his return, for he was a restless man and seemed to dislike anything that required concentrated attention. He was a great lover of the pipe and smoked continually, drew whiffs between sentences, even between words. As talking seemed to interrupt his smoking, at least to a certain extent, I felt that I should not see him again until he needed more money for tobacco.

Early in the morning of July 30th a procession of long-
bodied one-horse wagons crowded with men and women passed through the main street of Usturdi. These men and women were convicts from Russia, and a stalwart soldier, carrying a rifle, walked by the side of each wagon.

A halt was called on the first open field beyond the village. The dusty wagons were at once abandoned, and the crowd of convicts, falling into groups, began to build fires and prepare tea. Meanwhile the soldiers formed a circle around the entire party and stood on guard.

There were two hundred and seventy-four of these men and women. They were on the way to the Lena River, and farther north to the frozen Yakuts country. They had received sentence before the ukas abolishing exile to Siberia had been issued, and were specially interesting as being, perhaps, the last group of prisoners to be sent into that country, which has so long been used as a place for exile and punishment. Following the convicts came a small party of political prisoners, but they were allowed to stop at the post station for rest and refreshment.

The crowd sitting on the ground ate brown bread and drank tea with great relish. The soldiers conducting the prisoners did not fare better than the prisoners, in fact they did not fare as well, for I saw them receive merely large pieces of rye bread; at this halt they were not given tea. It seemed to me that by united action the convicts with naked hands might overpower the soldiers, for though the soldiers were alert fellows with much presence of mind, they were few in number.

The impression produced by these people was peculiar. They were all strong and sturdy, mainly of the peasant class. They were by no means downcast, grieved, or troubled. Forty of them were manacled, and even those men seemed in no way affected. One could not think while looking at these convicts that they were an oppressed and
punished people. I was very anxious to talk with some of them, but it was not permitted to go inside the line of soldiers.

After a rest of an hour or so command was given to "raise camp," and five minutes later fires had been stamped out, kettles packed, and the long-bodied wagons were again moving forward over the dusty road.

I then went to visit Andrei Mihailovitch at his summer place. When about a mile and a half from his house I met him riding over to Usturdi in a little one-horse trap. He turned back, however, and drove forward rapidly, so as to reach home and be ready to welcome me. I wished greatly to photograph the "Ongons" or gods supposed to protect his house and property. I was doubtful about getting his
consent, but he gave it with many pleasant words. I first photographed those that guard the home and are always hanging high up in one corner of the house. Then I went out to photograph the Ongons that guard the property. They were in a box having a door made of four small panes of window glass; this box was fastened to the top of a corner post of the carriage shed. With much difficulty it was unscrewed, and brought down and placed where I could photograph the gods which it contained. Andrei Mihailovitch could not carry these gods into a house nor could he take them out of the box, for that would bring misfortune to the family.

Inside the large box were two small boxes of home manufacture. In these were crude pictures of the gods, tiny men and women in outline, also the skin of a ground squirrel, and one or two other dried skins of very small animals. When these were photographed Andrei Mihailovitch invited me to visit his winter home, saying that on the way we would pass his field Ongons.

We drove over level pastures to the hill eastward, climbed rather slowly to the top and, after we had passed a gate, descended gradually to the brow of the hill, or rather to a point of the slope, whence there is a fine view of the country beyond: several villages, a narrow, winding river, and, somewhat to the left, the winter residence of my host. On the brow of the hill is a collection of twenty-five or thirty pillars, or hewn posts, with four flat sides. Across the top of each post a small board is so fastened that it projects on the east side like half a roof. Under this roof, in a square aperture in the post, is a small box with handle and sliding cover. The aperture also has a sliding cover which protects and secures the box inside.

Andrei Mihailovitch took the box out of his own post, opened it and showed me the gods which were on pieces of silk or cloth. Fastened on a narrow strip of blue silk were several little metal images. On two small pieces of cloth were tiny painted figures.
I photographed the pillars, and then tied the images around a pillar and photographed them as best I could. After I had finished Andrei Mihailovitch took the pieces of cloth from the pillar, folded them carefully, put them back in the box, and, placing the box on the ground near a small pile of dry juniper, which our driver had collected for him, lighted the herb. When it was burning well he put his foot on it three separate times to make it smoke and quench it. In the box, purified by the smoke, Andrei Mihailovitch placed a little bag of tobacco, which he had taken from it, then he closed the box, put it back in the pillar, and covered the aperture. Everything was done with the greatest care and reverence.

Each Buriat, as soon as he marries and has a home, must set up in the field one of these posts or pillars and place images of his gods in it. The Shaman assists him. When a man dies the box containing his Ongons is removed from the pillar, carried to the forest and hung high up on a tree, and there it remains till it rots away. The person carrying the Ongon from the pillar to the forest must not look back; should he do so it would bring great misfortune to the family of the dead man.

Andrei Mihailovitch's winter house is built on the Russian plan with large brick stoves in the partitions between the rooms. In the yard, however, are two or three eight-cornered Mongol houses where I think the family lives during winter unless some "governor" happens along.

Toward evening I started for Usturdi. The road was through a hilly or rolling country. We passed several rye fields, but with one or two exceptions the grain was very poor. After crossing an elevated ridge we came down into an opening in a forest of small timber—just such a weird opening as Sienkiewicz describes in "The Deluge"—and later on we reached another and larger opening, a remarkably lonely looking place in the dusk of approaching night, and there we came upon a Russian. He was uncouth, sturdy, and somehow uncanny. His horse was feeding near a cart, and the man himself was occupied in smoking, and in stirring something which he was boiling in a kettle over a small fire. He did not notice us or answer my greeting.
It was late in the evening when we reached Usturdi.

A few days passed now, during which I made no effort to get story-tellers but spent my time in studying the language. On the 2d of August the Horse Sacrifice was to be made and I needed to bring my work into order and prepare for this remarkable ceremony.

The Buriat country is one of two places in Asia where the Horse Sacrifice may still be seen. This ceremonial has existed among the Mongols from time immemorial and is a wonderfully interesting survival of a primitive religion.

Andrei Mihailovitch had finished his mourning now and he came over to be present at the great festival. With all his politeness I felt sure that he was not anxious that I should
see the death of the horses,—on the contrary, that he was
determined I should not see it.

He said to me the evening preceding the sacrifice and then
again the following morning: "I will leave about nine
o'clock; that is very early. If you start an hour later you will
have plenty time." The evening before, however, I had
made sure that horses would be waiting at the post station
near by, and within ten minutes after the departure of my
host I was driving rapidly across the country.

When we had gone a mile or so my driver wished to get a
drink of milk at a house by the wayside. He was terribly
thirsty, he said. He was as dilatory as might be in getting
the milk, then drank a whole gallon, I should think. After
that we drove on very slowly. I urged and urged, but still he
would not hurry the horses.

Later, when more than halfway to the Hill of Sacrifice he
was again about to stop before a house. I would not permit
a halt this time, and commanded him to hasten forward.
When at last we reached the Hill I found that seven out of
nine horses had been sacrificed already. Two fine, white
mares remained. I had come very near losing the
ceremony. The two, however, were among the best
animals, and as every detail was observed in their case,
there was a chance to see the sacrifice. The death of the
two was sufficiently painful.
CHAPTER IV

THE HORSE SACRIFICE

THE Tailgan, or Horse Sacrifice, takes place on a hill called Uhér, about seven miles from Usturdi. On this hill fifteen large stone altars have been built. The sacrifice is made by the first and second division of the clan Ashekhabat. In the mythological past the founder of this clan lived at Baganteng, perhaps two miles distant from Uhér. This first man, or clan founder, had seven sons. He and those sons sacrificed on the hill Uhér to the Burkans (masters or gods) of the hill, and to those of the mountain opposite, of whom the chief is Malan Noyon.

Of the seven sons five went beyond the Baikal, and there their descendants make sacrifice to this day, but they make it to Baganteng, where their clan originated,—where the tomta 1 of the founder is. Long ago they forgot Uhér and its divinities.

The order of the Tailgan, or Horse Sacrifice, is as follows: About seven o'clock on the morning of the ceremony the various families of the clan send a sufficient number of men to Uhér with vessels, tarasun, milk, tea, twigs, trees, and bushes—in fact, with everything needed at the sacrifice.

The two liquids drunk are tarasun and that which is called "the white." Generally this is milk, sweet or sour as the case may be, but milk with tea in it is given also, since some persons prefer it.

The men sent in advance with supplies and utensils stop about halfway on the road to Uhér and sprinkle milk and tarasun to the Burkans of the hill and the mountain, and to all the Burkans that there may be in existence, asking that they give first of all a good Tailgan, and then success and prosperity to those who make the sacrifice. The reality, the essence, of the milk and the tarasun,
goes to the Burkans, immensely increased and incomparably better in quality. Thus a single drop may become a whole barrelful when it reaches the home of the deities, when it goes to the mountain and the hill, in both of which there are beautiful dwellings, invisible to man.

On arriving at the Hill of Sacrifice the men sent in advance prepare places for the kettles, hang them on tripods over wood ready to be ignited, and dispose the vessels and other things used in the ceremony.

Each family has its place on the hill and not far from some one of the fifteen stone altars. Small birch branches are thrust into the earth at these places. Later, near these branches libations are made; that is, a few drops of milk are cast into the air to the Burkans, and when tarasun is passed around some of that is also cast into the air.

When the crowd assembles fires are lighted. First the horse is purified by being led between the fires (there must be either three, nine, or twenty-seven fires), then it is led up toward the officiating persons, who sprinkle milk on its face, and on the hair halter, and cast some in the air to the gods. After that there is a libation of tarasun, then a prayer or petition is made to all the Burkans. The horse, I should state here, has been led to the right side of a small birch tree which has been brought from a near-by forest; the lower part of the trunk of the tree is on the ground, the upper part and branches rest on a crosspiece. The tree is called "The foot of the place of sacrifice."

The officiating men then turn, as they say, "with knee bending," first to the ninety western Burkans, then to the four eastern Tuget—Tuget means "complete." These are deities who have come down from the sky and are in the east, but their place is not known exactly. They turn next to the Undir Sagan Tengerin (the lofty clear heaven); sprinkling to each deity or group of deities as they name them. Then they implore Uligin Sagan Deda (the revered pure earth). Next in order is Buga Noyon Babai (bull prince father), then comes Budung Yihé Ibi (blessed mother mist), and Zayahung Yihé Zayasha (the creating great one, who
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has created). This is at present the hedgehog, and in Buriat religion he is the wisest of all the deities, though greatly supplanted by other gods. Next in order is Zayang Sagan Tengeri (creator, pure heaven). Then Esege Malan Babai (Grand-father Bald Head); next Ehé Ureng Ibi, and then Adaha Zayang (creator of cattle); and Uha Soldong (the golden Sorrel), which means the light of the sun, the dawn of the morning. The dawn of the morning is creator of horses. Then Hotogov Mailgan (Crooked Back), the goddess of the night heavens and creator of people.

All these divinities are addressed by name and in turn, addressed very much as saints are in a Christian litany. Those who are officiating appeal to the divinities, and the people follow them, either aloud or mentally. Each man prays usually for what he likes best, or most desires. When this prayer was ended long ropes were tied securely around the fetlocks of the horse, each rope was held by four men, then the eight men in front pulled the forelegs forward and somewhat apart, while the other eight pulled the hindlegs back and apart. The horse fell on its side, and then turned on its back. The sixteen men held the ropes firmly and the beast was utterly helpless. A man, his right arm bare to the shoulder, now came with a long sharp knife and with one blow made a deep incision just behind the breast bone. He thrust his hand into the opening, seized the heart of the horse, and wrenched it free from its connections. The poor beast tried to struggle, but could not, and died very quickly. With the other horse it was somewhat different. The man must have done his work unskilfully, or his hand was weaker, for after he had withdrawn his arm and finished, as he thought, the beast regained its position to the extent of being able to bite the ground in agony. The sight was distressing. Its teeth were bared in a ghastly grin; the eyes became green and blue, much like the color of certain beetles. A more striking expression of piercing and helpless agony I have never seen. It groaned once with a sound of unspeakable anguish, kept its mouth for a moment in the earth and then dropped over lifeless.
When the horses were dead men hurried to skin the bodies, quarter them, and remove the flesh from the bones. The bones were then placed on the fifteen stone altars where fires were not merely burning, but roaring. The flesh was put into the iron kettles under which fires at that time were blazing briskly.

There was much animation on all sides; men were sitting in groups along the entire hillslope, beginning at the highest altar and extending down to the fifteenth, near the foot of the eminence.

Meanwhile a good number of groups were seated near vessels of tarasun from which they drank freely. As the flesh was cut into small pieces the cooking did not require a long time. The flesh of the horses killed first was cooked before that of the last two was placed in the kettles.

Small bits of the cooked meat were thrown on to the blazing fire of the altars, where the bones were burning; soup from the kettles was also thrown from small cups on to the fire of the altars.

When all the meat was cooked and the flesh of the nine horses was ready the whole company of people stood in groups before the fifteen altars. At times they moved
toward the altars, at times they receded, throwing small quantities of soup and little bits of meat on the fires, as they uttered the following invocation to the deities already mentioned:

"We pray that we may receive from you a blessing. From among fat cattle we have chosen out meat for you. We have made strong tarasun for you. Let our ulus (villages) be one verst longer. Create cattle in our enclosures; under our blankets create a son; send down rain from high heaven to us; cause much grass to grow; create so much grain that sickle cannot raise it, and so much grass that scythe cannot cut it. Let no wolves out unless wolves that are toothless; and no stones unless stones without sharp corners or edges. Hover above our foreheads. Hover behind our heads. Look on us without anger. Help those of us who forget what we know. Rouse those of us who are sleeping (in spirit). In a harsh year (a year of trouble) be Compassion. In a difficult year (a year of want) be Kindness (in sense of help). Black spirits lead farther away from us; bright spirits lead hither, nearer; gray spirits lead farther away from us. Burkans lead hither to us. Green grass give in the mouths (of cattle). Let me walk over the first snow. If I am timid, be my courage. If I am ashamed, be a proper face to me. Above be as a coverlid, below be as a felt bed to me."

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When the people stood before the fifteen stone altars and uttered their petitions the ceremony seemed very solemn and had a real character of worship. The invocation which I have given is repeated by all, then each adds what seems good to him. The prayer over, the company seated themselves by families, ate of the horse flesh, and drank tarasun till the end came.

During the throwing of the meat on to the altars vultures, of which there were many, flew back and forth over the hill and at times swooped down very near to us. During one of these times I took a piece of meat from Vassya and threw it toward a vulture. The bird caught it with the utmost dexterity, and darted away.

Vassya then threw a piece to another vulture which seized it in like manner. They hit a boy's cup, and caught the meat
from it. I asked Vassya afterward if the people did not look on these birds as perhaps divine. He said not in the full sense, but that vultures were represented in some narratives as rushing in front of the Burkans when they were passing from one place to another, and in that way they might be supposed to indicate that the masters of the opposite mountain were present, or on the hill where we were standing.

When the people had finished eating and drinking, boys pulled up and threw on the fire the twigs, or little branches which had been planted by the designated place of each family. This indicated that the sacrifice was ended. Any soup or meat left is taken home. If not all used it is carefully burned, for none of it must be eaten by cats or dogs; that would be desecration and misfortune would follow in its wake.

The Horse Sacrifice is a ceremony of immense interest, a remarkable relic of religious and social antiquity, the value of which we can hardly overestimate. A number of things become clear after one has looked on this sacrifice carefully. The first of these beyond doubt is this: that there is and must be a correspondence between a society and the faith professed by it—a sufficient harmony between the religion and the people.

As I walked up and down among those Buriats, talking with some and observing others, I saw that they enjoyed that sacrifice heartily. For men in their position there was reason for enjoyment;
there was cause to be satisfied during that day in every case. They were seated on a pleasant hill possessed and inhabited by Burkans, or divinities, who had descended from the sky and occupied in the hill a magnificent dwelling. In fact they were sitting on the great roof of a divine house, and were feasting delightfully, in company with friends and relatives.

Out in front of them and near by were mountains in which lived other Burkans. Opposite dwelt, in homes of indescribable beauty and wealth, Burkans, who were kindly and liberal to persons who remembered them. They had power to give every good thing in abundance.

Feasting there on that roof the Buriats ate, drank, and made merry with profit. They sent a share of the flesh and soup from their horses to the gods, who received that flesh and broth multiplied enormously. Each drop of broth when it reached the gods' mansions sufficed a hundred persons, each bit of flesh was increased in like manner, and so with tarasun, a few drops of which would cheer thousands.

The gods ate and drank of these multiplied offerings, while they, the faithful worshipers, sent up requests and prayers to gain every profit and good for which their hearts hoped. The feasting worshipers then filled their stomachs with unmultiplied food, which they had in abundance.

There were pleasure, sociability, eating and drinking with gods, those world forces who are able to grant prayers and listen to the petitions of all men who please them.

The social part is very instructive, showing clearly in this Buriat survival a strong and prominent trait of primitive religion: the intimate relation of gods and men, the nearness of the gods and their friendliness. Most interesting of all is that strange philosophy, at least strange for us, by which gods are pleased and profited by a small material
outlay on the part of mankind.

While a society and its religion correspond the society is greatly attached to the religion, and if a society is simple and well-nigh stationary, as pastoral societies are, if environment will permit it, the society and its religion may live on in harmony for ages. Religion once it is established changes little comparatively, and not in its essence. Its forms and ceremonies are sacred. Its statements are myths taken literally. To modify, change, or abolish forms, ceremonies, or statements of a religion is to destroy that religion; for the spirit of religion is not what men have in view generally, but forms, its outward seeming, its mythology, its connections with popular life, with the customs and history of the people professing it. A pastoral life is almost immovable, especially in a country where grass is abundant and agriculture unknown, or if known little cared for. Were it not for the influence of Russia and China the Buriats might live on for ages without changing their religion or customs.

Of course nothing in the world is or may be immovable. An inner motive or an outward shock is sure in time to stir every object or being in existence. No planet in space, though immensely remote from all others, and moving by itself in a loneliness which is appalling, is secure from collision. No man or group of men, tribe, nation, republic, or empire has ever been or ever will be left to his, their, or its own will save for a comparatively short period. The groups of men under various designations, from small primitive societies to great republics or empires, have their will for a season. This is the time during which the character of a group is made manifest, and during which it conquers. This character is always special to each. A group comes in collision inevitably with other groups which also are special. The result is the destruction or absorption of some groups, the modification and enlargement of others. The whole course of history may be represented as an endless succession of these collisions.
With reference to preserving their religion the position of the western Buriats was specially favorable, and continues to be so. Their fellow tribemen, who live east of Lake Baikal, and touch on the great world of Buddhism, became Buddhists. The western Buriats are secluded considerably, and little troubled by neighbors. They prefer their own primitive religion thus far. The Russians have no objection to offer, and would rather that they retain Shamanism than become Buddhists. If they have no wish to become Christian they may remain Pagan.

For a people in primitive conditions to accept a new religion which condemns the chief part of their life and the main customs of their country is a great step indeed. To introduce Christianity would involve a complete revolution among
Buriats. For Mongols the transition from their Shamanism to Buddhism after the latter has passed through Thibet is less difficult. The western Buriats are satisfied with Shamanism. If there is any propaganda among them, Buddhistic or Christian, it is very slight, and touches only an odd individual.

After the sacrifice came wrestling at the southeastern or valley foot of the hill. This is a very popular amusement among the Buriats. There is always wrestling after the Horse Sacrifice and after the making of Shamans.

The whole company deserted the hill-top. Some went to the place of wrestling, others remained on the brow of the eminence, not far from where the horses were sacrificed.

In wrestling there are two parts: the first is the manœuvring for advantage in the hold; this requires time, perhaps fifteen or twenty minutes are occupied before the opponents grapple and close in the conflict. Very often the wrestling itself does not last as long as the preliminary manœuvring for advantage.

After the Tailgan I decided to make a trip northeastward and northward through the Buriat country. I wished above all to visit Olkhon, the "sacred" island of Lake Baikal. On this island live perhaps seven hundred people, who are more primitive than other Buriats. I was anxious to see these islanders and get their folk-tales, if possible.

I laid in all the provisions that I could find either in Usturdi or at the next post station, and made arrangements for Vassya and Lazareff, the Cross-eyed, to go with me and assist in every way. Andrei Mihailovitch gave them a light, convenient carriage, and I was to furnish provisions and pay their traveling expenses. One or the other was to translate for me from Mongol into Russian. I always preferred Vassya, for he was far more intelligent, and acted more willingly, as he was himself interested in the mythology of his people. He was an excellent translator as well, having an equal command of both Buriat and Russian.
I do not think that I have ever found a better case of what development means than that presented by those three Buriats,—Vassya, his father, and Lazareff. Vassya during six years at the Irkutsk gymnasium had not only learned what is taught in the regular course there, but he had acquired a real love for good reading. He knew what science means, and found pleasure in mental development. Vassya's father was a man who believed that knowledge is power, but simply power to win wealth, to make money, acquire land, herds, and cattle—and importance. This was the power which he valued. Hence he was what is usually called practical.

Lazareff would esteem that knowledge which would make three blades of grass grow where two grew before, if they would come by magic, intrigue, or some other man's labor, given because he was outwitted.

Mutual benefit was looked for in the journey. I hoped that the two men would help me in many ways. They spoke Russian fluently, so I could talk with every Buriat. They were well known in most places, and with them the journey would be successful in some degree. They were glad to go, moreover, for I paid their expenses. The weather was fine, the country as a whole very interesting, and parts of it beautiful. They also, as I learned afterward, had errands to perform and business to transact for Vassya's father.
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Footnotes

44:1 See ceremonies after the birth of a child, page 96.
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CHAPTER V

JOURNEY TO THE ISLAND OF OLKHON

AFTER annoying delays the day for starting on the journey came at last (August 6); but only at one o'clock were we ready for the road. A few moments before leaving I witnessed an interesting ceremony. Eight men with Vassya seated themselves in a circle on the ground, then one of the eight rose and with a glass of vodka in his extended hand implored the gods, as he sprinkled the vodka on the ground, to grant Vassya a prosperous journey.

From Usturdi I drove directly to Lazareff's house, whence we were to set out on the journey together. The two men had proposed to start alone at two o'clock, but I preferred to have them with me, if possible.

On arrival I found that Lazareff was "not quite ready"; he needed an hour at least, and he and Vassya wished to stop a short time at a near-by village where there was a wedding in progress,—a friend of theirs was celebrating a part of his marriage. Lazareff promised faithfully to overtake me on the road, or at Olzoni, the next station.

I drove on, and at the first village, which was a short distance from the highway, I saw a large assembly of people. The inhabitants had no work on that day, nothing to think of but the marriage. The young people were dancing most vigorously; the old men and women were sitting around in groups, laughing and talking, taking refreshments, solid and fluid.

That afternoon in the first half of August was delightful, sunny and bright, but not too warm. The road was excellent, being the highway between the capital of eastern Siberia, Irkutsk, and Yakutsk, which has been for so many years the city of exile. Along the road on the left there are many good winter houses.
The places chosen for these buildings are in most cases well sheltered by high hills from winds of the north and northwest.

There is nothing in which Russian influence on the Buriats is shown more emphatically than in the matter of winter homes. Before Russian times the Buriat house was always an eight-sided log structure, with a hole in the middle of its earth-covered roof to let smoke out. A fire of sticks was made on the ground under this smoke-hole. How cold those places were in such a climate we can imagine very easily. The winter house now, with its great stove made of brick, is in use among the better class, and often it has double windows.

Though there were many dwellings along the way, people were living elsewhere for the summer months. There was perfect quiet, no man or woman was to be seen, no horses or cattle were grazing in the pastures.

Twenty-four hours before there had been rain, hence the road was clean, with no trace of dust on it. Rarely have I traveled with such pleasure as on that clear sunny day in August. There was no racing of horses this time, the carriage moved on at an easy, good pace, very comfortably. Only once did we meet an equipage. It seemed as though the whole world was at home sleeping.

About seven o'clock we rolled into Olzoni, a pleasant-looking village in a narrow valley. Along the middle of the village runs the single street, which is also the highway.

On the left hand, at the entrance to the village and just outside the first buildings, is an ostrog, or palisaded prison enclosure, which has a suggestive and sinister look, mainly because we know why it is there and what it is used for. It was the first of the kind I had ever seen.

At the other end of Olzoni the valley turns to the right quite abruptly, and the street seems to end in a hill. On this hill is a small wooden church, beyond which there are no houses. The church at one end, the prison at the other; narrow
fields at the right as we enter, and wooded hills beyond
them. On the left green fields and a rolling country, perhaps
fifty feet above the highway.

At Olzoni there is an excellent post station. Tea was in order,

and then preparations were made for a supper, which came
about two hours later. On the street there was considerable
activity. I met two children who were playing horse, and I
discovered that the horse was Timofei and the driver Andrei.
I had to remonstrate with Andrei for using his whip too
freely, though Timofei explained that he was whipped
because he was a horse and did not want to work. A man
sitting on an ox and going for water with his cart and barrel
furnished a good picture of domestic life. The ox was well
trained and walked off briskly.
To add to my stock of provisions, and to find out something of possible interest regarding the inhabitants of the village, I went into the principal shop, where I made the acquaintance of the merchant Pan Tembovski, a Pole, who told me very interesting things touching the Buriats. He was exiled many years ago for political reasons; after serving out his sentence he went back to Russia, but returned soon, because "there is more money and life in Siberia." To me it seemed that all the powers of a financier would be needed to make even a meagre living in Olzoni.

At ten o'clock Lazareff and Vassya made their appearance. They had not left the wedding till six in the evening. There had been an immense consumption of food and drink, and the merry-making, they assured me, "was great."

Fresh horses were brought, and I set out at eleven o'clock. Olzoni is a place of some interest, and for a post station really very pleasant. When returning from the island I remained four days in the village.

About three o'clock in the morning I arrived at Baiandai (pronounced Buy-and-die), the next station, but saw nothing of that broad, straggling village with which later on I became quite familiar. There was no delay for horses, and soon the carriage was moving toward the station, Hogotskaya, where I arrived at five o'clock in the morning, and slept on a hard bed till seven. The night ride had been very pleasant, for the weather was perfect. Lazareff and Vassya came an hour later, in time for a short sleep.

About nine o'clock we set out for a visit to the brothers Alexandroff, who are numbered among the wealthiest and most influential of the Buriats; their estate is about five miles from Hogotskaya. It was warmer that morning than the day before—it was hot, in fact.

The country about Hogotskaya is a fine rolling region of good grass-land and black soil of sufficient depth. Hay and
grain are abundant, with culture. Between ten and eleven o'clock we were at the Alexandroff's. The three brothers live in one neighborhood; their houses are near one another, and form a whole town, if considered together.

As these brothers are good friends of Andrei Mihailoff, they received us very cordially. We were conducted to a pleasant sitting-room fitted up in Russian fashion, and while we were conversing there with one brother another set servants to work in the kitchen and elsewhere. In half an hour they had ready in the dining-room a zakuska, or "bite," the collection of preliminary tidbits which, in all parts of Russia, precedes each considerable meal, and are taken to rouse appetite and also to nourish. In great houses these "bites" are elaborate and enticing.

Invited to the dining-room we found there two tables; on one of these stood bottles containing vodka and two kinds of wine, sherry and claret. On the other were things to be eaten,—boiled eggs, brown bread, smoked fish, pickled herrings, sardines, cheese, fish, eggs, and other rich "appetite rousers."

The zakuska is always taken standing. The first thing is a small glass of vodka, kummel, or some other liquid of similar quality, "to increase appetite and induce cheerfulness." Then comes the eating, which bears somewhat the relation to dinner that a skirmish does to a murderous battle.

After the zakuska, as our mid-day meal was not ready yet, we went again to the sitting-room and talked for a time.

We spoke of the country, the Buriat methods of managing land, of rearing cattle and horses, of moving from one place to another in summer, and back to the first one in winter.

While the brothers were explaining these customs to me carefully a servant declared that the "guest meal" was ready and waiting. There were two tables, at one of these, which was square, sat the master of the house, with my wife, Vassya,
and me; at the second table was his brother, with Lazareff and persons of the family,—a dozen at least in the company.

One cause of the delay in the dinner was that a lamb had been slaughtered and cooked for our nourishment. The great dish of honor at our table was the boiled head of that lamb, with the wool on. There was also a species of soup made of blood and kidneys, which seemed much like diluted blood pudding. It was relished by the Buriats, but strive as I might I could only make a very scant trial of its qualities. There was an abundance of other food, however, hence I could let these Mongol dainties pass.

The Alexandroffs are the most Russianized of Buriats in their style of living, and manners; though they, too, live a double life in some measure. They are of the rich and small class which builds at least three houses. The winter house is like that in use throughout Russia; it has brick stoves and chimneys. The old-fashioned Buriat house is modelled on a tent. In summer these houses are cool and agreeable, but in winter it is impossible, in a cold country, to heat them sufficiently for modern comfort. When well improved they are delightful from May to October. Should a chilly hour happen at any time, or a cool evening come at the beginning or at the end of the season, a fire is made quickly, and people sit around it to enjoy the warmth and to talk. To rouse conviviality tarasun is drunk; it is brought in a jug holding one or two gallons. This jug, which always has a wooden cup in it, is moved around the circle, and when emptied of liquor is filled again straightway.

All Buriats, without any exception, prefer the style of house used by their forefathers, and are attached to it greatly. Pagan Buriats must have this house, if they are to be married according to the rites of their people, since the last act in the ceremony of marriage is performed at the central quadrangle of bare earth, where the fire is made, when the new wife takes her place at the milk barrel which stands there, and becomes house mistress. Her special office is to make the tarasun, always distilled at this fireplace. Beside its good qualities, the old house is strong through its hold on
the ancient religion, the needs of the people, and their habits and customs.

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The Alexandroff dinner, as to food, was peculiar only by the sudden slaughter of the lamb, to show honor to strangers, and the special preparation of its head for the table. Otherwise the dinner might have been given by a Russian. The flesh of the poor little victim was cooked in the ordinary fashion, by boiling.

When the meal was ended the masculine part of the company retired to the summer house, and sat smoking and conversing for an hour or so.

This summer house was very well built. The floor was higher than usual above the bare earth in the center, and thus afforded a more comfortable seat for the company; chairs also were in use, so that whoso preferred one might sit on one. The smoke-escape was better constructed,—wider at the roof than in other houses.

The Alexandroffs' summer and winter establishments are different from any among Buriats in this that they are adjoining; only a road lies between the two places. The houses stand almost opposite each other and not more than half a mile apart. The difference between the two places is remarkable, however. The summer land is level or slightly rolling, and is exposed at every point of the compass, open to winds from north, south, east, and west, so that whenever the air moves men and animals feel it. On the right of the road, where the winter place lies, all is changed. The land slopes away toward the east and the south; on the north is a large and dense forest, which wards off the north wind effectively.

Some distance from the highway there are well-watered meadows and splendid pastures. A great deal of hay is produced on this land; I counted fourteen immense ricks in one part of the meadow. The wealth of the Alexandroffs comes chiefly from the breeding of cattle and horses, and from lending money at a high rate of interest.
Since we had planned to continue our journey that same day we soon bade good-bye to our host, who strove to persuade us to remain at his house till the morrow in every case.

An easy life is that of those three brothers. Every year they sell many horses and cattle. Whether the price falls or rises they have a good income. Thus far they are free of political problems. They have had their own way under Russia up to this time. At present, however, they fear that their land supply is about to be lessened.

At Hogotskaya there is a "narodni dom," or people's house, in which travelers may find a room and a samovar. That room we had made our headquarters. Near this narodni dom is the home of the chief of the district. We returned at four o'clock, sent for post horses, drank tea, and were soon ready to start for the island. In the morning, before going to the Alexandroffs', I had called on the district chief, and now he came to wish me a prosperous journey. Though I did not know it at that time, he had sent forward word to officials to help me in every way needed. I thanked him heartily for his kind wishes, and promised to explain my success, if I had any, and tell him all my adventures when I came back from Olkhon and Lake Baikal.

I was off at exactly five o'clock, Vassya and Lazareff a few minutes later. Each carriage was drawn by three horses. We intended to travel all night. The weather was perfect, the road dry and in fairly good condition. I thought we might reach the third station about daybreak, or at least very early in the morning.

After leaving Hogotskaya, which was our last station on the Yakuts road, we passed a mile of level road, and then traveled over land gently rising till we came to the base of a ridge. This ridge was perhaps eight hundred feet high where the road lay, and much higher on either side. On reaching the highest point of the road it was seen that the ridge,
which was wooded for the greater part, turned more and more from the highway till its direction was at a right angle, then it turned backward gradually and formed a great ellipse. Into the picturesque valley formed by this elliptical ridge we now descended, and through it, and a valley adjoining, we traveled till midnight.

The whole region around was either woodland or meadow. People were cutting hay and making stacks as we passed along through it that evening. Places like this are very frequent in Siberia. Warded well against winds and surrounded in great part with dense forests, they are sheltered marvelously from cold, and cattle are driven to them for the winter.

At nine o'clock we reached the first station; at midnight we arrived at the second, where, after some waiting, a samovar was set up, and we ate a bountiful lunch which I had brought with me. The station furnished hot water for the tea and boiled eggs; I had sweet bread, brown bread, and ham of good quality ready cooked.

Roughing it on the road is delightful at times, and at times very dreary. Good health, good weather, wholesome food, and pleasant people make traveling a holiday, and joyous. Bad weather, vile food, hostile people, take away the best charm even from scenery, since they weaken power and mental vision in the traveler.

If one is working for a purpose, however, all hardships grow easy, they become even pleasant if devotion be strong enough in the mind of the worker.

Of all hardships in traveling, and there are many, the greatest and most bitter, in fact the only serious ones are those caused by people. The deceit, opposition, and active harmfulness of mankind create the only troubles worth mentioning as we move on examining the crust of this earth ball, striving to discover what is on it, and under it, and above it. If men were as good as they are evil,—and they
are evil through ignorance and weakness,—it would be
easier and much pleasanter to travel than it now is. It would
also be easier to do those good deeds of which each man is
capable. I thought thus as I supped at that station, which
was poor and not very clean, but the people in it were
obliging and courteous.

When supper was eaten three horses were attached to my
carriage, but Vassya and Lazareff had to wait for horses
which were out in the pasture. Men had gone to search for
them, hence my companions might have to remain long at
the station or only some minutes. I resolved to set out at
once, promising to wait at Kosaya.

It was one o'clock when I started. No moon was visible; the
night was one of stars only, the most impressive of all nights,

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and that means the most impressive sight possible to man
during earthly existence.

The majestic and marvelous dark night of stars, that face of
infinity looking down at us in silence, affects every serious
man deeply by its presence. In days past that presence,
though the same in its features as to-day, was not the same
in meaning. It was looked on variously by different people in
different ages. To all men the sky seemed in old times dome-
shaped and solid, the greatest single thing visible to any
one. By some it was revered as a deity, and is so revered
even to the present; by others it was esteemed to be a
dwelling-place. Whether a deity or a dwelling-place, it was
closely connected with the earth, to which it was in great
part subservient. I was thinking of this as I looked on that
beautiful night from the swiftly moving carriage, when it
occurred to me on a sudden that if I were to credit my own
eyesight I should believe myself to be just in the center of
all things. The horizon in front, behind, and on both sides
was equidistant; the highest point in the sky was directly
above me; I held the center, apparently. Eye-sight, the first
simple witness, uncorrected by examination and
afterthought, formed the basis of current belief and
philosophy touching everything in existence till Copernican
teaching destroyed it.

How self-satisfied were men in the old time, how contented and happy. They believed that this earth was the center of the universe, that it was fixed and immovable, that the sun went around it, that all things existent came and vanished because of it. The sun rose and set just to serve man.

All that belief and philosophy has gone from us. That which seemed to be the great fact was found non-existent and illusive, that which is has proved so stupendous that no one is able to grasp it. Man's home in the sky, the heavenly house just above, has been rent from him. His yearning remains, or at least in most cases, and he is like the poet who never had a home, but who sang of home, that sweet home, as no man ever sang of it before him or afterward.

As the carriage rolled on I recalled how a man in London, three months earlier, had spoken to me very earnestly as follows:

"This earth is no longer the center of the universe. People now do not think that in the sky straight above them is a heavenly city, where they will live through endless ages in happiness. Science, which is encroaching on ancient beliefs, and destroying old systems, is taking away every basis of earnest conviction, and so far has given nothing in the sense of assuring a future existence, by showing where or how that existence could be realized. My father died," continued my acquaintance, "with the firmest conviction that he would live soul and body hereafter. I believe in nothing. I should be glad to believe, but I cannot. Some scientists tell me that at death I shall die altogether, that my conscious I, which is talking this moment, will vanish forever. Others tell me that if for individuals there be a hereafter, no man can prove it. The majority of men hope and wish for a life in the future, hope and wish for that which the old beliefs promised. I should like wonderfully to have such a belief, but how am I to get it? Who can help me? This is for me the great question."
The horses had passed half the road, perhaps, when I dropped asleep while pondering over the words of my London friend. I woke soon, for we had come to rough places and the harsh jolting roused me. After that we were in an open region. The whole sky was visible, and the carriage moved smoothly. Again I fell to thinking, and my friend's words came back to me:

"Can Science find eternal life possible in the same human being? Science finds eternal life everywhere, but not in the same form.

"To be permanent and undying a material body must either not change, or must receive the equivalent exactly of that which goes from it, and, besides, it must retain all its life vigor. There must be no loss to it in exchanging.

"Given the immortal body, where is its home to be? The heaven is gone, that solid region, that firmament, as men once considered it. There is nothing now overhead save expanse. Where shall we look for the home of undying individual existence? Not on this earth, since on earth there is no place for an endless and happy hereafter. Is there in infinite space out beyond us a place where immortal existence might have a fit dwelling? If there is, how can we find it? From the various groups of men who ponder over the mystery of existence three may be chosen to illustrate the problem before us, and how men relate themselves to it.

"The first group is made up of persons who declare that there is no spirit whatever save what is inseparable from and connected with matter, and which inheres in it. There is in this way a spirit in everything various in each case; from that in the atom, which is, perhaps, the most restricted, to that in man, which on earth is the most comprehensive and intricate.

"Whenever an organism, such as man, comes to dissolution,
or death, the spirit which inheres in it must vanish; and when that organism is resolved finally into elements or atoms, there is simply a myriad of atomic spirits, but no spirit of a man to consider, because there is no man in existence, and so with all other living creatures and organized existences.

"There is nothing immortal save the atom in any place. From atoms all things are aggregated, and from atomic spirit is built up all the mind in the universe. Since the organisms are transient, the spirit is transient.

"For thinkers of this group the question just raised has no interest whatever.

"The second group is formed of all Christian believers, and also of those who, though they may not be Christians, believe in a spirit, or soul, as distinct from each body. For this group the question cannot be without interest.

"The first and the second group have no common ground of agreement.

"The third group ascribes enormous, nay, unbounded, importance to the atom, but only in conjunction with that all-pervading substance which men for the moment call ether, but which in reality is spirit.

"What is the atom, and what is ether? The atom is deathless; no one can seize it, no one can injure it, fire cannot burn it. In the raging heat of the sun or on Sirius the dog-star, in the maximum of cold where life would cease suddenly, in a dew-drop, in a tempest, in a blizzard, or in Niagara the atom is there. Invincible, eternal, equally contented in the highest heaven and the pit of the inferno, infinitely obedient; inconceivably flexible it enters into beauty as readily as into the vilest deformity. Equally at home in the diamond and the dung-heap, the atom is everywhere present and constitutes all
things material. There is no existence possible without it.

"What may we say of the ether? The atom is everywhere, but the atom is always embraced by the ether, always upheld and kept down by it. Wherever the atom, which constitutes all things, has an office, and it has one in every place, the ether is present.

"In the scheme of the first set of thinkers among the three to which I have referred, the atom alone is important; in fact, there is nothing to begin with, the atom which is so small that no human eye can behold it is the first unit, the starting-point. By an infinite accretion of atoms effected through impulse or love which atoms have for one another, all the forms in the universe are constituted gradually; all the beauty and intellect in existence are thus evolved; all the millions of suns, stars, and other heavenly bodies, as well as the various kinds of living creatures, man, and everything that has life on our planet.

"By this scheme all physical forms and all degrees of mentality come from the association of atoms, which, increasing in certain lines, always growing in number, cause with each increase a higher mentality and a more varied physical development.

"The statement of the third group is this substantially: When an accretion of atoms has happened, an inflow or pressure of ether takes place with this growth, simultaneously, and at every phase of it. For instance, if two atoms unite, a mind to grasp this situation is needed; the ether is present, and the mind is immediately. The association of atoms increases to a hundred for example, the association is vastly more complex with that number than it was with two atoms. The great point being that from an aggregation of atomic mind it is quite possible to reach a cosmic mind, or one even that embraces a solar system, and finally the universe.

"With change effected by new atomic accretions there was always an inflowing of ether and an increase of mentality sufficient to dominate the situation. If there was not, the new association
failed and went to pieces, fell back into atoms, to begin anew and continue till success came at that or another time.

"The impulse to accretion is indestructible in the atom, and is active unceasingly. The ether is everywhere present, going through each accretion, embracing and testing it. The ether finds every joint, seam, or line of union between atoms, inserts itself and breaks up the union, unless it be suitable and strong enough. If it be suitable, the ether stays with it, gives the mentality needed in the new combination while it is fit to continue. When not fit, its mentality withdraws and it perishes, that is, drops apart and reverts to its atoms. In this way from the beginning of ages, from the time when atoms began first to seek one another, that is, as soon as atoms were divided from ether, from the time that one became two and the Son was sent forth from the bosom or personality of the Father, creation began and continues to the present, and will continue while existence endures, or, in other words, while there is force in the universe, or still in other words, while there are atoms and ether in existence.

"We have now this point. From the time of the first dissolution of atomic aggregation to this moment there is a continuous going out and returning of ether, each return bringing with it a life history beginning with the first failure of two atoms to associate beyond a certain period, and ending with the latest dissolution of some structure in the universe. Each one of these returns has its memory, and each one of them is deathless. Each temporary aggregation reverts to its atoms, which begin new adventures, while the ether returns to the source whence it started.

"According to the thought inherent in the scheme of this third group of thinkers there was a period when ether and atoms were indifferientiated, merged in one. At the end of a period, beyond calculation in length, a period which might be called an eternity without a beginning, one became two, atoms and ether became segregated and each was indestructible for opposite reasons. The atom because it stands alone, the ether because it is infinitely yielding, no
power can separate it, and it pervades all things no matter how closely their particles are

compacted. Out of atoms all forms may be created. Ether knows everything, because it is in all places, and is never separated or interrupted. The Great Ether knows all that the small parts experience, but the small parts know only by observation, reasoning, and inference anything of the Great Ether.

"We have thus two forms of immortality at present, existent in all places, the ether and the atom. The aggregation of atoms is perishable, and an individual made up of atoms and ether would be immortal and safe only in a place secure from invasion, safe from every external shock and collision, and from chemical action which would destroy the adhesive force of its atoms. Is there such a safe dwelling, and where is it?"

The reasoning of my friend which I give here was in my mind, unexpressed, as I dropped asleep thinking: Is there a real heaven in existence instead of that one up there which is lost to us? I had been looking straight into the wonderful night sky, my mind filled with that awful reality before me; my eyes closed now, and I was dreaming,

I seemed still to see everything around me, and all grew in size, gradually; next I saw nothing, and rested, I know not how long, and then again I was dreaming. I opened my eyes, as I thought, and found myself standing near a telescope enormous in size and far better than any I had ever used or seen thus far. "Will you look in?" asked a person, as I stood there in wonder. "If you look you will see the great center of all things, the place of repose amidst all the action in existence. You will see clearly through this telescope the storm center of the universe, where there is a perfect balance of forces, and where there is peace kept by infinite power and knowledge. There is no decay there, and there will never be. It is the great result of all the toil, suffering, death, and anguish in every other place, and only
beings who are perfect can ever reach it."

"But will the balance not be lost?" I asked. "Will not trouble come to it, as to all other places?"

"As long as force and matter last this region which I show you will be as calm and happy as it now is." He moved to go before me, but that moment something happened; I was

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pushed and jolted, my driver shouted and whipped his horses, and I woke and asked:

"Where are we, what 's the matter?"

"Kosaya Steppe!" (Crooked Prairie) called out the driver.

And he rushed into the village, Crooked Prairie, made half a turn in front of a church, so as to face a large gate before which he stopped, slipped down from his seat, rang a bell, and then waited. The gate was opened after some minutes and we drove into the yard of the "People's House." The woman, who had charge of the building and all that pertained to it, appeared at a porch, and the gate-keeper came out and took from the carriage some things for my use.

The house, which was of good size, had apparently not been occupied much in recent days. The windows had not been opened, the air was close and unpleasant in odor. The first thing was to open the windows, and then, pure air secured, to have breakfast made ready.

A boiling samovar was brought about half an hour later. In Russia tea is the greatest, the best drink of the country. So far as my experience goes Russian tea is the most refreshing drink in the world and when there are suhari (rusks) to go with it food and drink are at hand for a good meal in the morning.

After drinking tea I slept till seven, that is one hour, then I
went to the courtyard and there in the middle of the open space was a carriage and in it Vassya and Lazareff sleeping soundly. I had engaged my horses for half past seven, hoping thus to have them in season. A little before eight the two men woke, and the horses were brought in. Vassya wished to remain two or three hours at Crooked Prairie, so I went on to Elantsin, the next station, where I arrived only at two o'clock after some delay on the road and slow traveling.

At Elantsin I was informed that it would be impossible to get horses that day; I must wait till the morrow in every case. No help for it. This station, which is about a verst from the town, is one of the best on the road. It is a large building with fairly clean rooms and an immense kitchen. Just across the road is a small house, and near by a small church with dome

and bell tower. Behind the church is a high mountain. The place reminded us of Ragats, Switzerland.

The station master, a young married man, had provisions in plenty, and treated us well. Toward evening Vassya appeared and we had the promise of horses for an early hour on the morrow. But in spite of every exertion it was almost noon when we started. The road was rough and dusty. As one approaches the lake there are low, unwooded hills with stony summits that look in places as if altars had been set up, or as though covered with the ruins of ancient fortresses.

When within a few versts of the Kutul Vassya and Lazareff turned off to go to a village where a man lived to whom, as they said, Andrei Mihailovitch had sent a letter asking him for assistance in our work. I never saw the man, however, and later I discovered that the letter was about private business, and had nothing whatever to do with my work.

We reached Kutul in the evening. This station is well kept and spacious. There is a large room in it where the Buriats hold their public meetings and discuss questions touching interests in the district. The mistress of the house, a
Russian, was not at home, having gone to a town a hundred
versts away to send a telegram to her husband, who was in
the army.

The journey from Kutul to Olkhon, though a short one,
required considerable exertion and patience. To all
appearances there was much difficulty in obtaining horses.
There was delay for other reasons also. When I was in the
greatest doubt as to what to do the chief of the district
arrived at the station, to be present at a Buriat meeting, and
he gave me willing assistance; without his aid I should have
had a good deal of trouble. He advised me to hire an
additional man, one who knew the Olkhon people, and also
informed me that the road to the lake was so rough as to
necessitate leaving my carriage at Kutul and taking wagons.

The master of post horses at Kutul is a stripling named
Muravieff. This man, half Russian, half Buriat, is
tremendously bent on making money, and in his dealings is
quite as crooked as the world-renowned ram's horn. His
father was a full-blooded Buriat. When Count Muravieff
Amoorski was

![Convict Prison at a Post Station.](http://www.sacred-texts.com/asia/jss/jss09.htm)

What looks in this photograph to be a board fence is a square enclosure at
least twelve feet high

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![Buriat Women in Full Dress.](http://www.sacred-texts.com/asia/jss/jss09.htm)

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governor of Eastern Siberia he took a fancy to this Buriat. Through his influence the young man became a Christian, and at baptism received the name Muravieff; in this way bettering his condition in a worldly sense. Some time after that a Russian girl, deceived by a man, who in due time deserted her, was alone, without a friend or money, and not far from childbirth; the Buriat Muravieff married her; the child, which was a son, he adopted. Later she had a son by Muravieff; this is the half-Buriat stripling whom I have mentioned as being so fond of money.

On the island of Olkhon there is only one store; this store is owned by Muravieff, the Russian, the half brother of the half-blooded Buriat; both are sons of the erstwhile deceived Madame Muravieff.

After annoying delays I obtained four horses and two small springless wagons for the continuation of our journey to the island. My extra man was Protopotoff, "the official inoculator for small-pox." Starting about ten o'clock in the forenoon, we had a most interesting day. Between Kutul and Lake Baikal there are two villages, Kuchulga and Togot; the first contains about fifty houses, the other is much smaller.

The region from Kutul to the lake is in the main rugged and rocky. From the brow of the last elevation to the edge of the water, a distance of two miles, the road we went over is remarkable; it is not the one taken generally; the road for laden wagons is at least a third longer. By this shorter route we crossed a broad stretch of smooth grassland which slopes toward the lake; the descent is not abrupt enough to be dangerous, but is sufficient for swift driving. When well started we went along at a pace like that of tobogganing in Canada. It seemed like coasting on wheels in summer time. The land is so even, its surface yielding the least trifle under the wheels, that the sensation which comes of swift motion
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was wonderfully pleasant, almost equal to sliding down hill in those days which are now in eternity.

We halted at a house near the water, but still half a mile from the Olkhon Island ferry. At the house, or rather directly in front of it, was a Shaman; around him were five or six bark and

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iron dishes containing sour milk, sweet milk, and tarasun. He was performing some function of his office. Just before we stopped he made a libation, throwing tarasun up, and chanting a prayer.

The Shaman was a very strange person in visage and action. To a dark, sweating face and bright eyes he added a large round lump or knob on his nose just under and halfway between his eyebrows. He swayed gently from side to side as he chanted and then made a few steps which were short and spasmodic, a kind of twitching. Soon he halted, made another libation, chanted again, sprinkled with tarasun and milk the bushes growing near the house, took a few more spasmodic steps, and finished.

All I could learn was that these offerings had been made to drive sickness away.

The Shaman sprinkled my men with tarasun, muttering a prayer meanwhile, and then he treated them to the liquor with such liberality that it was only after much delay and great urging that I at last got them started again.

The passage to the island, which is rather more than a mile, should be made in good weather, since the lake is very rough at times, and the boats are far from reliable. Our chance for safety was good, as in August the weather is excellent, usually. Two boats, all there are in service, were needed for our company, as we had four horses and two wagons. One of the boats was at the mainland, the other was returning from the island, and we waited for it, wishing to set out together.
The wagons were lifted into the boats. The horses sprang on board very nimbly, showing that they were accustomed to this way of traveling. Each boat carried two horses and one wagon. On my boat there were six rowers, men, women, and children; on the other boat there were four. It took thirty-five minutes to cross.

I felt very curious on approaching the island which the Buriats call "sacred." On one side of the small bay toward which we were sailing a lofty cliff juts out boldly. On the front of that cliff are two immense faces, so distinct that all people note them. One of these looks at the mountains on the mainland; the other on the water in front of it. One as if watching the great world outside to see who might come from it to examine the island and its secrets, the other as if watching the visitors whom the men ferry across.

I drew attention to the faces and learned that they are called "The Watchers." There they gaze, watching night and day, never sleeping; looking, waiting, as waits the great sphynx near the pyramid of Ghizeh.

We landed without any trouble or adventure, and now I was on the sacred island of the Baikal. There are no houses near the landing. The first village is about three miles from the lake. At that place, which bears the name Nur, young Muravieff showed his high qualities and quite a comedy was presented.

I had supposed when we started from Kutul that we should be taken to Sem Sosen (Seven Pines), the chief village of the island, and the only one where there is a store and a possible stopping place. Muravieff, knowing that we were all going there, and that we expected him to take us, made his own plans, but he hid them from us carefully, until we reached Nur. There to our surprise he demanded a change of horses, though we were only a few miles from Seven Pines, our destination. He drove into the village and stopped
in front of the house of the elder, the official who is obliged to furnish horses if they are demanded by travelers. The elder’s wife, who was quick enough to see what was wanted, declared that her husband was off fishing some twenty versts away and that she did not know when he would return. At that moment he came from an out-house, where he had evidently been sleeping, and thus unwittingly gave a lie to her words, but she was not embarrassed in the least.

As soon as he appeared Muravieff demanded a relay of horses. The elder had no horses to give. All beasts trained to draw wagons were far from the village at pasture.

It was the bounden duty of the elder to find us four horses—they were not to be had, and he could not create them. There were only two or three miles to the end of the journey, and the horses we had were well able to make it, but Muravieff very bluntly refused to drive them farther.

At last, through his friends, he informed the elder that he would take us to Sevens Pines for ten rubles. The elder’s claim was less than a ruble; government allowed him to receive but three copecks a verst for each horse. He paid the money, however, and Muravieff drove on.

I told Muravieff what I thought of him, but he only smiled with satisfaction. He had gained his point and saw no reason to be ashamed. To him success in any form was a thing to be proud of.

We arrived at Seven Pines about nightfall. The evening was warm and pleasant. The first move, of course, was to find lodgings. There was only one row of buildings in that part of Seven Pines where the store was. The first of these buildings was the storekeeper's dwelling, a house with but one large room; the second building was his store. This proved to be very small, and closely packed with groceries and dry-goods. The third was a shed and could be of no use to me. The fourth belonged to a Russian who was absent. I went to the fifth house, but the woman who lived there told...
me that there were billions of fleas in her house, and she could not with a clear conscience let any one try to pass a night in it. She felt obliged to refuse me. My search for a place in which to spend the night proving fruitless, I went back to the storekeeper and asked him what I could do. He suggested that I might sleep in the church, or Molitvenny dom (the prayer house). I agreed to this, and my things were transferred to the little prayer house.

Vassya and Lazareff were to sleep under the shed, in their wagon.
CHAPTER VI

SOJOURN ON THE "SACRED" ISLAND

THE morning following my arrival on Olkhon the golovar of Kutul, who had accompanied me to the island, returned to the mainland, after sending for a man whom he said could tell me much about the religion and customs of the people, and I was left to the devices of the islanders and others.

The messenger came back alone—the story-teller had gone to the Angara to fish, and would be away for some weeks. We were discussing the position when we saw two men riding in from the direction of the lake, and all called out, "There comes the story-teller." But instead of the story-teller it was Ilbik Urbashkin, the starosta of the second division of the Abazai clan. All the Buriats of Olkhon belong to this clan, but it has two divisions.

I now sent in various directions for men supposed to know stories, but when they came they could give me no information of value.

I had slept two nights on the floor of the little prayer house when the Russian in charge returned from fishing, and immediately deprived me of a shelter. He was an ignorant, self-sufficient peasant whom neither kind words, money, nor documents showing government protection influenced in the least. He was angry that the building had been opened to me during his absence and without his consent. He was in authority, and his authority had been ignored. It was impossible to reason with him. He strove to hide the real cause of his anger by repeating continually, "God's church has been desecrated by being used as a lodging." I was forced to move out.

I had become acquainted with the people of Seven Pines, and a young Buriat, who had recently built a one-roomed house,
said that I could occupy it as long as I remained on the island. A stove, a couple of chairs, a pine table, and a bedstead were all the furniture that the room contained. He and his wife were exceedingly kind people. The woman cleaned the room with great care, and the man came several times each day to light the samovar and do what he could to make us comfortable. When not serving us they were busy in a meadow near by, cutting and raking grass. It was pleasant to witness their pleasure and gratitude when at parting I rewarded them for their kindness.

Meanwhile the search for knowledge continued. At last the starosta of Olkhon assembled a crowd near my cottage and questioned each man; but no information was to be obtained. "My father knew much about the old time." "My grandfather was a very wise man, and could have told you a great deal." "I had to work when a child, I had no chance to learn the lore of my people." Such were the answers given.

After a few days of very unsatisfactory work I decided that it was useless to remain longer on the island. Lazareff was uneasy, and anxious to go. He had relatives on the mainland, he said, "who knew all about the Buriats of the old time. They were more intelligent than the islanders, and would give me much valuable information." I was aware that Lazareff had his own interests in view, not mine, but I consented to visit those wise relatives as I wished to meet as many of the Buriats as possible. And on August 13 we left Seven Pines.

When we reached the Baikal a sturdy young girl, wearing pants, boots, a dark shirt and very short skirt, assisted the men in getting the wagons on to the boat, and was afterward one of the rowers. Two men and two small boys managed my boat.

When I turned and looked back at the rock faces, I thought that they had a satisfied expression, as though down in their rock hearts they were glad that we were leaving their sacred island.
It was evening when, greatly wearied, we reached the first post station, which after our experience on Olkhon seemed a very clean and hospitable place. The mistress of the house had returned and we found her an intelligent, kindly woman. At noon the following day we were at the "Ragatz" station, where

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we were forced to remain the rest of the day and the night. In the morning, after traveling a few versts the carriage gave out, and we stopped at the little village of Kuntin for repairs. The blacksmith, a good-looking old man, with bushy gray hair, was an Italian from Udine near Rome. When he heard his mother tongue once more his eyes lighted with pleasure, and he could not express his delight at meeting some one who knew his language and his country. While he was mending the carriage we took shelter in the house of a certain Petrof, a Russian who owned the vodka shop of the village. The old man boiled eggs and heated the samovar for us, and provided tarasun so liberally that I was afraid that we should have to leave Lazareff in Kuntin. When we returned to the blacksmith shop I snapped a photograph of our outfit, "en memorium," as the old Italian said.

We had a splendid run out of Kuntin; dozens of dogs flew after us, like the wolves after Mazeppa. The horses went at full speed. It was splendid! glorious!

At five o'clock that afternoon, during a heavy rain storm, we reached Kosostép. Seven versts farther on lived Lazareff's relatives. He urged me to continue the journey that evening, but I was weary of bad roads and rain. The station was untidy and miserable. Our supper consisted of bacon and eggs, which for the sake of cleanliness we cooked for ourselves. Lazareff, like most of the Buriats, did not eat "pig meat," so bacon was cut out of his menu. Education had freed Vassya from this prejudice and had roused in him the desire to live as Russians live, hence he shared our supper with pleasure.

The Buriats, even those who are rich, live much like
American Indians. There are no regular hours for meals, or any apparent forethought regarding them. Rye bread and mutton are the staples. When guests come, or a family gets hungry, a sheep is killed, skinned, cut up and boiled, and the tough meat is eaten with great relish. Occasionally a cow or a horse is slaughtered for food. If all of the meat is not disposed of immediately, it is dried for future use. Ice, one of the luxuries of modern life, is unknown, except as the covering of lakes and rivers during winter months. If an official or some person whom they wish to show more than usual respect arrives, hidden-away "Russian dainties" are brought forward, and a "lunch before dinner" is served. But this is the reception meal, and will not be repeated.

I was glad to get away from Kosostép early in the morning. The ride, after the rain of the evening before, was delightful.

On each side of the road were meadows where Russians and Buriats, both men and women, were busy mowing and turning grass. The dress of the Buriat woman—pants, boots and a short loose sacque—is convenient for field work, but it is not picturesque. A Russian woman of the laboring class wears a short dark skirt and a bright colored waist, and usually ties a red or red and yellow kerchief around her head. The hay fields that clear cool August morning were animated and dotted here and there with brilliant colors,—a beautiful harvest picture.

With a different climate the rich, black soil of this district would be exceedingly fertile, but as it is wheat will not grow; oats, though they ripen, are not good and the only reasonably sure crop is rye. Grass, however, grows wonderfully well, and at this season of the year nearly all of the men and women were busy in the hay-fields. There is no fruit in any part of Siberia which I have visited. The only berries I have seen were blue-berries, and those were cultivated.

On my arrival at Alaguersk-rod, a beautifully situated little
village surrounded by meadows, I found that I was expected. The Uprava, a building used for government purposes, had been made ready, and a samovar was boiling. The "writer," or official translator, and twelve or fifteen Buriats were there to meet me.

The writer, a Russian exiled for life, is an educated and interesting man. Though only forty-five years of age his face is deeply lined and he looks worn and sad, for he has suffered much; fifteen years of his life exile have already past. Later, from an official at Irkutsk, I learned that the man had been in the army, and had been exiled for striking a superior officer.

After drinking tea the work of obtaining information and stories began. The hay-makers, glad of an excuse to leave the field, crowded into the uprava, and soon the place was dark with

the smoke and vile with the odor of bad tobacco. An old man commenced well, but was interrupted by a young man, who said that he was not telling the story as he (the young man) had learned it. Then he tried to tell it himself, but could not; the old man was angry and the story was left unfinished.

A man from the Trans-Baikal gave me much important material, but after an hour or so a Buriat from the village, who had been drinking heavily, interfered, and tried to prevent his giving a foreigner information regarding the religion of the country. Only after much uproar and talk and a wearisome answering of questions, asked to establish my position, was the enemy silenced by his neighbors and the officials. In the evening when the crowd had dispersed and the room had been cleared the man in charge of refreshments brought us a dish of beef cut into small bits and boiled—not tempting, but we ate it, for we were hungry. The next day work went on well for a couple of hours, then the story-teller informed me that Irkutsk merchants had sent him to Alaguevsk-rod to hire men to go to the mouth of the Angara to fish. As he had contracted to
have the men at the river within a week he could not stay with me longer. I was unable to find another man who could tell me anything of importance.

Lazareff, tired of his relatives if relatives they were, went back to Kosostép at once. I remained for the night, for accommodations, though poor, were better than at the post station. The crowd disappeared, only the exile remained. The man was poor, and his life was one of hardship and anxiety. Later I went with him to his home and met his wife, a frail woman whom trials and poverty have greatly disheartened. I promised to speak a good word for her husband and a few weeks afterward was able to fulfil my promise in such a way as to make his position somewhat easier.

The following morning was so chilly that a fire was needful. There was delay in starting, and it was noon before we reached Kosostép, where I found horses waiting, and we were off at once. At the first station beyond Kosostép we were treated to Siberian fruit—blueberries—which we ate greedily, though they were hard and sour. From this station a sturdy young Russian was our driver. He whirled us over twenty-nine versts rapidly, rushing through Hogotskaya to the post station as fast as the horses could run. Priestoff, the stanovoi of the town, called immediately and invited us to dine with him that evening. This made a pleasant break in the monotony of our return journey.

From Hogotskaya to Baiandai the horses were miserable; one side horse especially was contrary, and would not pull. The driver unharnessed him at last, and hitched him between the thills, where he was forced to work.

Upon our arrival at Baiandai Lazareff and Vassya learned of the death of a relative's child, and, though the child was only a few days old, they made the death an excuse for hastening to Usturdi. Lazareff had been of little help to me,
he had caused me much vexation and expense, and I was glad to say: "God speed you."

Baiandai is a curious place. It is a collection of Buriat villages with one Russian settlement. In this settlement nearly every man and woman is either an ex-convict or a person exiled for life. I could have easily gathered many stories there, life tragedies, vastly interesting for a man who wishes to study all phases of life, but I was in Siberia to obtain Mongol material, and did not wander from my task.

Baiandai houses, like most of the houses in Siberia, are unpainted, except the casings and blinds, which are painted white; they get black and old quickly. Many of the buildings have shattered roofs and look uninhabitable, still they are occupied. Though a large place, there was but little to eat; no butter, white bread, or meat of any kind could be obtained. My bed in this village, or collection of villages, was made by putting two doors on two boxes and placing my carriage mattress on those doors.

The Russian secretary of the village was away, but the assistant secretary was very kind, and made every effort possible to find "wise men" for me. He was an exile from Little Russia, where he had held a government position. Losing in some way a thousand rubles of government money, he was sent to Siberia for twelve years, leaving at home a son and a daughter, and a position which gave him more than a hundred rubles a month.

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He had already lived through eleven years of this exile. What he will do when the term ends he does not know. His health is broken; evidently exile has been a frightful experience for him. It is doubtful if work in a mine is worse for an educated and refined man than the monotony and associations of such a place as Baiandai.

After a time a story-teller came. I paid him and sent him away, for he knew only fragments of folk-lore; another came who was not much better, and still others. I remained three days in Baiandai searching diligently for folk-lore, but
I could find nothing of value.

The man detailed to care for me during my stay was Danilo of Moscow, a rogue. He was sent to Siberia when nineteen years of age, under sentence to work in the mines, in chains, for fifteen years. Seventeen years ago, when he had served out twelve years of that sentence, he was pardoned. He came to Baiandai, married, and nine children have been born to him. His own account of the crime he committed was that at a festival, when intoxicated, he, with three associates, beat and killed a man whom they had long hated. He has the appearance of being a quiet, inoffensive person, but I found him tricky and wholly unreliable.

Now a great excitement rose in Baiandai: fifteen hundred soldiers were on their way from the Yakuts country to join, at Irkutsk, forces which had been ordered to China. It was reported that they were unruly, destroyed property, and did as they pleased in the villages they passed through. Two hundred were expected in Baiandai; they must be fed, supplied with bread, and the population must furnish carts and horses to carry them to the next station. Officials assembled to keep order. Five hundred rubles were raised to pay for bread, and every competent housekeeper was ordered to bake a certain number of loaves. In this time of unrest I made the acquaintance of Arkokoff, a rich Buriat, who invited me to visit him, and promised to find men familiar with the folk-lore of the country.

August 23, very early in the morning, there was a wonderful commotion and turmoil. The two hundred soldiers had arrived. The uproar was made principally by cart-drivers, those who

had brought the men, and those who were to carry them away; by Buriats disputing and quarreling, and by dissatisfied soldiers, who had received mouldy bread when fresh had been paid for. Some exhibited this bread. I heard one soldier declare that it was not fit to feed to hens, another said that pigs would refuse to eat it. The breadmakers defended themselves, and there was a noisy
battle of words. But at last the soldiers were off, and when
the squeaking of the rickety carts had died away in the
distance Baiandai sank back into its usual apathy.

A few hours later I started for the summer home of the
Arkokoffs, fifteen versts distant. As the road was smooth
and level and the horses were good, we were soon there.
Within one immense enclosure are three houses built on the
Buriat plan, and one on the Russian, together with sheds
and storehouses. The gate of the high board enclosure was
open and we halted in front of the Russian house out of
which came a very old and very dirty woman and two of the
dirtiest men I have ever seen. Arkokoff himself came from
one of the Buriat houses. He invited us into the Russian
house, and ordered a samovar. While that was preparing he
spoke of his wealth and position. He had several thousand
head of cattle, four hundred splendid horses, five hundred
sheep, and goats as well; a hundred and thirty thousand
rubles in the Irkutsk bank, many houses, and a great deal
of valuable land. He was a man of influence, for he had
money to loan.

When the samovar was brought the steam from it had such
a terrible odor that it made us ill at once. Upon asking what
caused this peculiar odor Arkokoff said that the water they
used was from stored snow, and asked me to go with him
and see how well he had it protected.

Back of the houses was a small building, with a door loosely
hung and always open. Inside of this building was a hole
twenty-five feet deep with steps going down to the bottom.
This hole, or reservoir, was filled in cold weather by
shoveling in snow, stamping it down and packing it as solid
as possible. Men in the reservoir trampled the snow as
others threw it in. The well at this time was about one
quarter full. The snow had turned to ice,
and there was water over the surface. This water was of the color of tea and was full of dirt. A man brought up a bucketful for my inspection. The odor was nearly as bad as from the steam of the samovar.

On looking around outside I saw that the houses and the cattle-yards were on higher ground than the reservoir, and in such a position that the well was to a certain degree a drain.

I decided to leave at once if this was the only water supply. But when I said that I had never used snow water, and thought that undoubtedly it would make me ill, Arkokoff sent men to a small river, quite a distance away, to bring water for my tea.

I now made the acquaintance of Mrs. Arkokoff, a short,
A fleshy, determined-looking woman about sixty-five years of age. She wore a double-breasted Canton silk coat, blue pants tucked into the tops of long-legged boots, and a pair of new, heavy rubbers—Buriat women think that the gloss of new rubbers gives a dressed-up appearance, and they wear them over their boots in the driest and hottest weather—On her head was a round felt cap, and over her shoulders a bright kerchief, knotted in front. She could speak only Buriat, hence my conversation with her was somewhat limited, but I saw that she ruled every one, with the possible exception of her husband. Later on, in Usturdi, I learned that a few years earlier Arkokoff had married a young woman and taken her to his home. Though among the Buriats it is not unusual to have two wives at the same time, Mrs. Arkokoff No. 1 was very angry, and young Mrs. Arkokoff did not live long.

The old man had a curious collection of people around him. In the kitchen of the house in which I was given a room was a queer-looking woman, a Russian, the widow of an exile. Her sole occupation was making rye bread, and though she complained bitterly of Arkokoff as a miser, who would not pay his help, and when they revolted would say: "Go and sue me; I have money, you have none. See how you will come out," she had labored for him twenty-four years, for three rubles (about a dollar and a half) a month. Near the oven in her untidy kitchen stood a tub of rye flour and a tub of yeast. On a bench, not far from the flour tub, slept, during the day, the night-watch, a man who had served out a sentence for murder. He was tall, lank, and always barefooted; his face unwashed and beard and hair unkempt, a wretched specimen of mankind, mentally unbalanced. He had been a servant in the Arkokoff family for twenty years.

I was invited to visit the Buriat houses in the enclosure, three in number. In the first lived the old man and his wife; in the second their son and his wife; in the third the widow of their elder son, and her four children, one boy and three girls, whose dress—pants, loose shirts, long-legged boots,
and caps with visors—made them look precisely like boys. Near the widow's house was a long wagon shed in which were ten or twelve large barrels, each three-fourths full of curd left after distilling tarasun. This curd is given as food to the shepherds, herdiers, and other laborers. Arkokoff said that it was excellent. The barrels are never covered. When the curd dries and hardens it cracks, as does mud under the heat of the sun. Dust fills the cracks and covers the top. Fresh curd is put in each time that tarasun is made. Curd dried in this way lasts for years. When needed a chunk of the vile stuff is chopped out and cooked with rye flour. Tarasun is distilled almost daily, but fresh curd is seldom eaten. For economy's sake they use the dried. The dust comes from the horse, cattle, and sheep yards near by.

In the Buriat country nearly all the milk from horses and cows is made into tarasun. The Arkokoffs make a great quantity of this liquor, but they also make butter of which the master of the place is very proud. A large panful was brought for my inspection. I noticed that it was covered with specks. I asked to have a section cut out; this was done, and I found that the butter was permeated with fine dust.

A dish of soup, a piece of roast mutton, and some rye bread were brought for our supper, but I did not enjoy it, for the mutton was very tough, and I had seen the breadmaker.

The only possible place for us to sleep in this rich man's house was on the floor of the room which had been given me in the Russian house. The family slept on benches in the Buriat houses. My mattress was brought from the carriage and spread on the floor. The door into the kitchen where the old Russian woman slept, and where the night-watch, the ex-convict, came and went while on duty, could not be locked. Of course I had money with

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me sufficient to meet traveling expenses and pay men. But I was too weary to borrow trouble, and slept in spite of everything.
Next day story-tellers came and went. Many men crowded into the room to listen, and were a great drawback and annoyance. I got one fine folk-tale, and sent twenty versts for a man who had the reputation of knowing a good deal. He came, but declared that he knew nothing about the old time. Arkokoff insisted that he did, but neither urging nor money availed. I paid him for his lost time and he went home. Another man came; as it was late in the evening he said he would stay and begin work in the morning. In the morning, although I was up at daylight, he had disappeared. At noon an old man arrived, who told one good folk-tale, then his memory failed, and another man took his place. During these hours of waiting and annoyance tea acted as a wonderful sedative. It was fortunate that I had plenty of Russian tea with me, and also rusks, for in Arkokoff's house the only meal during the day is a dish of mutton and a loaf of rye bread, some time between four o'clock in the afternoon and nine in the evening. The family lives mainly on rye bread and tarasun. I had seen the rye bread made and could not eat it, but I derived great pleasure from feeding it to an old, lame, sore-backed dog. My translator was a Russian in the employ of Arkokoff. I paid Arkokoff more each day for the loss of the man's labor than he paid him for a week's work. I also paid the man in the same proportion.

The third day I had no better luck with story-tellers than the second day. My rusks were gone, and at four o'clock I ordered the horses, which a tall Buriat had had in waiting for two days, and in half an hour we were on the road to Olzoni.

Though I was weary and hungry and had paid exorbitantly for my experience, I was well satisfied, for I had spent three days in a typical Mongol family. Arkokoff professes to be greatly devoted to the old religion; perhaps he is. One thing is certain, he is tremendously devoted to making and hoarding money and drinking tarasun.

The Olzoni station was commodious and clean. I should have spent several days there had it been possible to find folk-tales. Trembovski, the Polish merchant, came to welcome me.
and assist me in getting stories. I had brought Arkokoff's man to aid me, having paid Arkokoff in advance for the time I expected to keep him. But as soon as we reached the village he began drinking and after that I was not sure of him for even half an hour at a time.

In spite of worry and vexation, I remained four days in Olzoni. Then, taking my drunken servant, for fear that I should not get a better one, I started for Upper Kudinsk.

The country we passed through was uncultivated though the soil was rich. I have noticed that there are many wild flowers in Siberia and that they are usually of a purple tint. Daisies of a lavender shade grow everywhere.

At Upper Kudinsk the "People's Quarters" is in an open field half a mile from the village. The house is surrounded by a very high fence. The guest room is small, the bed simply a wooden bench upon which one is expected to put his carriage mattress. The window-sills were packed with tall plants which kept the light out and made the air bad. The official in charge, a Buriat, was very obliging and sent off immediately for "wise men."

Next morning my translator was wonderfully and fearfully drunk. Fortunately I now understood the language so well that I could dispense with his services. A man came who knew folk-tales, and he gave me much valuable information. In the after-noon a middle-aged, blue-spectacled man appeared, and stated that he would tell me "all about the Buriat religion." With him was the son of a Shaman, a bright, intelligent fellow. The middle-aged man, whose name was Kongoroff, was the son-in-law of Arkokoff. He had turned away from the religion of his forefathers, and was perfectly willing to show me his abandoned gods and tell me about them. I was glad to meet such a man.

That evening there was a good supper, the first enjoyable meal I had had for more than two months: beefsteak and
baked potatoes, such potatoes as I had not seen since leaving London, and they were grown in a garden near the house, there in the Buriat country, where I had frequently heard it stated that no vegetable would grow.

But if we had a good supper we had a miserable bed, and a wonderful experience with cockroaches. The moment daylight disappeared they came from their hiding-places and raced everywhere, up the walls, down the walls, on the table, floor, stove, bed, and baskets. Only once before in my life had I seen so many. That was in Guatemala, where in my sleeping-room they ate everything available; ate even the
films off photographic plates which I had set up on a shelf to dry. These Buriat cock-roaches were very aggressive, when I tried to sleep I found it beyond the possible. Toward morning I surrendered, dressed, and went out on to the porch. There I found a Jew tailor whose home was in Lodz, Poland. He had been exiled for eleven years, for smuggling, but at that time had only one year longer to serve. He was a peculiar-looking man with curly hair, white, except at the back of the neck, where it was jet black, which gave him a remarkably odd appearance. He had no friendship for the Buriats, whom he said the excessive use of tarasun was destroying as a people. As he spoke German he could converse freely without fear of being overheard, and we had a long talk, mainly about the country and the Buriats.

In the morning, as soon as I could get horses, I started for Kongoroff’s. The ride of fifteen versts would have been pleasant but for the horses and the driver. The first were wretched, pitiful; the second was inhuman. The land was rolling and the road heavy, the horses lean and underfed. I was afraid they would give out, but urge or threaten as I might I could not make the heartless driver rest them.

Kongoroff’s place was disappointing. The house was so badly kept as to make tea and lunch undesirable. A German from Riga, as he himself declared, came in and began talking rather rapidly. Kongoroff had him turned out soon, and quite rudely, I thought, excusing the act by saying that the man had been drinking. Later he appeared a second time, but was sent off promptly. It seemed much as though Kongoroff, who did not understand German, feared that the man might make some complaint. When I was going the exile came to the carriage, shook hands with me, and said in German, "God sees everything."

Kongoroff brought his Ongons, took them from the boxes, and nailed them to the side of the house to be photographed. They were much like those shown to me by Andrei Mihailovitch.

Kongoroff told me their names and attributes. The visit was
not very pleasant, and though I obtained a few important facts, I was glad to get away from the place.

Another night-conflict with cockroaches and I was off for Usturdi, accompanied by Zabailenski, the translator, who had made good promises. The trip was delightful. There was just the right temperature and the proper breeze. It was a beautiful day! I had been away one month.

I was anxious to go to Irkutsk, but was determined to get the rest of Manshut's folk-tales before going. I sent for him immediately. My messenger soon returned with word that Manshut was sick. I did not credit this, so I got an order from the chief of the village for the old man to come to the uprava. The man who carried the order was gone an entire day. When at last he came he brought the same message as the first man: Manshut was sick. I did not know what to do. There had been a festival, and nearly all the men in the village were intoxicated. I tried hard to keep Zabailenski from bad company, but toward evening of the first day he disappeared. Andrei Mihailovitch was also drinking heavily. Vassya was about the only man in Usturdi who was not to some degree intoxicated.
CHAPTER VII

A BIRTHDAY IN SIBERIA

ON September 6, my birthday, I hired a troika for four rubles and a
half and set out to bring in Manshut, dead or alive. The day
was beautiful, the air clear, sweet; the sun shone brightly, and there
was a breeze just strong enough to give tone to the atmosphere.

The troika moved not too quickly, but still briskly over the country, which
was slightly rolling. The road was excellent, and soon we were abreast
of the Hill of Sacrifice, then beyond it. Manshut's village was said to
be twenty versts from Usturdi, but it was a short twenty versts. At
last we came in sight of several villages, one not far from the other.
At the first I inquired for the house of Manshut's employer, and found
it by driving through what seemed to me a series of unfenced
cattle-yards. In front of the house were half a dozen stolid,
stupid women, one of whom was the employer's wife. She gave no
information except that her husband was away, and Manshut, who
was not at work, was somewhere with friends. Just at that juncture
the worst-looking man I have ever seen ran up from somewhere
around a corner. His red face was decorated with a nose which was an
immense lumpy knob, red as blood. He was terribly repulsive,
ragged and dirty beyond description, a man who had drunk barrels
and barrels of tarasun.

"I will show you where Manshut's house is," said he. The driver made
room for him, and we went, at his direction, toward the end of the village
where there were several tumble down houses.

My guide said that Manshut lived with his mother in the second
house, but we found that he lived in the first house, not with his
mother, but with an old, weird, witch-like creature, who was at

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the second house sitting on the ground outside with three other very
old women. When I asked where Manshut was she did not answer,
but got up and going to her own house sat down by the door. Then
an unsatisfactory conversation began; one story was that Manshut
was visiting somewhere in the neighborhood, another, that he was
off cutting grass. I thought that he might be hiding, so I gave the woman
some money and she let me go into the house and look around. He was
not there.

Meanwhile, the knob-nosed man, with fifty copecks in hand and
a promise of more, had gone off to hunt Manshut up. Seeing the
I decided to go back to the employer's house. On the way I met a Russian-Buriat, who had seen me with Andrei Mihailovitch at the Horse Sacrifice. He was drunk, but gave me more information than I had been able to get hitherto. He said that Manshut's employer had a great deal of grass to cut, and would not let the old man go to Usturdi. He offered to go to the hayfield with me, if I wished. The driver objected to this. He said that the place was across the river, and more than a verst away; his horses were too tired for the trip. I sent for other horses. Then he did not want his wagon to cross the river. At last, very reluctantly, with an increase of pay, he decided to go to the hayfield. The drunken man took his seat by the driver, and we were off.

After driving about half a mile we halted in front of a small house built on the Russian plan. I inquired why we were stopping. "To get a drink," answered my guide. "It is hot; I am terribly dry."

The small house was a dram shop; fortunately it was closed. When he rapped heavily on the door two children came to a broken window, but they refused to let him in; their mother, who was at work in a field quite a distance away, had told them "not to unfasten the door for any one." The man insisted, offered them money, scolded, but they would not disobey. I told him that I was in a hurry and could not wait; that it was almost night. At last, when my patience was nearly gone, he took his seat and we started.
field hailed us. It was our knob-nosed friend, who when near enough called out,

"I have found Manshut!"

We turned back at once. The man had somewhere procured a bottle of tarasun. A Shaman came up and a drinking bout began. The bottle was emptied quickly and with great gusto. I was afraid that the driver would get intoxicated; but accustomed to tarasun it had no visible effect.

The knob-nosed man and the Shaman stood up on the back of the wagon and we drove on. Just outside the old witch's house we came upon Manshut. He was ragged and dirty, and had an old handkerchief tied around his head.

Without waiting for words I greeted him, and said: "Get up by the driver. It will be night soon, we must be off immediately!" He took his seat, not hesitating for a moment, and we started.

Usturdi seemed far away that September evening, for the horses were tired, and the air was chilly. It was nine o'clock when we reached the village. It had been a holiday and of course the Buriats had feasted on tarasun; the effects of it were evident everywhere. With great effort we succeeded in getting a samovar and a few pieces of rye bread. It had been a strange birthday; but I was content. I had fought a battle and won a victory.

Manshut told folk-tales for four days, and his work was very satisfactory; nevertheless they were hard days, for my provisions were gone, except tea. No matter how large a Buriat village may be there is never a meat market. Occasionally at the little grocery shops one can buy bacon, kept for Russian customers, but it is of a very poor
quality. At this time Usturdi lacked even bacon.

In a Buriat house, as I have stated, there is but one meal in twenty-four hours; tough mutton, rye bread, and tarasun. This meal is eaten without ceremony. Plates and knives and forks are placed on a table which usually has an oilcloth cover, a dish of mutton and a plate of rye bread are brought, and each person serves himself. Tea is used in the morning. The poorer classes drink what is called "block tea," the odor of which is very disagreeable. The well-to-do drink ordinary Russian tea. I am sure that the constant use of tobacco destroys their desire for food, for the rich live as badly as do the poor.

Buriats smoke almost continually, using a pipe with a large bowl and long stem. I have seen children five years of age smoking. Young girls seem more addicted to smoking than boys are, if possible. They are dissipated in every way. It is only after marriage that morality is expected, and then it is strictly enforced.

To the large majority of Buriats Russian is an unknown language. It is difficult to find a man able to carry on an ordinary conversation. Buriat women make no effort whatever to learn Russian. There are no Buriat schools.

I was rejoiced when I had on paper all that Manshut could tell me, for he was so unkempt as to be exceedingly repulsive. I recompensed him well for his time, and his knowledge of ancient tales, and he went away satisfied. Zabailenski was happy also, for I did not count out the days that he had been so intoxicated as to be useless.

We left Usturdi September 13. I was glad to go from the Buriat country, where, though I had gained considerable knowledge, we had endured many hardships.

Seven versts beyond the first station I passed through Iyók, a town of about four thousand ex-convicts, Poles, Jews, Russians, and Tartars, mainly peasants. It is a town with one immensely long street of unpainted houses and fences, all in a more or less tumbled down condition. When we reached Kudà (Where), it was already dusk and we remained for the night, not only because it was difficult to get horses, but because I thought it unsafe to travel in the night time, as within two or three years there had been several murders at this end of the route.

At the Zemski quarters I found the ispravnik of Vernolensk, an
uncultured, stupid man. He was on his way to Irkutsk. His wife and aunt had met him at Kudà, and he and they occupied the guest room with trunks and bags which should have been left outside. This was vexatious, but I had an opportunity to study the real character of the man. He would have been officious and guarded had he known that I was traveling under government protection.

The woman in charge of the house gave me a small room where I tried to sleep on a huge box which occupied a good part of the chamber. But at midnight a party of young officers arrived with the governor-general's order for horses. When horses were not to be had there were high words and disputes. They had been ordered to Iyók to make arrangements for quartering a regiment of soldiers there for the winter. As they would not wait for station horses private horses were found, and they continued their journey, much to my satisfaction.

Next morning we were on the road at an early hour, carrying with us the house mistress' blessing, who said, as we parted, "If you never pass this way again I hope to meet you in that other world."

It was a cold and rainy day, and our driver informed us that thereafter there would be "little heat and much cold."

That evening I dined with the governor of Irkutsk, and went with him to the opera. In this quick change from life among the Buriats to the refinements of civilized life in the capital of Siberia, I experienced the striking results of some centuries of social evolution,—an evolution which through its effects upon humanity enables the man of cities to step back in a moment and with no mental effort from the wild, free life of fancy to the prescribed surroundings of material facts.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Thus did I leave the heroes of the past, who fought so bravely with the many-headed Mangathais, and return to the no less valiant men of the present who, struggling with the evil forces of indifference and ignorance, are bringing to Siberia the prosperity that country so well deserves to call her own.

Footnotes

90:1 Captain of police.
CHAPTER VIII

CUSTOMS OF THE BURIATS

THE MAKING OF TARASUN

THE most important work in a Buriat house and of a Buriat woman is to keep the milk barrels full, and to distil the milk into tarasun, a liquor looking like alcohol or pure water. When the milk is sour enough for the watery part to separate from the curd it is ready to distil. As much milk as is desired is taken out of the barrel and put in a large iron pot, then the pot is sealed up with a heavy paste made of mud and cow manure, and is placed over a slow fire burning on the ground in the center of the Buriat house.

From the pot a pipe runs into a tub which stands four feet or so away. From the end of this pipe drips out the tarasun.

If strong tarasun is desired the first is redistilled. The strongest is made by distilling the liquor three times.

I should judge that the milk barrels in a Buriat house are never empty, for they look as if they had not been washed for years.

In some of the houses two or three barrels of sour milk stand in the room where the family lives. But, when there is a large herd of cows, and many people to be supplied with tarasun, the barrels are kept under a shed near the house. These barrels are left uncovered, consequently the milk is permeated with dust.

The "arsá," or substance left in the pot after the liquor is distilled, is stored in barrels. It hardens and is mixed with rye flour and cooked for laborers. Arsá becomes so solid that an axe is used in getting it out of the barrel. These barrels are also left uncovered in a shed or outhouse.

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Buriats keep many cows, but nearly all the milk is made into tarasun; there is no cheese made, and very little butter. What butter is made is wholly unfit for use.

**MARRIAGE CEREMONIES**

When a young boy and girl take a fancy to each other their parents, if in favor of the marriage, begin the regular negotiations through matchmakers, or one father may say to the other, "You have a daughter and I have a son, let us become relatives." This agreement made, the matchmakers' work begins.

The matchmakers, usually, if not always, elderly women, go to the father of the girl with the proposal from the father of the boy. The girl's father will entertain this formal proposal, or, if he has changed his mind, will definitely refuse it. In the former case he will receive another visit. This time five or six persons come. They enter the eight-sided yurta, and the two matchmakers sit down opposite the door; with them are men whose business it is to decide upon the sum to be paid. The father must always get "kalym"—the price of the girl. Now begins bargaining, one side asking a big price, and the other offering little. This is often a mere formality, for many times the question has been decided in advance. The girl's father reduces the price somewhat, the boy's father offers a trifle more, until finally they reach an agreement as to the amount.

This kalym is almost always paid in horses, cows, sheep, grain—anything of value among the Buriats; the amount varies from three to seven hundred rubles, according to the wealth of the two families. A day is appointed for the next visit, and the matchmakers and their assistants go home.

On the day appointed a large company goes to the girl's home. They sit on the ground, talk, and drink tarasun. Then dancing begins in front of the house. Sheep are killed, and if the father is rich he kills a horse also. The meat is cooked, and the crowd feasts. Only friends, relatives, and neighbors are present; neither the girl nor boy attends the ceremonies of this first day.
The second day of the marriage ceremony, which may be

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some weeks later, the bridegroom comes early in the morning to the bride's father, bringing provisions. If he is wealthy he has a horse killed and gives the head of the beast to his father-in-law. The ribs are cut out and given to those of the wedding guests who are most distinguished. All of the meat is cooked, then the best parts are distributed among the people present. Tarasun is dealt out in abundance. There is dancing and feasting. This entertainment takes place in the open air. Chairs and tables are unnecessary; every one sits on the ground to eat.

The third day the groom is at his father's. The house where the young couple are to live is made ready. In the room is a bed, and near the bed is fixed a place where the bride is to sit. Meanwhile she is at home. All at once a small party on horse-back is seen in the distance approaching on the keen run. They halt in front of the door, enter, seize the girl, put her on a horse, and race away to the new home. There she is swept off the horse, taken into the house, and seated by the bed, where she remains with a handkerchief over her face. The groom is around everywhere, but does not approach to greet her. A table is placed near the bride and the Ongons or household divinities are put on it. Four of the bride's friends now inform the groom that the bride is there. He approaches, she rises and takes his hand, then three old men, of family and importance, appear. The bride and groom bow to the Ongons and are then led around the table three times by the three old men, who ask of the Ongons that the newly married may be prosperous, gain much wealth, and have many children to begin a new line. After this ceremony the bride returns to her father's house.

On the fourth day of the marriage ceremony the bride again goes to the new house (or yurta), puts on a mask and bows before the Ongons. There is a fire made on the ground in the center of the yurta; she bows to this fire, and throws a piece of butter into it; then she takes a piece of fat mutton, perhaps a pound or two pounds, cuts it into bits, rolls it into
a lump and throws it into the hands of her father-in-law; in this way she assures him that she will be bountiful and kind to him. The ceremony over, the bride sits down near the milk barrel, which always stands at the northwest corner of the fire. Taking her place at the milk barrel concludes the marriage ceremony, for this denotes that she takes formal possession of the milk of the house. Thereafter she is mistress of the milk, and everybody must go to her for it. It is her business to make, or to cause to be made, the tarasun.

In Balagausk, where another branch of the Buriats lives, the marriage ceremony differs slightly. On the day that the bride is first taken to the home of the groom, a man, taking with him a large arrow, goes ahead of the party having the bride in charge. When he arrives at the new home he sticks the arrow into a pillar in front of the house, and calls out that the bride's party is coming. When they are within a short distance of the house a man appointed for the purpose throws the meat of the second joint of an animal—a cow, sheep, or horse—to the boys of the village who are waiting to catch it. The bride leaves her father's house either on horseback or in a wagon, but always approaches her new home on horseback. She rides up at full gallop, is swept from the horse, and conducted with covered head and face to the bed, where she sits down on the chair placed there for her. The more speed with which this is accomplished the greater the good luck of the bride will be. The horse she rides is ornamented with a bell. The bell is removed, rung, and hung on the western post near the door.

The day following the last day of the ceremony the women of the ulus, or village, come to visit the bride. She must meet them with cap and handkerchief on. She must not call certain persons by their names, but always by the relationship. When they come to the house they cough outside the door; this is done simply for fun and to confuse the bride.

On the second day of the marriage ceremony the bride sits
in the house and begins to cry, and some of her girl friends come and cry with her. Then she lies down on the bed with her most intimate friend. They take each a tress of their hair and sew it to the other's shoulder. Then they clasp each other firmly, friends come in, girls and boys, and try to pull them apart, to tear one from the other; there is laughter and screaming. This ceremony is to show that after marriage the young woman will be true to the friends of her girlhood. If a bride is enceinte she is not permitted to bow down to the Ongons. Such an act would bring misfortune to the whole community.

CEREMONIES AFTER THE BIRTH OF A CHILD

Just before the birth of a child a "receiving mother," or midwife, is summoned. As soon as the child comes into the world the father takes a broad arrow-head and cuts the umbilical cord. The infant is then washed in warm water, wrapped in a lamb skin, and put into its father's fur coat. The friends and neighbors assemble, and an animal, either a cow or sheep, is killed and the meat cooked. Then a man accustomed to perform such ceremonies makes libations of the meat and of tarasun, in this way sending it greatly multiplied to the gods, asking, meanwhile, that the master of the house may be blessed with many children and an increase of flocks.

From the animal they have killed is reserved the leg bone below the knee; this they boil. On the second day the meat is cut from the bone, and the bone is tied to the outside of the child's cradle, on the right-hand side. If the baby is a boy, a boy stands by the cradle ready to answer questions and to give the child a name. If it is a girl, a girl stands by the cradle.

We will suppose the child to be a boy. The receiving mother holds the infant in her arms in front of the cradle and asks, "Which are we to rock, the child or the bone?" She asks the question three times, then the boy answers, "The child!"
Then she asks three times, "Shall we rock up or down?" the boy answers, "Up!"

The baby is put into the cradle and tied in, then the receiving mother asks, "What is the name of the child?" and the boy repeats the name which the parents have selected.

The third day, if the father is well-to-do, a second animal is killed; this one is divided among the most distinguished people of the village, those who have not been present at the ceremonies attending the birth and the naming of the child.

On the third day the tomta (placenta) is buried. Two planks are removed from the floor near the mother's bed, a hole is dug

in the ground, and dry juniper is burned near it. The tomta is put into the hole, covered up, and the planks are replaced. Then the mother is purified. Only women are present during this ceremony.

The tomta has a sacred significance among the Buriats. If you ask a Buriat where he was born, he will answer, "My tomta is buried in that house;" or will say, in such or such a village "is the house where my tomta is buried."

The Buriats beyond the Baikal, when questioned about the origin of their people, will answer, "Our tomta is on the western side of the Baikal." They make libations to it. In this case the tomta is that of the recognized ancestor of all the Buriats. When they are making libations they sprinkle tarasun to the gods, naming them all, then to their ancestors, and finally to their tomta.

ORIGIN OF THE BURIATS

An account of the origin of the childbirth
ceremonies as told me at Usturdi by two very old men.

Buhan Khan lived at Haugin Dalai, not far from the sea. He was a bull in the daytime, but always turned himself into a man at night. Not very far off, but on the west of the sea, lived Khunshai Khan, who had a beautiful daughter. One night Buhan Khan saw Khunshai's daughter and fell in love with her. After a time a son was born to them. When the child was placed in its cradle Buhan Khan stole it away, tied it firmly to the cradle, carried it to the edge of the sea, and with his hoofs dug a hole in the earth, and there buried the child and the cradle.

A Shaman named Usihun and his wife Asihan lived by the sea. They saw Buhan Khan digging the hole, and when he had gone they went immediately to find out what he had buried there. They found the cradle and took it home, but so tightly had Buhan Khan hooped it around that work as they might they could not open it. Then Usihun began "to shaman" and to ask how the cradle was to be opened. He was answered by Buga Noyon Babai, the god to whom he made libations. "Fasten the right leg bone (below the knee) of a two-year-old bull on the right side of the cradle," said the god, "and place a sharp knife by the cradle, then ask, 'How is it, shall we rock the bone or the infant?' A child must answer, 'The infant.' 'Shall it be head down or up?' 'Up.'" When the Shaman did as Buga Noyon directed, the hoops snapped and the cords untied, and there in the cradle was a beautiful child. Usihun and his wife reared the boy and named him Bulugat. When four or five years old Bulugat became very fond of playing by the sea. After a while he began to get up and slip away in the night-time. The Shaman's wife wondered where the child went; then she followed, and saw that two children, a boy and a girl, came out of the sea and played with him.

The Shaman and his wife were very curious to know what
kind of children they were, so one evening they set out milk and tarasun and told Bulugat to give it to his playmates. The boy and girl came out of the sea, played till tired, then they drank the milk and the tarasun, and straightway fell asleep. The Shaman came from the reeds where he had been hiding and caught the boy, but the girl slipped away, turned to a seal, and sprang into the sea.

The Shaman named the boy from the sea Uhurut, and he and Bulugat, son of the bull, grew up together. All the Buriats west of the Baikal are descended from Bulugat, and all the Vepholensk Buriats are descended from Uhurut.

**ANOTHER VERSION OF THE ORIGIN OF THE TRANS-BAIKAL BURIATS**

A hunter one day when out shooting birds saw three beautiful swans flying toward a lake not far distant. He followed the swans, saw them come down by the water, take off their feathers, become women, and swim out from shore.

These three swans were the three daughters of Esege Malan. The hunter stole the feathers of one of the swans, and when she came from the water she could not fly away with her sisters. He caught the maiden, took her home, and made her his wife. Six children had been born to them when one day the daughter of Esege Malan distilled strong tarasun, and after her husband had drank much she asked for her feathers, and he gave them to her. That moment she turned to a swan and flew up through the smoke-hole. One of her daughters, who was mending the tarasun still, tried to catch her and keep her from flying away, but only caught at her legs, which the girl's dirty hands made black. That is why swans, a sacred bird among the Buriats, have black legs.

The mother circled around, came back within speaking distance of her daughter, and said, "Alway at the time of
the new moon you will pour out to me mare's milk and tea, and scatter red tobacco."

From this swan, the daughter of Esege Malan, came all the Trans-Baikal Buriats.

**SICKNESS**

In case of sickness a Shaman is sent for at once. To discover the cause of the illness he burns the shoulder-blade of a sheep until it is white, then by the cracks in the bone he learns what the sick person has done to anger this or that Burkan. When he has thus found out which Burkan has caused the sickness he knows by experience what sacrifice must be made to appease him. If the illness is slight, an offering of tarasun may be sufficient; but in case of serious sickness, besides the offering of tarasun, an animal must be sacrificed.

Many of the Burkans are very exacting about what is offered to them, others are indifferent. To some the offering must be a black ram, to others a white ram; to some a white goat, to others a black goat; and there are Burkans who cannot be appeased without the sacrifice of a bull or a horse.

The Shaman kills the animal by making an incision in the breast and pulling out the heart. The body of the animal is disjointed at the neck and at the knees, the skin removed, except from the legs and head, and the body carried away to be boiled. Then a long pole is driven into the ground and the skin of the animal is fastened to the top of it, the head facing the mountain, hill, or place where the Burkan who has caused

the sickness is supposed to have his home. The pole leans slightly toward that same mountain.

The flesh of the animal is cut up and cooked, and bits of it offered to the Burkan, either thrown into the air or burned,
the rest is eaten by the family and those who assist at the 
sacrifice. Tarasun is used freely at such times. During the 
ceremony the Shaman mumbles mysterious words and 
prayers.

There is a second way of offering the sacrifice. The liver, 
gall, and intestines are burned, the bones of the animal are 
broken into small pieces, and together with the pleura put into a bag and placed on a pole, where the bag remains until it rots and falls.

If the patient has pain in any particular part of his body the 
Shaman puts spittle on it and prays to the Burkan who has 
caused the pain; sometimes he touches the man's tongue 
with a red-hot iron, or he pours hot water over his body, 
and though the water is very hot it feels cold.

If after the first sacrifice the sick person does not recover, a 
second is made, and perhaps a third. The Shaman does not 
get discouraged, but continues his efforts until his patient 
recovers or dies. In former times he was paid very little for 
his labor,—whatever the family thought proper,—but at 
present the reward is sufficiently large.

The light Burkans, as well as the dark, can cause sickness. 
Sickness sent by a light Burkan is usually in punishment for 
the taking of an oath (to swear by the name of a Burkan is 
an oath); or for the killing of a sacred bird, which is a great sin, and if the man is not punished for the sin his children will be.

Berkut, the white-headed eagle, is a sacred bird. Ejin, the 
god of Olkhon, the sacred island of Lake Baikal, had no children; so he created the white-headed eagle and called him his son, adopted him. Ejin himself is the son of the Fiery Heaven, and is called Utá Sagan Noyón (High White Prince). He is counted a brother of Dalai Lama, who is also a son of the Fiery Heaven (Galta Tengeri Xubun) (Fiery Heaven son). The swan is a sacred bird. Vultures are not sacred, but they are often sent by the Burkans to locate persons whom they are about to punish.
The owner of the land is sick; a ram has been sacrificed with due ceremony.

 Bones of the ram. They will remain until the bundles rot and fall.

No one is permitted to kill a white-headed eagle. If an eagle alights on a sheep or lamb and scratches it, the owner kills the animal immediately.

The Buriats do not sacrifice to the eagle, but to its ancestors "the ancients of eagles." In some cases those ancestors are represented as people, in others as birds.

**RITES ATTENDING THE BURNING OF THE DEAD**

The Buriats usually burn their dead; occasionally, however, there is what they call a "Russian burial," that is, the body is placed in a coffin and the coffin is put in the ground.
But generally if a man dies in the autumn or the winter his body is placed on a sled and drawn by the horse which he valued most to some secluded place in the forest. There a sort of house is built of fallen trees and boughs, the body is placed inside the house, and the building is then surrounded with two or three walls of logs so that no wolf or other animal can get into it.

The horse which drew the body to the forest is led away a short distance and killed by being struck on the head with an axe, then it is left for wolves to devour.

If the man was so poor as not to have a horse, but had a cow, the cow is sold and a horse bought to take the body to the forest. If so poor that a horse cannot be purchased, the body is carried on a stretcher.

If other persons die during the winter their bodies are carried to the same house. In this lonely, silent place in the forest they rest through the days and nights until the first cuckoo calls, about the ninth of May. Then relatives and friends assemble, and without opening the house burn it to the ground. Persons who die afterward and during the summer months are carried to the forest, placed on a funeral pile, and burned immediately. The horse is killed, just as in the first instance.

Often the ornaments and the most valued trinkets of the dead are burned with them, as well as their best garments. Ordinary garments are left for their heirs.

A Shaman does not officiate at this cremating ceremony, which is conducted in the most quiet manner possible.

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**BURIAT BURIAL OF THE DEAD**

As soon as a Buriat dies he is dressed in his best garments and his face is covered with a white cloth. On that day no neighbor or friend begins any work; to do so would bring
misfortune. They call the day "mu udir," bad day.

It is customary to keep a body three days, but often it is buried or burned on the second day. In the coffin a small sum of money is placed, each friend contributing. A sheep or cow is killed and bits of the meat put in the coffin, together with a small bottle of tarasun. "The spirit of the dead man will meet the spirits of friends and relatives who have died earlier, and he will wish to entertain them." Every necessary article, such as his coat, cap, pillow, and blanket, is put into the coffin, as well as his pipe and tobacco, even his whip for his horse, if he has owned one in his earth life, goes with him.

The family and friends eat the meat of the animal they have killed and drink tarasun. As they drink they pour out some to the dead man, pouring it on the ground and mentioning his name. For three days and nights refreshments of every kind are served in the house—the man's spirit is there among his friends and relatives and it partakes of the food.

The spirit has the form of the body but is invisible, except to persons having "second sight." The spirit is often sorry to go from among the living, and tries to prove to itself that it is still alive; that is, in the visible form. "It goes to the fire, steps on the ashes, and when it sees no track fears that it is no longer in a material body. It goes close to the chained dog to see if the dog will bark. If the dog barks it is a proof that he sees something, and the spirit hopes that it is visible. When the man's friends breakfast, dine, or drink tea, the spirit waits anxiously to see if any one will offer it food or drink. If four or five are drinking tea, the spirit takes a cup and wonders that they do not notice it; but the five cups are there, it has taken only the spirit of the cup. The man is there in spirit among his friends, he moans and weeps, hopes and tests the position; no one sees him, no one pays any attention to him. Poor man, he is sad indeed."

When the corpse is taken from the house for burial it is carried out head first. During this ceremony, if a button or any small article drops it is lucky, and each person is
anxious to pick it up, for the man who does so will have a
child added to his family, or some other good fortune will
come to him.

Sometimes the dead man is taken from the coffin and
placed on the back of his favorite horse; a friend sits up
behind to hold him on, and thus he rides to his own burial.
But more frequently the body is left in the coffin and the
coffin is carried on a sleigh or a wagon. Women and
children take farewell of the dead at the house, only men
attend the burial.

When they reach the spot where the body is to be buried
they sprinkle the earth with tarasun, and then dig the
grave. The saddle is taken from the dead man's horse,
broken into small pieces, and put in the bottom of the
grave, and if the body has been brought on a wagon the
wagon is broken up also. This done, the coffin is placed in
the grave so that the body lies facing the southeast. The
horse is led aside and killed, either by the blow of a sledge
hammer on the forehead or by a knife being driven into the
spinal marrow; the latter is the nobler form of death. The
skin on the horse's back is cut away to represent a saddle,
and on his head and face a bridle is outlined in the same
way; then he is either burned, or left for wild beasts to
devour. The horse has gone to its master and is ready for
use. The friends now return to the grave and fill it with
earth.

Nine days of remembrance are incumbent on the nearest
relatives; they must remain in their houses and think only of
the dead. If a near relative lives far away he will come when
he hears of the death, even if it is not for a month; he will
bring food and drink and "make remembrance."

Where the dead are buried or burned, there are large
settlements, houses, and buildings of every kind; but all this
is invisible, except to persons with second sight.

The spirits of the dead wear not only the garments in which
their bodies have been buried, but also their old garments,
those they wore many years before their death, for they
wear "the ghost" of the clothes.

When spirits take the form of living people, as they can if they wish, the effect is the same as if they were clothed in real garments. The spirit of a woman sometimes takes the form of a bird and flies around its old home, but this is considered unlucky and the bird is shot at, not to kill it, but to drive it away.

The Buriats believe that sometimes a person dies because the spirit or soul gets tired and sad, and wants to leave the body. In such a case the Shaman and friends talk to the spirit, tell it to come back, and it shall eat well, drink well, and have a good time. This effort to persuade the soul to return to the body is called "the invitation." "You shall sleep well. Come back to your natural ashes. Take pity on your friends. It is necessary to live a real life. Do not wander along the mountains. Do not be like bad spirits. Return to your peaceful home." (They think that the spirits of the dead wander about the mountains, returning to their homes from time to time.) "Come back and work for your children. How can you leave these little ones?" And the Shaman names the children. If it is a woman these words have great effect; sometimes the spirit moans and sobs, and there have been instances of its returning to the body.
CHAPTER IX

THE ORIGIN OF SHAMANS

FROM Baronyé Tabin Tabung Tengeri, the first spirit to emerge from the Highest Existence in the Universe, Delquen Sagán Burkan, World White god, often called Esege Malan, came the fifty-five Tengeris. One day the spirit of one of the fifty-five, it is unknown which, entered into a hailstone, fell to the earth, and was swallowed by a girl thirteen years of age, whose name was Mélûk Shin. Soon after swallowing the stone Mélûk Shin became a mother. The son she bore—Qolongoto Ubugun, or, as he was also called, Mindiú Qúbun Iryil Noyon Tunkói—lived three hundred years. He established the Buriat religion, gave the Buriats all their prayers, and told them of their gods. (My translator, a Christian, states that Mindiú is the same for the Buriats that Christ is for Christians).

Mindiú chose and consecrated the first one hundred and seventy-six Shamans, ninety-nine males and seventy-seven females. In a sense he was himself the first Shaman. He commanded to pray to Delquen Sagan, to Tabin Tabung, to the fifty-five Tengeri, and the forty-four Tengeri,—to heavenly spirits only. But in later times Shamans have forgotten or do not follow his command, and pray sometimes to the spirits of dead Shamans, male and female, and to the Bumal (descended) Burkans.

Mindiú's portrait is always made of skunk skin.

There are two kinds of Shamans,—those made directly by Burkans, and those who have inherited from either the male or female branch of their family their right to be Shamans.

A man whose father or mother, grandfather or grandmother, has been a Shaman has the inherited right; he must, however, have this right confirmed by the Burkans. A child or young
person is supposed to be acceptable to the Burkans when
the spirit of a dead relative, a Shaman, comes while he is
sleeping and takes his spirit to the residences of the Earthly
and Heavenly Burkans, who conduct him through their
mansions, show him their possessions, power, and wealth,
and instruct him in all things.

To one selected directly by the Burkans the spirit of a
Shaman, who has died within four or five years, comes at
night while he is sleeping and conducts his spirit to the
Burkans. In the morning the spirit returns to the body. This
Shaman guide may select two or three, or perhaps four,
children or young people and educate their spirits while
their bodies sleep.

It happens sometimes that a person who seems foolish in
this world becomes wise in the mansions of the Burkans,
and one who seems wise to us may be found by the
Burkans to be foolish and incapable.

When this education, which may require several years, is
finished, the spirit of the Shaman, in the form of a flame,
strikes the student a heavy blow on the forehead. He falls
to the ground, and is raised to his feet by those who chance
to be near him. If this happens away from his home, he is
taken home, and an offering of tarasun is made by
sprinkling tarasun to the young man's Shaman ancestors,
and to those Burkans who gave rights of Shamanship to
those ancestors. Or if he has been chosen directly, they
offer a libation of tarasun to the Burkan who has chosen
him. A person who has inherited the right to be a Shaman is
educated exactly the same as one who is chosen directly.

Even after his education is finished it is a long time before a
young Shaman can offer sacrifice; often there are years of
trial. The Burkans may leave him at any time as unfit or
incapable, and then he is no better than an ordinary man.
His first libations and offerings are made to Bumal Burkans
(those who have their homes in sacred groves) and to the
spirits of Shamans. He officiates by request of the people.

The spirit of his ancestor strikes him again on the forehead.
He falls, the people raise him and cut birch sticks for him an inch or so thick. He takes these sticks and sways them behind his back, then in front. Then he holds them in one hand, sways them, pats his forehead with his palm, and begins to speak of the life and work of his ancestor. It is not the young Shaman who speaks, but the flame or spirit which struck his forehead, and which speaks through him.

Another flame strikes him. He falls, throws away the sticks, is raised, and the second flame speaks just as the first did. This may continue till all his Shaman ancestors have spoken. While speaking for a dead Shaman the live Shaman often approaches some person present and says such and such a Burkan wishes of you an offering and libation. If it is not given, you will suffer from sickness or misfortune.
When the young Shaman is ready to become a Shaman in full a day is appointed by the people. They invite an experienced Shaman to conduct the ceremony, and he makes libations and offerings to a number of Burkans, asking for their assistance.

Fifty-four birch trees are cut from a sacred grove, by the permission of the Burkan of that grove. Three of these trees are large, the others are small. The small ones are planted in a row called "dry"; a large tree is placed on the right side of the row and is called sergé, "pillar"; beyond this is the second large tree, called turga. The third large tree is placed in the middle of the yurta, the top coming out at the smoke-hole; to this top are fastened silk strings representing the colors of the rainbow; the strings are carried to the tree called the pillar and tied to its highest branch.

From the young Shaman's village nine men are selected to assist in the ceremony. They represent the nine Heavenly assistants of Xoxode Mergen (one of the Burkans). Then the old Shaman and the young one enter the yurta and stand at the right-hand side of the door; each holds in his right hand as many one-branched twigs as he has friendly Burkans. The old man sets fire to his twigs and summons by name the Burkans which the twigs represent; when he has finished his invocation, the young one begins. As soon as they have summoned the Burkans they leave the yurta and go to the great birch tree, "the turga."

The people of the village and of surrounding villages have brought milk, tarasun, sheep, and horses, all things necessary for a great sacrifice.

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There can never be less than nine animals offered on such an occasion, if there are more than nine there must be eighteen or twenty-seven (it is not necessary, however, to have nine of a kind, there can be eight sheep and one horse, or any combination which will make up the nine).
Again the two Shamans summon the Burkans. Milk and tarasun are sprinkled as a libation on each of the nine animals, and they are then sacrificed. The old Shaman calls on the Burkans. Three of his assistants stand at his side, the first man sprinkles milk en the ground, the second tea, and the third tarasun. This, immensely multiplied, goes to the Burkans supposed to be present, or, if not present, in their dwellings where they can partake of all that is offered them.

During this ceremony the young Shaman removes his outer garments, leaving only his shirt, and approaches the row of small birches; when he reaches the birches he takes off his shirt, and is entirely naked. Then the nine young men, representing the Heavenly assistants of Xoxode Mergen, bring up in front of him a white goat and stab the goat in the breast in such a way that the blood spirts over the naked body of the new Shaman. This ceremony is called ugälga, purification. When it is over, the goat, still alive, is thrown far off to where women are waiting; they seize it, give it the finishing blow, then cook and eat the meat.

Before the sacrifice begins, if any of the animals are impure the Shaman knows it, and has them purified by being led through the smoke of burning juniper.

The flesh of the animals sacrificed is boiled, parts of it offered to the gods, and the rest eaten. When this ceremony is ended the young man is declared to be a full-fledged Shaman. If there are a number of Shamans present they begin now to tell about their family of Shamans, and there is much talk and uproar. The feasting lasts for three days and nights. Some of the Shamans go to the tops of the trees and make offerings to the gods from there.

In old times there were such mighty Shamans that they could walk on the silk strings connecting the top of the tree which comes up through the smoke-hole of the yurta with the great birch tree outside; this was called "walking on the rainbow."
The Buriats have many traditions regarding the power of their Shamans.

Once two Shamans went to heaven on the real rainbow; when coming back in the same way the Heavenly Burkans saw them and were very angry. "How did those black beetles of the earth dare to come up here on the rainbow, and think of going back on it?" asked they, and immediately they cut the rainbow. The Shamans were falling to the earth when the stronger of the two, a very powerful Shaman, seeing that they would surely be killed, turned himself into a yellow, spotted eagle, seized his companion in his claws, and brought him down to the earth gently and safely.

Once a Lama came from beyond the Baikal to visit a family at Usturdi. A Shaman by the name of Badai, who did not like to have a Lama among his people, turned himself into a gray wolf and went to the house in the night-time. The Lama, who saw the wolf and was terribly frightened, called out: "There is a wizard here in the form of a wolf! He has come to kill me! Build a fire quickly!"

The master of the house did not see the wolf; it was invisible to every one save the Lama, who was so terrified that his eyes burned, and he was as pale as a dead man. All night the beast stood in front of the Lama, apparently ready to spring at him; not till daylight did it disappear.

The Lama left Usturdi that very day.

They tell of Shamans who cut open their stomachs, take out their livers, roast and eat them, then close their stomachs and are as well as ever. Others take a sharp shaman stick called "haribo," thrust it in over one of their eyes to the depth of several inches, and ask some one to pull it out. To do so requires all the strength of a strong man, still the stick leaves no visible wound.

There are Shamans who cut a man's head off. He walks around without it, they put it on again, and he is the same as ever. Some Shamans can stab the central pillar of a yurta and a stream of tarasun will flow out, for the Shaman has
power to

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summon tarasun from a distance, and command it to be in the pillar.

Another can call the birds of heaven, and they will come and sit on his shoulders. Then he will put the back of his hands to his head and spread out his fingers, and immediately his hands and fingers will be covered with worms for the birds to eat.

Almost any Shaman can dance on fire. A large fire is built on the ground, the Shaman strips naked and dances on the live coals until they die out; not even the soles of his feet are burned. Once a half-drunk Buriat, seeing a Shaman dancing in this manner, said, "I am as good a man as you are, I can dance on fire!" Pulling off his shoes he danced on the live coals for one moment and was so badly burned that he could not step for three months.

The seven Heavenly Blacksmiths have given a Shaman living in Usturdi the power to handle red-hot iron. He can heat a bar of iron until it is red, take it in one hand, draw the other hand over it and make sparks fly. He can lick it with his tongue and it does not burn him. This same Shaman if locked in a room whispers a few words, spits, and the door flies open.

There are Shamans who can ride on horseback through the two walls of a yurta, and leave no opening.

In Irkutsk, a long time ago, the Russians, who did not believe in Shamans, said, "We will see what power those people have."

They built a great fire and put a Shaman into it. The Burkans turned the fire into water and the Shaman danced in what seemed fire to others, but was water for him. The Russians shot at the Shamans; they caught the bullets in their hands, held them out and said, "Here are your balls."
Every effort against them was useless.

A Shaman has nothing to do with marriages; with deaths he has nothing to do after it is certain that the spirit has left the body and cannot be persuaded to return. His field of action is soothsaying with the shoulder-blade of a sheep; sacrificing, preparing Ongons, tying a ribbon on the cradle of each infant when a few days old, and conducting the great feast made when the child is one year old.

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A SHAMAN STORY

In Olzoni, where this story was told, there lived three hundred years ago an old Shaman who could raise the dead. One day when he was in his seventy-fifth year he went on a visit to a neighboring village. The people there were so glad to see him that they killed a number of sheep, roasted them, and all feasted for three days.

On his way home he came to a large gate opening into a field, and there he met three hundred horned cattle. He thought that a butcher was driving them, but soon discovered that they were driven by a woman who was riding on a red ox. The woman was holding an infant in her arms. After the red ox had passed him he met a man whose head was as big as a cock of hay, he was riding on a gray stallion of enormous size.

"From where do you come, flesh merchant?" asked the Shaman.

"I am not a flesh merchant," replied the man, "I am Minga Nudite Milá (Thousand Eyes), and I have just destroyed all the cattle in the country around here."

The Shaman hurried home and found that his cattle were gone, not a cow, sheep, or horse was left. He was very angry, and going to his five brothers, who were all Shamans, he said: "Let us take counsel. Shall we not go in pursuit of Minga Nudite Milá?"
"Of what use?" asked they. "He would not yield to us, for he is subject to no one."

When he saw that his brothers were unwilling to help him, and he must do all with his own magic, the old Shaman went home, made tarasun and drank it; then he went to the corner of the room, got his axe and put it under the pillow on his bed, tied his horse to a post in the yurta and lay down, saying to his wife,

"Do not let my horse out, and do not waken me." Soon he and his horse were sound asleep. But they were not asleep, it was only their bodies which were so quiet. In reality the Shaman was riding swiftly toward the Angara.

Before reaching Irkutsk there is a mountain, Torkoi Tonkoi. From the top of this mountain the Shaman saw that Minga Milá had made a bridge across the river and was beginning to drive his cattle over it. Half of the bridge was silver and half of it was gold.

The Shaman turned himself into a bee, made his axe equally small, and, taking it with him, flew under the bridge and hewed the pillars so that the bridge broke in two. All the cattle fell into the Angara, as well as the woman on the red ox. Minga Milá fell, but he saved himself—at least he did not sink, though he and his gray stallion remained in the water.

The old Shaman threw his gold ring of a Shaman toward heaven, and a dreadful wind sprang up which lasted for three days. Minga Milá sat on the water and was driven back and forth by the wind. After the three days of wind came three days of strong rain. By the end of those six days the hoofs of Minga Milá's horse fell off. When the storm was over Minga Milá came out of the river; his horse followed him, and they began to dry themselves. The horse's hoofs came from the river and went on to his feet.

Enraged by the loss of the cattle and the woman on the red ox, but frightened by the terrible storm, Minga Milá swore a great oath that henceforth he would not go to the Olzoni country. "Should I go there may my one thousand eyes jump out of my head, and my body be cut in three pieces. I will neither kill people hereafter nor destroy cattle," declared he. Hearing this oath the Shaman was greatly pleased, and at once started for home.

On the road he went to his five brothers and told them how he had punished Thousand Eyes. "I have freed myself and you of this monster," said he; "we can now live in peace." When he reached his yurta he rose from the bed, where his wife thought he was sleeping, untied his horse and drove it out to pasture. And all was as if it had not been. But the cattle of Olzoni were never stolen again.

The Shaman began to drink tarasun and visit his friends. In the spring, about a year after his return from the Angara, he was on his way to see friends in Olzonski-Rod when he came upon three men who were burying a dead child. "What are you doing?" asked the Shaman.

"Go thy way, grandfather," answered the men. "Stand not there, for the child is dead. No one is free from death."

They let down the body and began to cover it with earth.

"Take away that earth," commanded the Shaman; "give me the child and do you kill a goat and bury it in this grave." He carried the child to its home, had six stones heated red hot, took off his leggings, danced with bare feet on the red hot stones, and "shamaned" till morning, stepping over the dead child from time to time, until the first cock crowed. That made the blood move in the child's body, and he opened his eyes, but could not talk.

The next night the Shaman had the boy's father and mother tied to a post in the yurta, and again he danced and shamaned until the first cock crowed. All this time the child
lay without moving. At sunrise the Shaman blew on the child's head and feet. He sprang up and asked, "What are you doing, father?"

Then the Shaman unbound the father and mother. "Your child is alive and well," said he; "now I will go home."

"No," said the father, "I must reward you; I am rich. I will give you half my money and half my cattle for what you have done."

"I do not need your money or your cattle," replied the Shaman. But the father was too happy over the recovery of his child to let the Shaman go without a reward. "Well," said the Shaman, "all I need is one cock of hay, an arkan rope (skin rope, hide), and nine copecks in money."

The father gave him the money, the rope, and the hay, and loaned him an ox to draw the hay home. The Shaman fed the hay to his cattle, hung up the rope, and kept the nine copecks in memory of the father's gratitude.

The raising of the boy from the dead was the last great act of the Shaman's life, for he died soon after.

**BURIAT GHOST STORY**

There was once a Shaman named Gaqui Guldief. One day he was returning from Irkutsk to his home, when night overtook him on the Kanjirevsk steppes. Soon after dusk he saw dead men dancing, "for he was second-sighted." He heard them say,

"Be careful, Gaqui Guldief is coming." They had known him when they were living, and knew that he understood the dead and could see them.

Among the dancers was one who danced better than any of the others, and his friends were urging him to dance his very best. He was about to do so, when Gaqui shot at him,
hit him, and he fell to the ground a skull. Then a terrible disturbance arose among the dancers, and turning to one of their number, a tall strong man, they said, "You must punish him for this!" Guldief hurried away, for he heard what they said. When he got home he led into the house the savage dog he usually kept chained in the yard. He was not disturbed that night, but early the next night the tall, strong dead man came into the room followed by a great crowd of people of all ages.

There were food and drink on the table. The strong man began to eat; then the crowd ate and drank, and passed food to the living man. When they had finished eating, one of the number, looking at Gaqui, who was watching them, carefully, said, "Let us play tricks on him, and punish him." "No," cried others; "he is a good man at heart. We have eaten of his food; we will not harm him."

They remained a long time, then silently disappeared. When the watcher was alone in the room he saw that the food and drink which he had placed on the table was all there; there was not one bite of food or one drop of drink less, though all the dead had eaten.

SECOND SIGHT

Once a man having second sight was passing through a large field about dusk, when he saw three men, whom he knew to be dead, coming toward him. One of them was carrying a small box.

"What are you carrying?" asked the live man.

"We are carrying the soul of an infant," answered the dead.

The man knew that the son of a rich Buriat was very sick, and he made up his mind that the child had died, and the dead were carrying its soul away. "The dead are sometimes very shrewd"
and sometimes very stupid," said he to himself. "I will try
and get that soul away from them."

"How queerly you walk!" called out one of the dead men.
"Your feet make a dust, and you shake the earth when you
step."

"I have been dead only a little while," answered the live
man, "and have not yet learned to walk like the dead." Then
he asked cunningly, "Are you afraid of anything?"

"We are afraid of the shipovnik bush (a shrub which has
long thorns). What are you afraid of?" "I am afraid of fat
meat," replied the man. He walked on with the dead until
they came to a large clump of shipovnik bushes; then he
seized the box in which they were carrying the child's soul
and sprang into the bushes. They dared not approach, but
ran off to get fat meat; they were back in a flash and began
to pelt him with it. He ate the meat, and kept firm hold of
the box.

After a time the dead went away, and the live man took the
soul back to the house where the body of the dead child
was. The soul went into the body; the child came to life and
began to sneeze.

SACRED GROVES OF SHAMANS

When a Shaman dies his spirit, in the form of fire, goes to a
Shaman who has been his friend during life, and strikes him
such a strong blow on the forehead that he falls to the
ground (the spirit or flame is invisible to bystanders). They
raise the Shaman, and when he has recovered somewhat
he says: "The spirit of my friend has come to me for
assistance. It wishes to settle in a grove, and tells me where
the grove is."

No one doubts that this is the request of the spirit of the
dead Shaman. Friends go to the place mentioned, and,
selecting one of the largest and best trees, cut a small box-
like aperture in it. The body of the dead Shaman is burned,
the ashes placed in the aperture in the tree, and a slab
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fastened across it. Ever afterward the grove is sacred. Later on, if the spirit of a Shaman of the same family asks that the ashes of his dead body be deposited in this grove, the request is granted. Hence often in such a grove there are several trees which contain ashes of the dead.

There are many of these sacred groves in the Buriat country. When a Buriat is passing a grove where the ashes of a Shaman or of several Shamans are deposited, he sprinkles vodka or tarasun to their spirits. If he has no vodka or tarasun he sprinkles tobacco, thinking they may like to smoke. He mentions such and such Shamans of the grove, and sends the tobacco to them specially. It is supposed to reach the spirits multiplied immensely in quantity and improved in quality.

No tree can be cut down, grass mown, or sod turned in a sacred grove. A man would come to great grief if he were to injure a tree, even by breaking off a branch or twig. The punishment would be inflicted by the spirits of the dead Shamans.

No woman can enter a sacred Shaman grove.

THE SACRED GROVES OF THE BURKANS OR BURIAT GODS

There are Burkans who are called Bumal Burkans. They are so called because instead of residing always in lofty places their homes are in certain groves. No tree can be felled, twig broken, or grass cut in such a grove. In passing the grove offerings are made of tarasun or tobacco.

Not far from the village of Usturdi, where I spent several weeks, there is a sacred grove of a Bumal Burkans. Some years ago three or four Buriats who had lost faith in their ancient religion decided to measure the land and cut the grass around the grove. Shamans warned them that not only the grove, but the land to the extent of some acres around it, belonged to the Burkan. Paying no heed to the
warning, the men began to cut the grass.

The Burkan was very angry, and to punish them for trying to take his grass and curtail his domain, he sent an epidemic upon the village. People began to die off rapidly. The land around the grove was immediately abandoned, and sacrifices were made to the god, who after a time was appeased, and the epidemic died out.

One or two of the Bumal Burkans allow women to pass through their groves, but others are very strict in this regard;

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women not only are forbidden to enter their groves, but are punished if they step on the land.

Sometimes there is a mountain or high hill between villages, and on the summit of the hill, not very far from the road, is a sacred grove belonging to a Bumal Burkan. If a man dies in one of the villages no person is allowed to pass the grove for three days. At the end of that time the first man to pass must purify himself before leaving home. This is done by gathering dry juniper, placing it in a pile on the ground, setting fire to it, and, when it smokes well, walking through it repeatedly, inhaling the smoke. The horse the person is to ride must be purified in the same way.

SACRED TREES AND GROVES

It has happened at times during past centuries that a Shaman seeing a beautiful tree or a fine clump of trees has thought that a Burkan or the spirit of a dead Shaman if passing by there would surely like to stop and have a smoke; hence he has declared that tree or clump of trees to be sacred, and no man would be so foolhardy as to meddle with trees which they know have been given to the Burkans and spirits.

Buriats dislike to cut down a beautiful tree which has grown up on a clean place. They are inclined to believe that the
tree belongs to a Burkan; for there are cases where a man engaged in felling such a tree has been taken suddenly ill, and the Shamans have discovered that the illness was caused by the Burkan to whom the tree belonged. Sometimes the name of the Burkan is unknown; then, although an offering is made, the man may die.

A beautiful pine tree growing near Usturdi was cut down by one of the Buriats, who almost immediately fell ill. A Shaman was sent for, and by reading the cracks in the charred shoulder bone of a sheep he found that the tree belonged to a Burkan—was a sacred tree. But he did not know which Burkan; consequently, though several offerings were made, the man died.
CHAPTER X

THE GODS OF THE BURIATS

DELQUEN Sagán Burkan, World White God, is the highest existence in the Universe. He is also called Esege Malan. In him are three spirits: Baronyé Tabin Tabung Tengeri, Zúm Dishín Dirlún Tengeri, and Sagadé U!gu!gun.

From the first spirit came the fifty-five Tengeris, from the second the forty-four Tengeris; the third has seven sons and seven daughters. Of the seven sons the eldest is Golói Qûn Shara Qúbun. The eldest daughter is Golói Qûn Shara Basagán.

Prayers are offered and sacrifices made to all the Heavenly Burkans as well as to the Highest Existence. People ask the World White Burkan for cattle, for grass, and for health. They ask the three other spirits, especially Sagadé U!gu!gun, for rain, good crops, and children.

When they ask the gods for children they offer Sagadé U!gu!gun twenty pots of tarasun; they pray in the yurta, tie a hair rope around the four posts, and hang wooden rattles (playthings) on them. These playthings are to persuade the child to come. They bring from the forest and place in the middle of the yurta a tall birch tree, the top of which comes out through the smoke hole. At the roots of the tree they put three sods of earth taken from a swamp. Up this birch tree prayers are supposed to go to the Heavenly Burkans. After the offering and prayers a cradle is made, and all its belongings prepared for the coming of the new child.

No pictures are ever made of the Highest Being, or of the first and second spirit. Pictures are made of the third spirit, Sagadé U!gu!gun, of his wife, Sanqali`n Qatë`n, of their eldest son, Golói Qûn Shara Qúbun, and of their eldest daughter, Goloi Qûn Shara Basagán.
To the fifty-five Tengeris a sacrifice should be made three times in his life by every man who has the means. These sacrifices are as follows: the first sacrifice is fifty-five pots of tarasun, and five beasts,—one virgin mare, three virgin ewes, and one goat; the second sacrifice, fifty-five pots of tarasun, one virgin mare, five virgin ewes, and one goat; the third, fifty-five pots of tarasun, one virgin mare, seven virgin ewes, and one goat.

To Qoqodai Megûn Qubi`n, the eldest of the fifty-five Tengeris, sacrifices are made frequently; the other fifty-four are simply mentioned with him.

Qoqodai Megûn Qubi`n has nine sons and nine daughters. His eldest son is Qurêndé Buqû Qubûn; the second, Qugên Mergîn; the third, Qorsa!gái Mergîn, the fourth, Boroldâi Buqû. The eighteen sons and daughters have eighteen gray steeds. On these gray steeds they race and gallop over the sky, and make the awful thunder which we hear.

Of the forty-four Tengeris who are from Zûni Dishi`n, the second spirit of Delquen Sagan Burkan, the Highest Existence, seven are very important. These are Gutár Bai`n Tengeri, the eldest; Qap Sagán Tengeri; Togóto Bain Tengeri; Qásan Burún Qui Tengeri; Galta Ulan Tengeri; Qûng Germa Tengeri; Qair Qur Tengeri.

To the third spirit, Sagadé U!gu!gun, his wife, Sanqali`n Qatê`n, and their eldest son and eldest daughter, the sacrifice of a "fat, harmless ram" is made, and prayers are offered with libations of tarasun.

Buriats worship a heavenly spirit, a son of Bulage Iji`n, one of the fifty-five Tengeris. His name is Búir Sagán U!gu!gun. To this spirit and his wife, Qwir Sagán Qamagan, they make an offering of twenty-seven pots of tarasun, and two, or sometimes three, virgin ewes.

To the forty-four Tengeris offerings are made of tarasun, and thirty skins of various small animals,—three rabbit skins, five skunk skins, three ermine skins, seven squirrel skins, six small kid skins, and the skins of six small he-goats.
Irlik Namun Qûn, a descendant of the forty-four Tengeris, had three sons, Uqûr Qara Bisheshi, Selmendé Saga Bisheshi, and Shandá Bukqû Bisheshi; each of these sons came to earth,

and each has his dwelling-place in a mountain of the Buriat country.

At springs Buriats worship a heavenly power, a son of one of the fifty-five Tengeris, Bulage Iji`n, Buir Sagán U!gu!gun, and his wife, Qwir Sagan Hamagan. They make sacrifices at such springs,—twenty-seven pots of tarasun, two virgin ewes, and sometimes three.

**HOUSE ONGONS**

*First*. The wheel, with an image inside representing Tumûr Shi`n Qulain Seji`n Bará, who was a holy Shaman of ancient times. People boil meat for him and in important cases sacrifice a goat. At marriage the bridegroom sacrifices a he-goat to this divinity, and a small pot of meal pudding as well as eight pots of tarasun, asking for health, happiness, prosperity, and children. The wheel is made of birch; from the bottom hangs a bunch of hair taken from under the belly of a he-goat. The figure is metallic and represents the sacred Shaman himself. The garment he wears is of red cloth, and is supposed to be a shuba or mantle. Two coral beads answer for eyes.

*Second*. On a square piece of black felt are represented the third spirit of the World White God, Sagadé U!gu!gun, his wife, Sanqali`n Qatê`n, and their eldest son and eldest daughter, as well as a tiny infant which represents the infant that people ask for in their prayers. In the pockets below the little tin pieces which portray these spirits meat is placed as an offering.

*Third*. A long piece of felt containing three virgin sisters (little tin figures on blue cloth), Munqugshin Basagán, Munqoden Basagán, and Boryûntên Basagán.
When these are consecrated the ceremony is performed by a Shaman. Three virgin ewes are offered, thirty pots of tarasun, and one big pot of meal pudding. Through these sisters the people ask of the World White God, or Esege Malan, land, cattle, and all that is necessary for prosperity.

**OUTSIDE ONGONS**

In the first bag is the skin of an ermine. The skin is so dried and shrivelled as to be unrecognizable, and two little tin images represent Ugin Xubun and his wife. They were Shamans. People turn to them as to gods, begging for anything they wish for,—good crops, rain, etc.

In the second bag are two figures representing Qulebo and his wife. Both were Shamans. They are petitioned to intercede in all affairs pertaining to cattle-raising, buying and selling, etc.

In the largest gray bag are seven figures on two pieces of cloth; on one piece are five, on the other two. These represent Yûn Yiqé Qóta and his wife, Qazagar, and their
two sons and one daughter. On the second piece of cloth are the son-in-law and one daughter-in-law. These have about the same attributes as those in the other bags, and are petitioned for similar things.

The long skin is that of a skunk, and represents the god who came down in the form of hail and entering a girl of thirteen was born and named Mindiú Qubun Iryil (see Origin of Shamans). All things are asked of him. He is very kindly and grants many prayers.

The two little beasts are ermines—two sisters who are represented in little metallic figures. The names of these sisters are Búlai and Budraganá; to them must be offered horse meat and two salmon as well as nine pots of tarasun. They are invoked in sickness, especially in cases of scrofula.

THE CREATION—ESEGE MALAN

In the beginning there were Esege Malan, the highest god, and his wife, Ehé Ureng Ibi.

At first it was dark and silent; there was nothing to be heard or seen. Esege took up a handful of earth, squeezed moisture out of it, and made the sun of the water; he made the moon in the same way.

Next he made all living things and plants. He divided the world into East and West, and gave it to the highest order of gods. These gods are very strict, and people must sacrifice horses and rams to them. If angered, they punish by bringing sickness, especially to children. Some of the higher gods punish with disease or misfortune people who offend local gods. For instance, if a man calls to witness or swears by a local god,

either he is punished by that local god, or judgment is rendered by one of the superior gods, for it is a great sin to swear by any Burkan, whether the man swears truly or falsely.
Among these principal gods are the bird gods of the Southwest. Many of them take the form of swans. They are very kind to good people. To these bird gods offerings are made twice each year. In the autumn a wether is offered, and in the spring mare’s milk, tea, millet, and tobacco. Between these two higher orders and the Ongon gods there is a secondary order of Burkans of both sexes. Some of these descended from the higher Burkans, and others were in the old, old time people who by the favor of the divinities were made Shamans.

**ESEGE MALAN AND GESIR BOGDO**

*(TOLD BY ARHOKOFF)*

Our great story is from the sky,—the story of Gesir Bogdo. There are, as you know, people in the sky as well as here. They existed long before we did—no one knows how long. The oldest and chief of those people is Esege Malan.

Esege Malan had nine sons. The four elder sons said: "We will succeed our father." The four younger said: "No, we will succeed him." The fifth, or middle, son, a hero and very powerful, was on the side of the four younger brothers. His name was Mahai Danjin.

The four older brothers and the four younger began a dispute, and nobody knows how long it might have lasted had not Mahai Danjin interfered and sent the four older brothers down to the earth, to some place beyond the Frozen Ocean (Arctic), where they created wicked creatures, Mangathais, and vile serpents, some of which could fly around and swallow people. They also made immense and savage dogs to destroy things. This they did to spite their brothers who were ruling in the sky. They would allow no one to approach them, and to this day no man has been able to reach their dwelling-place.

As a result of the action of these four brothers, the earth became full of evil and great disorder, and continued so for many thousands of years—no man knows how long.
Meanwhile Esege Malan, having ceased to rule, had built for himself a great, splendid fortress around the sky. One day while walking about and looking at the fortress he found a place broken. He immediately called a meeting to discover who was trying to destroy his work.

In the heavens there are ninety-nine Tengeri provinces, and this meeting was formed of one Tengeri from each province. They debated long, but were unable to find out who or what had made the breach in the wall of the fortress. At last Esege Malan sent for Zarya Azergesha, "Esh," who was a very wise man, but he was footless. He refused to come to the meeting because, having no feet, he was afraid of being laughed at. Then Esege Malan sent two Shalmos (invisible spirits), to hear what Zarya Azergesha (hedgehog) might say to himself.

They found him sitting at home, and he was talking, thinking that no one could overhear him.

"That Esege Malan," said he, "does not understand. He has ninety-nine Tengeris, and still he could not control his four sons, and they went down to the earth and are making so much trouble there that the tears of people have risen to the sky and are weakening the walls of the fortress. The people have prayed and made libations, have sprinkled their own blood toward heaven, and when that did no good they sprinkled their tears. How is it that Esege Malan does not know this? Why send for me to give him information? All this trouble comes from his four sons. They are to blame for the tears and the broken battlements."

When the Shalmos heard this they waited no longer, but went quickly to Esege Malan and told him what Zarya Azergesha had said. Then Esege sent down to the earth his grand-son, Gesir Bogdo, the son of Mahai Danjin the hero, sent him as a bird, and he flew over the earth three years, unable to alight, because of the dreadful odor from dead bodies of every kind.

At last Esege Malan sent flies which created maggots, and
the maggots ate the dead flesh and purified the earth, and
it was sweet and clean. Then the bird alighted on a broad
steppe called Urundashéi, turned itself into a blue bull, and
bellowed

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loudly in challenge. The four brothers in their home beyond
the Frozen Sea heard the voice and said, "That is the voice
of one of our relatives, one of our own people!"

Then one of the four turned himself into a pied bull and
went to the steppe. The two bulls fought until the pied bull
threw the blue bull, caught him on his horns and tossed him
through the air so furiously that he fell to the earth on the
other side of the Altai mountains. Then the pied bull raced
after the blue bull to kill him, but the blue bull turned
himself into stone and stood in his road. The pied bull
rushed at the stone bull, but broke one of his own horns.
Then, finding he could do the blue bull no further harm, he
roared:

"Thou hast deceived me! Hereafter I shall be the enemy of
all horned cattle!" And, defeated, he went back to his
brothers.

Beyond the Altai that stone bull stands to this day. But Gesir
Bogdo, its spirit, went back to Esege Malan and created
heroes to fight the Mangathais, the evil animals, and the
serpents of the North. He had a son named Buqû Noyon.
Buqû Noyon had seven sons and one daughter, whose
name was Irgí Súban. Irgí Súban married Shandu Buqú
Besbesh, the grand-son of Irlik Nomun, the eldest of the
four brothers of the North, and thus the family of Esege
Malan was at last pacified.

Solobung Yubún, the Morning Star, is a great personage. He
is the favorite son of Esege Malan. If Buriats want many
cattle they sacrifice a ram at dawn of day, pray to Solobung
Yubún, and for three successive nights dance till daybreak.

**ESEGE MALAN AND MOTHER EARTH**
After Esege Malan had straightened out all things, Ehé Tazar, Mother Earth, went to visit him, and they spent several days very pleasantly. When Ehé Tazar's visit was ended and she was ready to go, she asked Esege Malan to give her the sun and the moon, and he gave them gladly; but he soon found that it was very difficult to get them for her. He called a thousand Burkans together and asked how he was to accomplish the feat, and though they studied long and seriously over it they could not tell him. Then Esege Malan sent for Esh (the hedgehog), and Esh went up to the sky to the dwelling of Esege Malan.

Esege Malan had three daughters who often came down to the earth, removed their clothing, turned themselves into swans, and sported in the sea. It happened that the three were at home when Esh came.

Esege had told his daughters that Esh was a queer fellow, that he was lame and hairy, but he was very wise, and they must not laugh at him. Notwithstanding this, when Esh walked in Esege's daughters looked sidewise and laughed; they could not help it, he was so droll. He saw them laugh and said to himself, "Esege Malan has called me up here for his daughters to laugh at and ridicule!" He was terribly angry, and left so quickly that Esege had not time to say a
word. Esh knew, however, what Esege wanted, for the messenger had told him. He came down from the sky very quickly, but two Shalmos (invisible spirits) followed, sent by Esege Malan to listen and hear what Esh said as he traveled. For Esege knew that Esh was raging, and he thought that he might say something about the sun and the moon.

The first thing Esh saw as he came to earth was a herd of cows and bulls. When they caught sight of him they were frightened, put up their tails and ran. Esh, angry that they should be frightened at him, cursed them, saying:

"May the hair rope never leave your nostrils, and the yoke never leave your necks!" And so it has been.

He went farther and came to a herd of horses. They were frightened also, raised their tails, and ran away. Zarya, terribly angry, cursed them, saying:

"May the bit never leave your mouths and the saddle never leave your backs!" And so it has been.

The Shalmos followed him always, listening to what he said. After a time Esh began to talk to himself and abuse Esege Malan. "What sort of a ruler is that Esege Malan?" asked he. "What sort of a master of the world? He manages everything, fixes everything. He has given away the sun and the moon, but does not know how to get them! If he is so wise, why does he not come to visit Mother Earth, and when the

visit is ended and he is ready to go, ask her for the hot dancing air of summer and the echo, habra yirligin and darbon. She would give them to him gladly, but how could she get them for him?"

When the Shalmos heard this they followed no farther, but went to the sky very quickly and told Esege Malan all that Esh had said.
Esege waited until a sufficient time had passed; then he came to return Mother Earth's visit, and while they were walking around he said: "When you came to visit me I gave you the sun and the moon, now I ask for a present. Give me the hot dancing air of summer and echo." She gave them, but try as she would she could not get them for him.

When she found that it was impossible to get them, and no one could tell her how to do it, Esege said:

"Let the sun and the moon remain where they are and the hot dancing air of summer and echo stay here!" And so it is that though the sun and the moon belong to the earth, they are in the sky, and the hot dancing air and the echo, though they belong to Esege Malan, remain with Mother Earth.