

paved courtyard. As our illustrations show, the other monastery-blocks were more or less closely connected with the main building. The walls were not absolutely vertical, but leaned inwards at a slight angle, so that each block formed a truncated pyramid — just as in the Tibetan monasteries.

One hundred and three steps led up to the terrace, from the stone-paved square of which rose the façade of the main building. Here stood an incense-burner and six immense iron bowls which collected the rain-water from the spouts on the roof. Formerly, five pagodas in the Chinese style had added to the beauty of the temple; but only two of these still defy the tooth of time.

On the west side of the balcony-courtyard there was a smaller building with a façade of grey faience, badly damaged by the weather and the encroaching plants. It contained one of CH' IEN LUNG's stone tablets, »The Thousand Eulogies of Buddha«, dated his 35th year (1770).

Everywhere between the stones of the terraces, walls, parapets and roofs grew weeds, bushes and small trees — the cruellest enemies of the stately monument. Here the botanist should be able to make a very respectable collection. In one of the rooms of a side-building with a caved-in roof flourished an impenetrable thicket of plants and bushes; wild vines thrived, sheltered from all the winds of heaven as though in a hot-house.

There were still three great flights of steps to mount, fifty-nine in all, before we reached the third and highest terrace. It was a square, shut in on all sides by the palace-like mass of the main building, which rose three storeys above the courtyard. To-day this wall round the courtyard is a mere shell, in which the crumbling, weather-beaten window openings gape forlornly; but in former times there were inside these walls galleries, rooms, and small temple-halls, with innumerable little Buddhas in niches, and possibly also living-rooms for serving monks. Now the galleries have gone; only the framework of beams remains in one of the corners to show what it originally looked like.

For us this courtyard had a special interest, for in its midst rose the most sumptuous lama temple in Jehol, of which we were going to make a copy. When we entered the courtyard and saw this pearl of Chinese architecture, we were seized with admiration. All four sides were alike, and the entrance faced south. The double roofs were covered with sheet copper, gilded with dull gold. Their corners curved upwards, a characteristic of Chinese roof-architecture which gave the building a rhythmic, billowing charm.

The temple, which was of wood, was raised on a stone terrace about four feet high, to which short flights of six steps led up on each side. A colonnade ran around the fane, its twenty-eight round, red pillars supporting the lower roof. The upper roof was supported by twelve columns, each 12 m high, rising from the interior of the temple itself. There were, in all, sixty columns, of which twenty were inset in the walls. (Fig. 22). The height of the building was 20 m.