

and a beautiful censer of gold. So they incense the tablet and the altar with great reverence, and then return each man to his seat.⁴

When all have performed this, then the presents are offered, of which I have spoken as being so rich and costly. And after all have been offered and been seen by the Emperor, the tables are set, and all take their places at them with perfect order as I have already told you. And after dinner the jugglers come in and amuse the Court as you have heard before; and when that is over, every man goes to his quarters.

NOTE 1.—The first month of the year is still called by the Mongols *Chaghan* or *Chaghan Sara*, “the White” or the “White Month”; and the wearing of white clothing on this festive occasion must have been purely a Mongol custom. For when Shah Rukh’s ambassadors were present at the New Year’s Feast at the Court of the succeeding *Chinese* Dynasty (2nd February, 1421) they were warned that *no one* must wear white, as that among the Chinese was the colour of mourning. (*Koepfen*, I. 574, II. 309; *Cathay*, p. ccvii.)

NOTE 2.—On the mystic importance attached to the number 9 on all such occasions among the Mongols, see *Hammer’s Golden Horde*, p. 208; *Hayton*, ch. iii. in *Ramusio* II.; *Not. et Ext.* XIV. Pt. I. 32; and *Strahlenberg* (II. 210 of Amsterd. ed. 1757). Vámbéry, speaking of the *Kálin* or marriage price among the Uzbeks, says: “The question is always how many times *nine* sheep, cows, camels, or horses, or how many times nine ducats (as is the custom in a town), the father is to receive for giving up his daughter.” (*Sketches of Cent. Asia*, p. 103.) Sheikh Ibrahim of Darband, making offerings to Timur, presented *nines* of everything else, but of slaves *eight* only. “Where is the ninth?” enquired the court official. “Who but I myself?” said the Sheikh, and so won the heart of Timur. (*A. Arabsiadis . . . Timuri Hist.* p. 357.)

NOTE 3.—The elephant stud of the Son of Heaven had dwindled till in 1862 Dr. Rennie found but one animal; now none remain. [Dr. S. W. Williams writes (*Middle Kingdom*, I. pp. 323-324): “Elephants are kept at Peking for show, and are used to draw the state chariot when the Emperor goes to worship at the Altars of Heaven and Earth, but the sixty animals seen in the days of Kienlung, by Bell, have since dwindled to one or two. Van Braam met six going into Peking, sent thither from Yun-Nan.” These were no doubt carrying tribute from Burmah.—H. C.] It is worth noticing that the housings of cut cloth or *appliqué* work (“*draps entaillez*”) are still in fashion in India for the caparison of elephants.

NOTE 4.—In 1263 Kúblái adopted the Chinese fashion of worshipping the tablets of his own ancestors, and probably at the same time the adoration of his own tablet by his subjects was introduced. Van Braam ingenuously relates how he and the rest of the Dutch Legation of 1794 performed the adoration of the Emperor’s Tablet on first entering China, much in the way described in the text.

There is a remarkable amplification in the last paragraph of the chapter as given by Ramusio: “When all are in their proper places, a certain great personage, or