

regions. Even from the upper gallery it was impossible to get a full view of the figure. It was too big in proportion to the hall, and we could never get far enough away to see it properly. From the stone floor we could study the pedestal and the vast feet; from the first gallery the stomach, and from the upper one the shoulders, arms and head.

THE ILI-MIAO

Not all of the temples and monasteries that form a half-circle round the walled-in park of the Summer Palace will be described in detail here. I have limited myself to the two most famous shrines, the Potala, which is associated with the return of the Torguts, and the Hsin-kung, whose temple-halls still retain memories of the third TASHI LAMA, and his visit to Jehol and Peking. But it is impossible to ignore two of the stately temple-monasteries situated at the foot of the hills bordered on the east by the valley of the Je-ho.

Through ravines and up hills a path led us up to the imposing Ili-miao. Also this temple was surrounded by a wall. The lama who had the keys let us in through the main gate in the south wall, and we stepped into a stone-paved forecourt to pause before an enormous incense-burner on a stone pedestal. In front of us rose the impressive façade of the main temple. The lower half was built of stone and bricks, with square windows and three round-arched gateways surrounded by graceful ornamentation. The upper half was of woodwork, with three tiled roofs, each smaller than the one below.

When we entered the temple-hall we stood still, amazed at the magnificence of the building, the picturesque columns, and impressed beyond measure by the play of the soft lighting. Steps led up to the first gallery, where twilight reigned and the columns glimmered palely against the dusky background. The upper gallery was brightly illuminated, for there all the windows were open. The sun shone in, lighting up the gallery with dancing reflections from the summer day without. To stand on the stone floor below and gaze up at these lofty spaces was like seeing the colonnades of a dream castle. Everything loomed in such light, airy, tender tones. The columns were silhouetted against a still lighter background, and the whole seemed to glow with the magic of an elfin castle.

Galleries ran round all four sides of the temple, their sagging floors covered with the dust and litter of the seventy years during which they had not been swept. The ceiling was divided into square, beautifully decorated panels, and in the space between the upper part of the columns stretched broad friezes, ornamented with Buddhas in large medallions.

The place of honour was occupied by a gigantic image of the goddess Tara, glittering with gold, and rising out of the chalice of a lotus flower. Her dress fell