

of the buildings were higher than the rest. They were built in Tibetan style with window frames tapering at the top and contained temples or were inhabited by reincarnations of the living Buddha.

You meet wonderful groups of pilgrims on the way to or from Labrang or some more distant place. Old men with expressive, deeply furrowed faces walk along, swinging small praying mills and automatically murmuring their prayers in a low voice, and carrying pilgrims' staffs ending in a trident, below which a bit of red or yellow cloth is fastened in the shape of a bag; there are half-naked old women, too, fingering their rosaries and muttering prayers, their wrinkled old faces, with skin like parchment, of a curious blackish-brown shade.

Rafts of logs hurry past northward down the river. They are carefully tied together by means of twigs threaded through holes bored in the ends of the logs and form long, narrow vessels, skilfully steered past the rocks and through the waves of the river by a couple of half-naked Tanguts wielding two enormously thick oars, one in the bow, the other in the stern. There are a great many flagstaffs in the villages with bits of cloth in different colours, wide and very short, which makes them look like proud, shot-riddled banners of old troops.

Sasuma, which we reached after a ride of about 16 miles, is a miserable little Tangut village, where a Dungan keeps a very bad sarai. Shaku sy with a reincarnation of the living Buddha and about a hundred lamas lies opposite. I paid a visit to the monastery and, after overcoming the objections of the senior lama, was received by the »Gegen« (the incarnate Buddha). The living Buddha, a young man with a dull face, sat with his back to the window on a kang in a small hut, about 2 × 6 m. On his right there was a shelf fixed to the wall, on which were some images in bronze and clay and all kinds of bric-à-brac, European and Asiatic, obviously gifts from devout Buddhists. I added to the collection by offering a triptych mirror and a snuffbox bought in Lanchow. He struck me as a physically undeveloped mental cripple. The conversation was carried on with the senior lama of the monastery, who answered all questions. The »Gegen« merely nodded approval. He was very willing to be photographed, so I got him to come out on to a narrow veranda, where a low throne-like chair with carpets in yellow had been prepared for him. It was evidently the only spot where the poor fellow could get any fresh air. The only time this youth of 20 spoke was when we mentioned a copy of the photograph. He begged me to remember to send him one. Blessed with a small figure of Buddha of gilded clay and encouraged by his promise to remember me in his prayers, I took leave of the holy man. The temple was of no great interest. The place of honour among the gilded Buddha figures of clay was occupied by an empty throne for the »Gegen«. On the whole it was rather poor. A crowd of a few dozen lamas pressed round me and in their inquisitiveness prevented my taking a closer look at the temple.

In Sasuma there are 30 houses, (12 Dungan, the rest Tangut), 20 horses, 7 or 8 donkeys and 30—40 head of cattle. Tthinkho, peas and beans are grown. The crop is 3—4 fold. East winds are frequent. There are no burans. Snow falls often, but does not lie. In the 5th and 6th months there is no snow.