

The first day of the Maydar festival had begun with a reception by JOLROS LAMA, who sat enthroned in state and dispensed blessings to the innumerable pilgrims. All had brought gifts for him. He gave his blessing by touching the pilgrims' heads with a yellow book. Among others came also the seven-year old KHAMPO LAMA, whom JOLROS LAMA lifted up beside himself, making much of him and talking to him the while. This was an unforgettable scene, for both were uncommonly noble and distinguished types.

In the gate-house at the entry to the courtyard sat the band, with enormous trumpets, drums and cymbals. The more exalted personages sat along the walls and on the balconies, while the women sat opposite them on cushions. Two yellow lamas in masks now appeared on the stage, dancing and capering. They wore fringed skirts and were followed by a merry, almost clown-like figure called Tsaghan Obogen or »The White Old Man«. The latter was regarded as the father of the yellow maskers. A parchment was unrolled and a reading of Maydar's doctrines given. Maydar is the coming Buddha or Messiah. A procession of high lamas in yellow hats now entered. They took their places in the courtyard, bringing sacrifices with them. Closely followed by the band they formed a procession. The Grand Lama, walking under a canopy, also took part in this. Behind him a number of soldiers bore an image of Maydar sitting in a kind of open sedan-chair, while others bore pictures of his disciples. Bringing up in the rear were a crowd of maskers. The procession made its stately way out of the monastery precincts and into the open. Here tea and refreshments were taken, followed by a tour round the sacred edifices. At each side, standing for a point of the compass, the procession halted for a short rest. On the completion of this tour the monastery was re-entered and prayers were offered up in the presence of crowds of pilgrims and all the distinguished guests.

The culmination of the festival was reached on July 14th. At 10 o'clock in the morning, to the accompaniment of trumpets and tinkling bells, the deep summoning blasts of the conch horn were heard on the temple-roof. All the believers trooped to their places in the courtyard, all according to rank and dignity, and the devil-dance began. In came the lamas, two by two, wearing masks representing skeleton-men, deer, wild beasts — just as they do in Tibet. They danced and cavorted, all the time to the accompaniment of the music. Some of the dancers were even seen on one of the balconies. LIEBERENZ was so squeezed and buffeted by the crowds of onlookers, all eager to have a sight of the spectacle, that he took refuge at the base of a low pillar, where he had a little elbow-room with his film-camera. The following curious rite formed an important part of the proceedings: the Lamas brought forward a large, triangular paper, which they bore over the heads of the crowd. This paper drew to itself all evil and sin. All now trooped out into the open, and formed a half circle on the plain. A fire was lighted and the triangle cast into the flames, being consumed with all its darkness and evil.

Another queer feature of the ceremonies was the behaviour of two possessed