

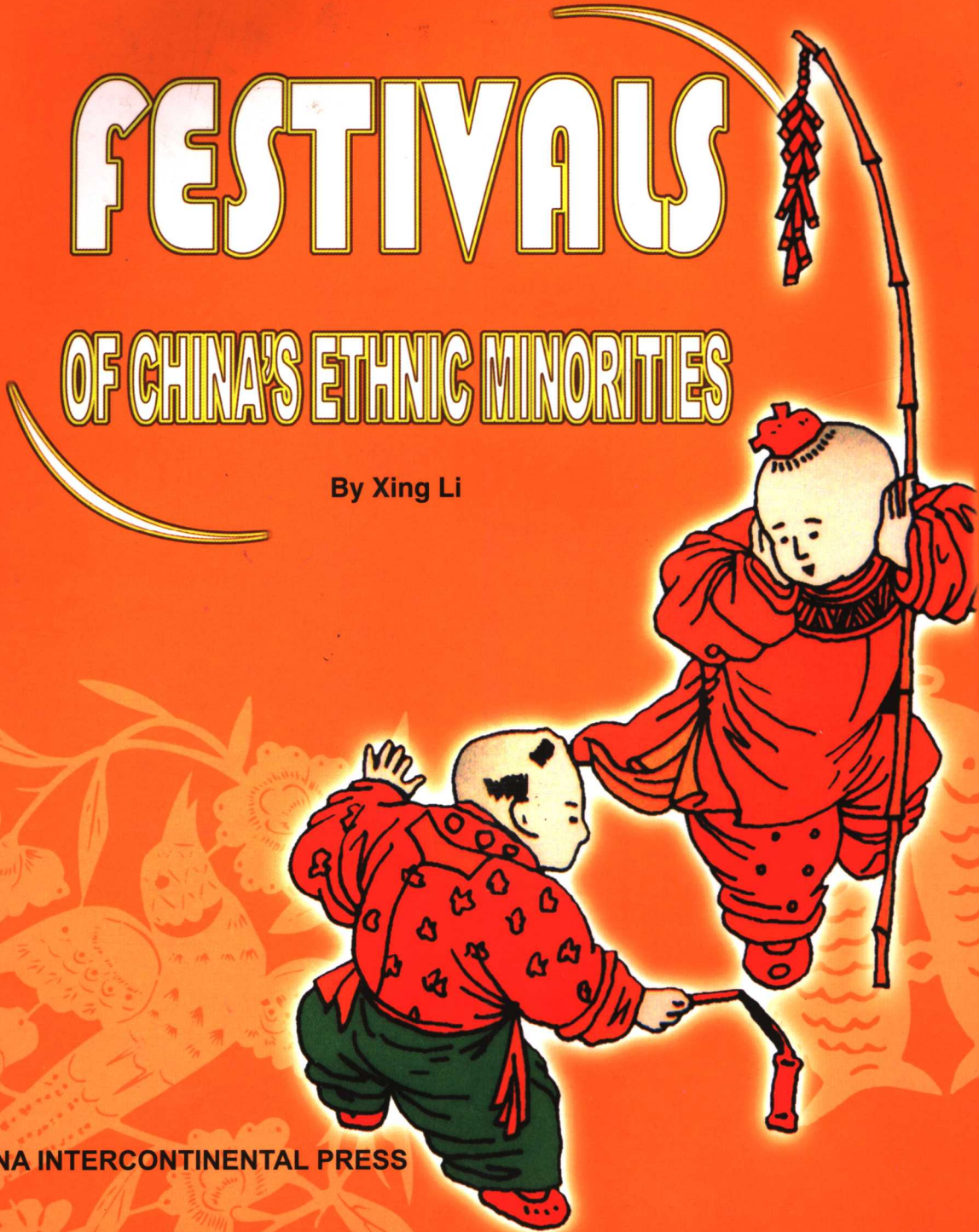
Ethnic Cultures of China

FESTIVALS

OF CHINA'S ETHNIC MINORITIES

By Xing Li

CHINA INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

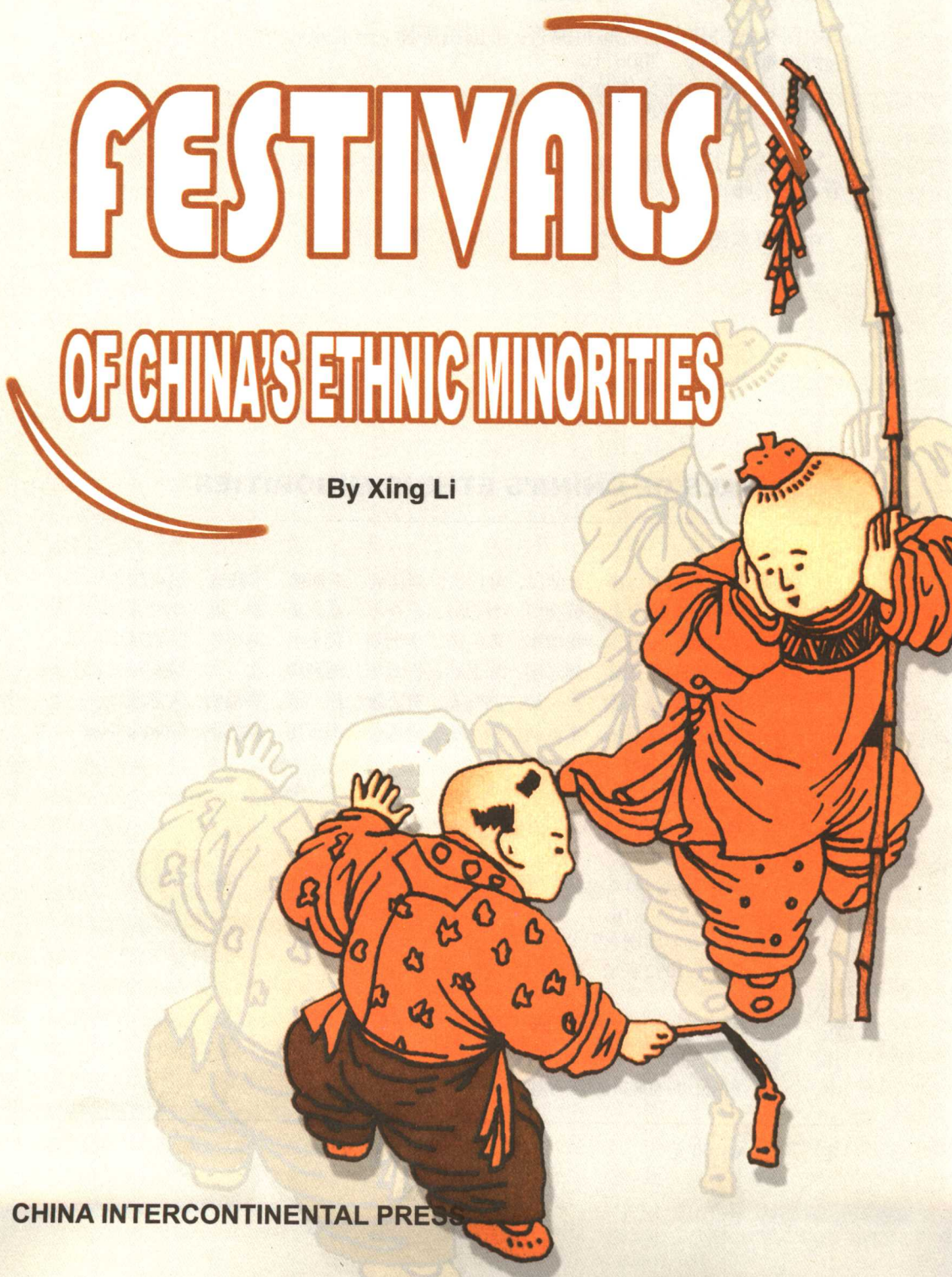


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Preface

The People's Republic of China is a great multi-ethnic tapestry composed of 56 ethnic groups each with their own culture, traditions and festivals. The sheer variety and color of this old Chinese festival culture is truly mind-boggling. Every month of the year sees the celebration of one or more ethnic festivals. The celebrations and festivals peculiar to each ethnic group influences the celebrations and festivals of other groups but yet amid all this tumult; amid all the homogenizing forces of modern existence, each manages somehow to preserve their own unique voice and flavor.

Traditional ethnic festivals everywhere are an expression of a community's social, economic and cultural life and all gradually evolve with the changing circumstances of history: changes which manifest themselves in terms of the lifestyle, historical traditions, and religious and psychological beliefs of individual ethnic groups.

Traditionally the celebration of festivals among the various cultures that make up the human species is closely related to nature: to the changing seasons, the exigencies of agriculture and harvesting and the changing climatic conditions that each season brings. The traditional Chinese calendar, the lunisolar calendar, takes the period of time the moon takes to go from full to full as one month. The first day of the lunar month is known as Shuori, and the fifteenth day is called Wangri. One year, as in the western calendar, is composed of twelve months but there are 30 days in a large month and 29 days in a small month. Thus the lunisolar year has 11 days fewer than the solar tropical year.

Some ethnic groups follow the Han calendar, but some have their own calendars. Many pastoral festivals are held at times dictated by an ethnic group's own view of time and season. The Kazaks, who use their own ancient Kazak calendar, hold their Spring Festival, called the "Nawoluz Festival" on the vernal equinox of the Chinese lunar calendar. Daytime and nighttime are equal on the Vernal Equinox, so Kazaks take it as New Year's Day: "New Year sets in" is the literal translation of "Nawoluz". The calendar of the Khalkhas is based on a division of time into twelve year cycles, each symbolized by a different animal. The eleventh day of the first month of the lunar year, which is the second day after the first time the Aries Star appears to the south, is celebrated as the Khalkha Spring Festival.

Sinkiang Yingerle Mongolia Autonomous Prefecture and Bortala Mongolia Autonomous Prefecture hold a Zulu Festival, on October 25 by the Mongolian Calendar which they regard as Midwinter, calling it "the day the sun comes back" (the Mongolian Calendar is one month behind the lunar calendar), and the herders who live here take this

date as the date by which they calculate their age.

The character of the festivals and the way in which they come into being is closely related to the natural environment and the mode of production of individual ethnic minorities. For example in Mongolia and Tibet, where animal husbandry is the dominant way of life, you find festivals such as the Thriving Livestock Breeding Festival, the Sheep Herding Festival, the Little Horse Festival and the Horse Milk Festival. The Kazaks, Mongolians and Tibetans have always relied greatly on horses so it is no surprise to see these cultures celebrating regular horse racing festivals. Ethnic groups like the Tong, Miao, Bai, Gelao and Naxi on the other hand engage principally in the cultivation of rice and so they celebrate events like the Tasting Fresh Festival, which is held when the harvest is approaching and expresses the people's expectation of the harvest and their appreciation of the hard work that will involve. The torch festivals celebrated by ethnic groups such as the Yi, Gelao, Naxi and Bai groups is an expression of the importance of driving out insects, an element extremely important to their respective farming cultures.

A festival's origin also relates to the religious beliefs of a particular ethnic group. In primitive society, religion in essence came into being in response to people's awe towards and fear of nature. Many ethnic festivals owe their origins to the beliefs of these primitive religions. All traditional Chinese festivals: Spring Festival, Yuanxiao Festival, the Pure Brightness Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-autumn Festival and Chongyang Festival have emerged today from ancient primitive rituals.

Many Tibetan festivals originate from the concept that every single thing on earth has a soul. To take three examples the Harvest Festival is an expression of adoration for the Land Goddess, the Mountain Strolling Fair originates from reverence for the Mountain God and the Arrow Inserting Festival from worship of the arrow. The origin of the torch festivals held by many ethnic groups is the common primitive worship of fire. Many religions focus on the belief that all people have souls, and this gives rise to the ancestor worship, which is such a common feature of Chinese society even today. Many ethnic festivals came into being because of ancestor worship: the belief that reverence and respect is due to the ancestors of one's own family and tribe.

Modern religious beliefs also enrich Chinese festival culture. Many Tibetan and Mongolian herders replaced or merged their ancient religious beliefs with Buddhism in the period between the seventh and thirteenth century. Thus colorful folk cultures blend with traditional Buddhist Festivals to produce unique cultural mergings, which, because of the wide participation of the people, are not only confined to the temples, but burst out and become a vital expression of the character of people's everyday existence. According to statistics, there are as many as 50 Tibetan Buddhist Festivals with such origins. Broadly speaking they can be broken down into three categories: the first is celebrations associated


with the dates of the birth and death of the primary Buddhas such as Sakyamuni, Tsong-kha-pa, Apothecary Buddha, Buddha Maitreya, and Lotus Flower Master; the second is to do with ritualized temple activities and taboos such as Free Captive Animals Festival, Six-four Festival, Rewarding Deities Festival, Grand Buddha Respecting Festival, Bathing Festival, Seventh-month Great Warrior Attendants Festival; the third is related to the Dharma Meetings held by the Lamas in the temples which grew into festivals when such meetings became large-scale gatherings. The Hui, Kazak, Uygur, Khalkhas, Uzbek, Tatar, Dongxiang, Bonan, Salar, and Tajik peoples are predominantly Moslem. They celebrate the Corban Festival and Eid, the Festival of Fast-breaking according to the teachings of Islam.

Some festivals owe their origins to ethnic folklore. The legends associated with events such as the Torch Festival, Water-splashing Festival, Tasting Fresh Festival, Sword-ladder Festival and Danu Festival go back to the age of myth. Those who participate do so just as their ancestors did in bygone centuries - as religious leaders, as representatives of heroes of legend and as respected community members. The origin of the Chinese traditional festival, the Dragon Boat Festival lies in the story of the great patriot, Qu Yuan. The legend of the founder of the Gelug Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, Tsong-kha-pa, is one of the sources of the Tibetan Ghee Lantern Festival. The Horse Races held in Lhasa on April 15 each year originate from a Tibetan Legend, which tells the story of the Tang Dynasty princess Wencheng arriving in Tibet to be married to the Tupan leader, Songtsan Gampo. Legend has it the race was first held by him to welcome Princess Wencheng.

The particular cultural psychology of the individual ethnic groups is also a vital factor one must consider if one wishes to trace the origins of certain festivals.

Traditional agricultural society is almost wholly dependent upon an abundant harvest each year and the wellbeing of its livestock and poultry for its survival. Thus in almost all agricultural cultures the concept of passing time and of ritual and celebration is inextricably linked with the growing period of crops. The planting and reaping of crops forms an unbreakable link in the chain of societal survival and so is of intrinsic importance to the culture of the group.

As the *Guliani Legend* records, "All the food crops ripen at harvest time; when abundant crops are completely ripe it means a bumper harvest." Many prayers for the coming year are made by women during the respective Spring Festivals of each ethnic group: the Gelao and Chuang shoulder new water on the first day of the first month of the lunar year; the Tong have the custom of "Singing the Eldest Sister" with the eldest girl being sung to by her siblings to pray for the success of the coming year's harvest and marriages. Prayers for the coming year are also important for each ethnic group in terms of planting in spring and harvesting in autumn. Not only can one find such prayers among crop-growing groups, it is also evident among stock-raising groups. Certain differences do, however, manifest themselves between the two groups in accordance with their



differing imperatives. The flight from the land to the cities: a mass migration of people whose scale exceeds any in previous history, has had a great impact on ethnic groups once wholly dependent on keeping animals. It means that festivals such as the Livestock Festival and Shepherd Festival are today in grave danger of extinction. In traditional society affluence was measured in terms of livestock; these days wealth is measured in the consumer goods of urban existence.

Human civilization has always had as one of its central focuses reproduction. Reproduction means survival. To ensure the survival of one's tribe, the rites of marriage and birth are of vital importance. In feudal society, arranged marriages were very much the norm. Loveless marriages were typical. The Qi Qiao Festival on the seventh day of the seventh month of the lunar year, the Mid-autumn Festival and Sisters Festival of many ethnic groups all owe their origins to the desire for love and free marriage. In traditional society, because of the lack of technological sophistication, manual labor is the driving force behind the community's productivity, and also very often the sole means by which one may acquire wealth. More hands meant more productivity. Thus the emphasis in traditional society was very much on giving birth to as many children especially boys as possible. These ideas are reflected very clearly in many ethnic festivals.

Wealth, the ability to produce male children and longevity are all traditionally seen as the very exemplars of good fortune. Though China's ethnic groups are widely distributed all over the land and their various festivals are each imbued with their own individual characteristics the concept of praying for good fortune and asking for blessing permeate every festival and indeed could be said to form an underlying foundation of China's rich and colorful festival culture. The Sisters Festival of the Hani originates from the legend that a girl refused what she saw as an unsuitable marriage and in the end died for love; the Butterfly Fair of Dali comes from a story that a pair of star-crossed lovers became butterflies; the Nianxi Flower Festival of Manchu originates from a tale that a beautiful girl was burned into ashes by the Fire-demon, her ashes then scattering on the land where they became nianxi flowers. The commemoration of the hero or heroine in the legends expresses a common desire to break away from the bondage of some restrictive traditional customs.

China is one of the world's great ancient civilizations with a history of some 5,000 years. Celebrations and festivals are an intrinsic part of that civilization. Some festivals have been held continuously for over 2,000 years. The festivals are important sources of cultural expression and enjoyment not only for Chinese people, but also for neighboring Asian countries and for expatriate Chinese communities around the world. Indeed one could confidently say that Chinese festival culture is now an intrinsic part of global heritage and culture.

CHAPTER I CHINESE NEW YEAR



The New Year in China is the most important and the most ceremonious festival of the year. These celebrations have a number of unique attributes.

The New Year has been celebrated by the Chinese people for over three millennia. No matter where a Chinese person should find him or herself at this time of year, Chinese New Year will be celebrated with tremendous earnestness. It is not only among the Han people that Chinese New Year is celebrated. Practically all the ethnic minorities also have the custom of celebrating this important festival. However, in different regions, ecological environments, and societies, the New Year is celebrated in different ways and at different times.

The New Year for the Han ethnic group is also called the Spring Festival because this is the first festival of spring in the new year. Spring Festival is also celebrated by 38 other minorities, making a total of 39 ethnic groups according to *A Complete Edition of Chinese Ethnical Festivals*. Among 31 of these ethnic societies all the people celebrate the festival, namely the Han, Manchu, Korean, Hezhen, Mongolian, Daur, Ewenki, Oroqen, Tu, Yugur, Xibe, Pumi, Qiang, Yi, Bai, Hani, Lisu, Naxi, Jingpo, Achang, Nu, Miao, Dong, Shui, Gelao, Zhuang, Yao, Jing, Li, and She. Among the other 8 ethnic groups only some people celebrate this festival. They are the Hui, Dongxiang, Tujia, Maonan, Wa, Mulam, Dai, and Kirgiz.

The Spring Festival is also observed in some Southeast Asian countries, due to the pervasive historical influence of China on her neighbors

I. New Year Celebrations in Northeast and Northwest Chinese Minorities

Seven ethnic groups have traditionally lived for countless generations in the regions of Northeast China and Inner Mongolia. The territory from the Loess Plateau and the Inner Mongolian Plateau to the Hun Lunbei'er Grassland is the cradle of the Mongolian people; the Daxing'anling and Xiaoxing'anling Mountains are the main areas where live the Ewenki and Oroqen peoples; the area around the Changbaishan Mountain and the Heilongjiang River is the heartland of the Manchu and the Daur ethnic groups; the Hezhen people who live by fishing are concentrated on the Sanjiang Plain (the alluvial plain formed by the Heilongjiang, the Songhua, and the Wusuli Rivers); meanwhile on the banks of the Hailanjiang River there live the Korean ethnic group where the cultivation of rice

dominates society. According to their different cultures and ways of life, different ways of celebrating the New Year have sprung up among these communities.

The White Festival of Mongolians

The Mongolian people live on the boundless grasslands that stretch across their land. For them, the New Year is a long festival, which they call the “White Festival”. People on this grassland place great reverence on the color white. White stands for purity, prosperity, holiness and happiness in their traditions. The designation is derived from the fact that people of all ages and both sexes in the Yuan Dynasty would traditionally put on white clothes on New Year’s Day as this day was the beginning of the white month (i.e., the first month). White clothes are thought to be greatly auspicious.

The New Year celebrations among the Mongolians are divided into the Lesser New Year and the Great New Year.

When celebrating the Lesser New Year, people offer sacrifice to the Fire and Kitchen Gods. Such sacrifices have a long history, going back to the very beginnings of Shamanism and Lamaism, which comes from the holy word “Lhamo” coined by Padmasambhava. Before this sacrificial ceremony, people first clean their homes (called gers), their cooking utensils and set up the Huochengzi (a traditional Mongolian cooking range). In some regions the Huochengzi is even decorated with colored ribbons. Blue and white ribbons represent the blue sky and white clouds; yellow and red strips are tokens of Kagyupa and Gelugpa; and green symbolizes plants. Sacrifices include mutton, pig’s large intestines, tea, butter, milk wine, Chinese dates etc. As the ceremony begins, the family members led by their patriarch begin to burn joss sticks, chant scriptures and offer sacrifices unto the fires, at the same time making congratulatory and imprecatory speeches in Mongolian and Tibetan. Very interestingly, during these addresses, the master chants: “Come near, good fortune. Good fortune, come near” while wielding an auspicious arrow. It’s said that the Mongolians living in the eastern regions still observe the custom of throwing food into fires during the New Year celebrations.

Traditional Mongolian celebrations also include many customs of worshipping the Buddha and paying respect to one’s ancestors. Several days before the Great New Year, women begin to prepare a great feast. Mongolians traditionally love fried food with flour, and also sweet mutton dishes. Besides fragrant and sweet fried food, food made in various ways from milk, such as Mongolian Cheese and Mongolian Butter Cheese are also extremely popular. These are called white foods by natives.

On the 29th day of the 12th lunar month, people place offerings before images of the Buddha and their ancestors, and light joss sticks and kowtow. Many Mongolian peoples also have the custom of worshipping Heaven. But this is done at different times in different places. It falls on the night of the 30th day of the 12th month in some regions, on the evening of which Mongolians toss successive cups of wine towards the sky and down to the earth, out of respect for Heaven and for their ancestors. Herdsmen in some pastoral areas will pile up a so-called "Tengger Aobao" with cow dung for kowtowing and praying. They believe the New Year is the common festival of both men and nature; their creed is no nature, no life.

Mongolian boiled lamb is absolutely essential for New Year's Eve. Usually prepared and eaten without any seasoning, the Mongolian boiled lamb is cooked by putting an entire slaughtered lamb into a large cauldron and then boiling it until it's seventy or eighty percent cooked. The eating of the lamb is quite ritualized. The whole cooked lamb is placed on an enormous platter, its hind legs both stretched out, the two front legs folded, with the head resting on top of them. The crooked horns and intact head of the beast about to be eaten will surely give you a vivid impression of the cultural continuity of this once nomadic, tribal people. Old and young sit around and cut off chunks of meat using elegant knives. When having a meal, herdsmen pay great attention to formalities: young men must toast their elders while the elders bestow sincere blessings on the young people. On the night of New Year's Eve, the far-reaching and melodious strains of the traditional Mongolian instrument, the Ma Tou Qin will be heard echoing from warm gers through the night sky; and a festive mood fills the whole grassland.

Mongolians lay great emphasis on paying New Year visits. If these are to the elder members of their family, they will ride galloping horses (often these days motorbikes). When carrying out these formalities, they make presents of snow-white hada and mellow wine to show their respect. The intoxicating songs which accompany the drinking of wine give the people a great sense of optimism and courage as they face into the life of another new year.

The Manchu Spring Festival Celebrations

The Manchu people are traditionally divided into red, yellow, blue, and white banners. During the Spring Festival, the people of each banner will proudly hang up their respective banner. For example, the people of the red banner paste red banners. These bright and beautiful banners are seen as guarantees of a propitious beginning to the new year.

The Manchu also have a strong tradition of ancestor worship. Traditionally enshrined on the west wall of Manchu residences was an "Ancestry Board". For this reason it is forbidden to sit on the west kang.

During a meal, it's customary for the elders and guests to eat first and the women and youngsters later. After the women and daughters-in-law carefully set the table, arranging the bowls, the chopsticks and the dishes, the diners then sit around the dining table on the kang and begin to eat. At this time, daughters-in-law will respectfully stand aside, ready to bring more rice and dishes to the menfolk and guests.

When the festival comes, gangs of Manchu boys take great delight in riding on various self-made ploughs to go to see relatives and friends. From the first to the fifth day of the first lunar month, the traditional yangko dance is performed in all Manchu areas. Some well renowned yangko performers perform not only in their own villages but also in neighboring regions. These merry dances carry people joyfully into the new year.

New Year Celebrations for the Daur People

The Daur people inhabiting the Nenjiang River valley customarily paste New Year pictures and Spring Festival scrolls around their homes. Several decades ago, the couplets on these scrolls were written in Mongolian, but many now appear in Chinese. Whatever the script, the message is one of prayers for good fortune and longevity for the new year. These scrolls are pasted on cabinets and boxes. The Door-god pictures are pasted on the gates and doors of residences and storehouses. The Daur also heap jumbles of grass and dried cow dung together into piles. When the veil of night falls, the heaps will be set alight one after another. At this time, the dancing flames and wisps of smoke illuminate the great festive mood. The Daur hold that the fires are a link with the fires of previous years, which symbolizes the prosperity of the family and the continuity of their society.

On the first day of the first month, the Daur people have the habit of rising early. Youngsters are urged to wake up by themselves: the Daur think in this way the young will grow into independent and diligent adults. Elders of the family lay the table in the courtyard and place upon it sacrifices such as meat, wine, or sweetmeats. All the family members burn joss sticks and kowtow to Tengger (the Heaven), Triones, the Niangniang Goddess, and the Kitchen God, praying for their blessing and a peaceful year and a bountiful harvest. Afterwards, they return to the house. The youngsters say to the elders: "Long may you live!" and the elders in return wish the youngsters happiness and the diligence necessary to be successful. The New Year breakfast is dumplings boiled with broth. Breakfast eaten, people ride horses, big-wheeled carts or ploughs to pay New Year



visits to their relatives and friends.

During this period, many entertainments are held. Boys in groups play hockey; little girls gather to make and play with toys; local actors chant epics till the dawn. By the time of the Lantern Festival, which falls on the fifth day of this month, entertainment activities reach a peak.

The Noruz of the Kazakh

Noruz is New Year's Day for the Kazakh people. It falls on the vernal equinox according to the lunar calendar. The celebration of the festival at this time is determined by centuries of tradition and life. The old Kazakh people lived a nomadic life on the vast grassland. Where there were waters and grass, there were Kazakh people. Each time when winter would fall, livestock would be enclosed in pens next to warm cabins in which the long and cold season would be passed. By the spring, the livestock would be driven out to the hillsides where the ice and snow would be beginning to melt, and the nomadic seasonal life cycle would begin once more.

However the day on which the livestock would be driven out was really hard to select. Sometimes they would arrive at the hillsides only to be met with an abrupt drop in temperature and many of their sheep and goats would die, as there was no pasture for them to feed on. Afterwards, a wise old man formulated a rule that if the livestock were driven out after the vernal equinox, such calamities would occur no longer. In order to celebrate this major discovery, people gathered in Grandmother Noruz's to celebrate. Grandmother Noruz boiled seven kinds of food like rice, millet, milk lumps, horseflesh and kernels, into a porridge, which ever after became known as Noruz Porridge. Since then, people will celebrate the vernal equinox every year and Noruz Porridge is an absolute necessity. Besidesthis porridge, other delicacies are also served, such as the large intestines of horses and sausages made from horse ribs. During the festival, people firstly offer the heads of lambs to the old men, who in turn bestow their blessings and congratulations. The other people just listen quietly smiling happily. Then, with great joy, they tuck into their portion of Noruz Porridge. It is an event of enormous significance for the Kazakh people to have their New Year meal with their relatives and the elderly. They believe the new is generated by the old; the old is the mother while the new is the infant.

Another school of thought contends that the word "Noruz" is transliterated from the ancient Turkic language, which means "new". So the festival is used for celebrating the time when the nomads leave the cabins, and go to the grassland to begin the new year's nomadic life. The preparation and eating of Noruz Porridge is to pray for a good harvest

in the coming year. Whatever one believes about the origin of the word 'noruz', what matters is the earnest wishes the word represents. As winter turns to spring, Noruz is a carnival celebrating the continuity of life. People sing Noruz songs and play traditional instruments, and engage in wrestling contests.

Noruz of the Kirgiz

Noruz is also the New Year of the Kirgiz people. They designate the 11th day of each year's first month, namely the second day after the Aries constellation first appears in the sky in the south, as their New Year's Day. Before the festival, people diligently clean their homes and prepare the special New Year food-Keque, which is made of flayed barley and wheat, vegetable oil, beef and mutton, onion, raisins etc. During the festival, every family presents delicacies and good wine to cater for friends that come to pay New Year calls. They will sing and dance, race horses and wrestle on the vast grassland. By the time night comes, when livestock come back from the pasture, each family kindles a heap of splendid achnatherum before their yurt. First the people and then the livestock will jump over it, indicating the elimination of disasters and the prosperity of both the family members and the livestock that will surely come in the new year.

II. New Year Celebrations Among Some Ethnic Groups in Southwest China

Many ethnic minority groups live in the southwest areas of China. And many of them have the custom of celebrating the New Year.

The Tibetan New Year

The Tibetans living in Tibet and Qinghai Province celebrate the New Year according to the Tibetan calendar. As early as 100 BC, the Tibetan people began to calculate time according to the wax and wane of the moon. The New Year's Day at that time fell roughly on what is today the first day of the 11th month in Tibetan calendar. From 1027, the Tibetans began to adopt what is referred to as the Tibetan calendar, using the ten Heavenly stems and the twelve Earthly Branches matched with the Five Elements to calculate the passing of days. In this unique calendar 60 years constitutes one complete cycle. However the day on which Tibetan New Year falls varies in different Tibetan areas. In regions like

Lhasa it falls on the first day of the first Tibetan month.

The Tibetan people have the custom of making a “Qiema” box during the New Year. The method is to put into each side of an elegant quadrate box, barley kernels and zanba (a Tibetan food mixed with ghee), with Qingke spikes and beautiful molded flowers covered in ghee. The Qiema box is also painted beautifully using colored ghee, usually featuring such figures which represent longevity and harmony. The Tibetans take Qiema as a mascot; barley kernels are a token of good luck; and zanba symbolizes health and a bountiful harvest for the new year.

The Tibetans pay great attention to cleaning their cooking ranges. They sprinkle some zanba flour on the middle wall and fashion it into an “Auspicious Eight-Figure Emblem”. And on the gates and walls they draw representations of the ears of highland barley with white lime and lacquer. Some are auspicious designs, representing the prosperity of the family and the value of grain. The Tibetans also hang Tangka paintings and offer sacrifices. They usually make the portraits of their forefathers that have passed away into Tangka and hang them out together with other beloved Buddha Tangka paintings. Before these figures, they will place some offerings like lumps of ghee, milk tea, and candies. Meanwhile, they light their ghee lamps to show their respect for the Buddha and also for their ancestors.

Mutton, ghee tea and chang comprise the typical dishes for the Tibetan New Year. On the 29th day of the 12th Tibetan month, people first eat the “Gutu” soup, which is made of nine ingredients, including fried meat, carrots, Chinese cabbage, sapodilla plums, and peas. Most interestingly everyone has to eat at least nine bowls. The cook deliberately puts stones, wool, pepper, wood charcoal and other items into the soup. The one who comes upon the pepper is thought to be locquacious; the wool stands for a good heart while on the other hand, the wood charcoal is a token of a black heart.

At night, people begin the ritual of “sending off ghosts”. They firstly use straw to fashion nine crisscrossed figures to represent ghosts. They then put leftover food and cloth, and some money into a shabby gallipot. The next step is to send off ghosts at night, the later, the better, lest ghosts in other homes should come in. when the ceremony is being performed. The inside and outside of the house is thoroughly smoked using a lit torch; then some zanba is scattered on the ground; and at last, the straw ghost figures are taken out. The whole family escorts them to a field far away from their residence in order to bring good fortune for the coming year.

On the morning of the first day of the year, the Tibetans get up very early. They rush off in order to bring back the first bucket of water, which is seen as being most auspicious.