

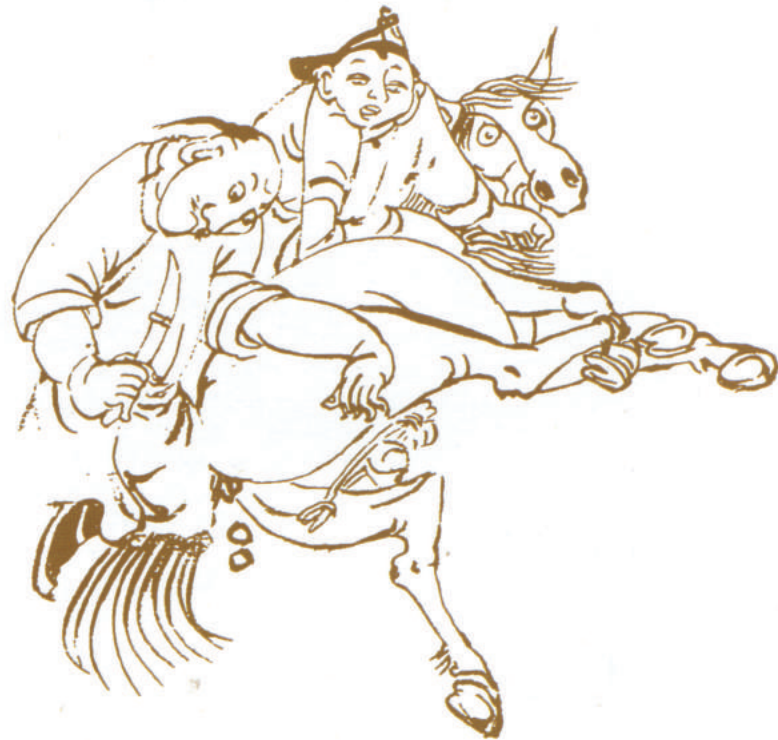
❖ CUSTOM TO CASTRATE YOUNG ANIMALS

Young animals are castrated at the beginning of summer. This is a traditional method to maintain the balance of male and female domestic animals. The methods to castrate animals differ depending upon the flock or herd. The general ceremony of castration is the same. For instance, in order to castrate flocks, a felt rug or piece of quilted felt is stretched out at the western part of a *ger*. There is a support piece of the *ger* that is placed at the right of felt rug facing to the north. On the western side of the man doing the castration, a small sack of millet and a pail of water blended with a bit of milk are also placed. An arrow is set lengthwise on the top of pail. Beside them juniper needles are burnt in an incense-burner.

A herder calls out, "Bring the swan-white faced lamb!" A person brings the lamb. If this lamb is selected to become a ram, its forehead is anointed with clotted cream and a plate of dairy products is placed under its chin. This ram is sanctified with smoke from the incense-burner three times. Placing the incense-burner under its muzzle, the castrator chants a benediction:

*May you be a
Good pedigree ram
Producing many offspring;
May your flock be many,
Grazing on the mountain grass
Watering on an ocean of water;
May you be a chubby swan-white ram
The vanguard of ten thousand sheep.*

And he releases this ram.



Illustrated S.Badral



Castrating other lambs, the castrator chants for each lamb:

*Be lighter than a feather
Cure quicker than the speeding arrow
Khurai khurai khurai
Dur dur suukhai*

Scattering grain onto the lamb symbolizes an increase in the animal population, and waving it with an arrow symbolizes a fast recovery. The words 'khurai, khurai, khurai' express the purification of fire, and the words 'dur dur' express the spells of a mantra. The words of the benediction chanted during the castration are a kind of charm or spell.