



Fig. 13. View from the Potala southwards

We had reached the famous buildings that claim to bear some resemblance to the residence of the DALAI LAMA on the Potala hill in Lhasa. The main building was a massive square block, with the façade towards the south. Every other window in the three upper storeys was blind, serving merely as part of the decoration. In the centre of the façade was a row of niches, one above the other, elaborately ornamented with miniature projecting roofs and architraves of glazed tiles, in the Chinese style. In every niche was a little image of Amitayus in a sitting position, and on the very crest of the wall a row of thirty-four similar niches with images.

In certain respects this magnificent façade reminded me of the Royal Palace in Stockholm. There were the same straight, dignified lines and the same vast expanse of wall. But within the mighty walls were now no spacious, light rooms or imposing temple-halls; only on the upper floors were there real rooms, with windows looking over the Lion Valley. The whole of this gigantic, square block of masonry was nothing but a shell, a decorative structure built round the most sumptuous sanctuary in the Potala: The Golden Pavilion.

For some distance up, the walls of this massive shell were built of stone, and were then continued in brick. It stood on a terrace which formed an open, stone-