

Non-burning fire.

Non-corrosive flame- heavenly fire - may be manifested only during contact with an aura of specific intensity. N.K. and I saw such fire during our journey through Tibet. It flashed out perfectly unexpectedly in our tent late in the evening. My husband was already asleep and I too was prepared to retire; going to my bed, I stretched out my hand to turn back the blanket and suddenly in the midst of the bedding arose a column or rather a bonfire of wonderful, silvery, pinkish-lilac flame. I could not at once understand what it was, and with a cry of : "fire, fire!" I set about putting it out.

But the fire was not fire as we are accustomed to understanding it; the tongues of flame did not scorch my fingers, did not destroy the light fabric of sheet and blanket, and at touching it I felt only a pleasant live warmth. My cry had awakened my husband and he saw me astonished, joyfully frightened in the background of the marvelous rainbow flame. The manifestation continued no more than half a minute, perhaps less, and vanished as suddenly as it had appeared.*

I can produce another attestation of non-burning fire. In the year 1933 a Tibetan lama named Karma-Dorje visited us. He told us about visiting the celebrated hermit Kshetrpa in a cavern found in the neighborhood of the village Shasregtog in Eastern Tibet. According to local tradition this hermit had appeared in this cavern in the time of the great-grandfathers of the present inhabitants and since that time his external appearance has not changed.

Like all hermits of this type, he never wears any clothing:--- his hair falling to the

*Non-corrosive heavenly flame is that non-burning fire with which Moses' bush blazed. This flame has nothing in common with St. Elmo's fire. St. Elmo's fire is a lightning which accompanies discharges of atmospheric electricity. Usually this lightning is manifested during a thunder-storm in the aspect of little fires on sharp-pointed objects, for example, on the crosses of church spires, on the tops of ship's masts, and even on the ears of horses. The manifestation of the fires is accompanied by the sound of crackling or hissing. Sailors of the Mediterranean have chosen St. Elmo as their patron, and regard these fires as signs of his protection.

(N.K.R.)

earth covers his entire body as a mantle. His skin is dark, but he is not Tibetan, though he knows all the local dialects. His cave-home consists of several rooms; in the last room stands a dried tree and the ground is covered as it were with soft ash. The local inhabitants assert that around his cave, even in the heaviest snow-drifts, no snow accumulates. They affirm also that he has repeatedly saved their village from epidemics. Undoubtedly this hermit possesses many siddhas; he lives in austere solitude admitting to himself only a few chosen ones. Lama Karma-Dorje, being present at his discourses with those who had come, observed the following: before responding to a put question, Kshetrupa in a half-whisper consulted as it were invisibly present Higher Forces and then gave his reply.

Sitting in his cavern, he could evoke non-burning fire, blowing around himself, during which at first the fire spread out on the earth and then centered on the dried tree standing in the depths of the cave.

Lama Karma-Dorje himself touched this fire with his hands, not receiving any burn, but feeling only an agreeable warmth. During a conversation with the hermit, the Lama told him that he suffers from strong headaches and asked him to give him one of his hairs as a protective talisman. Kshetrupa became somewhat agitated and, grasping his staff, struck him strongly on the head. The Lama was thrown out of the cave by the force of the blow and rolled down the hill. Coming to himself, to his greatest amazement, he discovered not the smallest scratch or mark of the blow. After this extraordinary treatment the head aches completely ceased. The European traveler Arnold Keim visited this place and wrote about this same hermit in his book issued in 1933.

After a brief stay with us the Lama one morning came to bid us farewell, saying that he must hasten because he heard the call of his Teacher living in the mountains of Tibet, near the sacred peak of Kailasa.

After half a year he returned to our place and informed us that his Teacher was dead, not awaiting his coming in answer to the call. By the injunction of his Teacher, Karma-Dorje never, even on the longest journeys, has with him more than two pounds of food and two rupees in cash. He had many remarkable visions during his sojourn in our Ashram. My son Svyatoslav did his portrait, I enclose a photograph of this picture. Whoever is acquainted with ~~this~~ the type of Tibetan lamas must recognize that his face is unusual.

At the present time the lama has withdrawn into complete seclusion for ten years; at the expiration of this period ~~the~~ he will go out into the world to teach people the great covenants of Truth and Love.

Elena Roerich.

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Himalaya