

The view of the monastery-town in the north was glorious. The fifty odd temple-buildings and dormitories were erected in the form of an amphitheatre on the slope.

Professor SIU, HASLUND and I, together with the Mongols TSERAT and MENTU, went to the monastery to pay a return-visit to the lama who had visited me. He was out on a priestly mission among the nomads in the vicinity. We were therefore conducted to the abbot himself. He was a little old man with a round head and wrinkled features, and sat with crossed legs in his well furnished little room, surrounded by a whole army of gilded or painted divine images. He did not return our greeting. He only looked surprised and taken aback, and seemed to want to get rid of us. When we had gazed at the little old man for a short while, therefore, we retired.

Instead, we made our way up to the magnificent temple-building on the crown of the hill, where a handsome row of small *suburgas* or *chortens* stand, with a white giant-suburga immediately behind them. A lama went to the temple entrance and ignited incense in a metal vessel before the door, afterwards taking his place on a cushion in the right short side of the room. In front of him, on a red-lacquered table, he had sacred pages, from which he read aloud in a singing rhythm, accompanying himself by clashing the cymbals he had on his lap and beating a hanging drum with a vertically held drum-stick shaped like the neck of a swan with a ball at the end. Occasionally he tinkled a little bell that was standing on the table, which was, moreover, also littered with a *dorje* and other ritual objects. It is possible that these ceremonies were intended to placate the gods in their wrath at our unwelcome visit.

The roof of the rectangular hall of the temple was supported by four red-lacquered columns, between which hung four uncommonly beautiful *tankas* or religious paintings. The short walls were decorated with paintings in red frames, while the back wall was taken up with shelves for sacred volumes and some decorative Buddha images in miniature shrines with glass windows. In the middle of the floor stood a model of a *suburga*. The altar table was cluttered with brass bowls and sacrificial gifts, and before it, in the centre of the hall, hung a canopy of cloth.

We wandered along narrow alleys between white walls, up natural steps in the hillside, over courtyards and open squares — just as in Tibetan temples and monasteries. The architectural style is Tibetan, even though some roofs, decorations, wood-carvings and paintings are in the Chinese style. Bayan-shandai-sume is picturesquely situated on its slope. At the foot of the slope runs a narrow valley. From the well in the bed of the valley water is fetched by means of a scoop made of sacking, which is emptied into a wooden trough. Just as we passed by some horses, a donkey and a camel belonging to a blue-clad Mongol from Kuku-nor were being watered at the trough. The whole scene made a beautiful picture in the warm, red glow of the setting sun, and with steel-blue, threatening storm clouds to the north.