

prostrated himself before the God and confessing his fault begged forgiveness. The figure looked benignly on him and smiled, and he heard a voice warn him against such sacrilege in future. He returned to Lob and kept his story secret for a long time till a Lamma discovered and exposed him, and he was so ashamed that he left the country."

The Kalmáks are entirely a nomadic or pastoral people. They have no towns or cities of their own. They live in *Khargáh* camps, which they shift about from place to place according to the seasons and the requirements of their flocks and their crops. Their camps are always pitched in a circle around their patron God who is set up in the centre as their presiding deity and protector. Every tent besides has its own household God who receives the worship of only the occupants of the tent; but the central God is worshiped by the whole camp, and nobody passes it without a low bow and always keeping the figure on the right hand; to pass it on the left is sure to bring down some calamity on the whole community. Should anybody so offend, the whole camp is struck and pitched in some other spot. Cattle are excluded from the centre of the camp lest they should so offend the God.

The Kalmáks are all of the Buddhist religion. Their idols are called *Burkhun* collectively, but the chief idol of the camps is called *Madárbí*. It is the figure of a man, and is of copper gilded; its size is that of a boy twelve years old. Once a year it is fixed against a pole in front of the Khan's *Khargáh* for three days at the commencement of spring; and the people come and adore by prostrating themselves on the ground before it, and pressing their foreheads against the body of the figure. Every *Khargáh* has its own idol, and everybody carries a small one suspended by a thread round the neck, and concealed on the breast inside the frock. They are mostly made of copper, though some are of brass.

Their religion is kept up by the priesthood called Lamma, and nobody knows their books but themselves. The head Lamma of each country is appointed from Tuwat or Joh and usually comes from that country. Every Kalmák father is bound to give up his second or third son to be educated as a Lamma. When a Lamma dies his body is fleshed, and the bones are broken up and tied in a bundle, and kept for transmission to Joh, which is a six months' journey from Karáshahr (my informant in these matters is a Karáshahr Kalmák) by the annual caravan.

At the yearly festival held at Joh, the bones of defunct Lammás, brought from all quarters, are boiled in a huge cauldron. On this occasion two or three aged Lammás always sacrifice themselves by jumping into the boiling liquor, and become converted into soup which is called *Sholun-arshan*. At the conclusion of the festival, this soup is distributed amongst the attendant Lammás, who fill it into copper vessels covered with red cloth; these copper vessels are called *lónkha*, and are carried about the person suspended on one side from the girdle. When all these Lammás disperse and return to their own homes they distribute their store of *Sholun-arshan* to the other Lammás who receive it in little copper vessels the size of a thimble and similar in shape to the *lónkha*. They are always worn slung at the waist from the girdle; and when he eats the Lamma first dips a wood pencil into the little copper bottle and passes it across his tongue.

The Kalmák language is different entirely from the Turki spoken by the Kirghiz, and Uzbek, and Tártár of Káshghar; and it differs in dialect as spoken by the Mánjhú of Ila, the Kalmák of Yuldúz, and the Tuwat of Joh; the Tánghút and the Monghol too have peculiar languages, and in fact every tribe has its own speech, which is more or less unintelligible to his neighbours, though of the same race. The Mánjhú write their language in characters like the Chinese, but the Kalmák don't write their language, unless the Lamma do it for them, and then they must read it too.

A sample of the Kalmák language will be found in the comparative vocabulary appended to this general description. They appear to be entirely illiterate, for I could hear of no books amongst them.

The Kalmák people are divided into tribes and clans like the Kirghiz, whom they resemble in their wandering mode of life. The ruler of a whole province comprising many tribes is called *Ghaldan*, which is the same as Khán; and the head or chief of a tribe is called *Noyún*, which is the same as Beg; the latter titles in each case being those current amongst the Uzbek people.