

one does not see any results of its activity. According to what we were told, there even exists a »Society for the Preservation of Cultural Relics«, just as in Peking. In one of Jehol's temples a notice that was pasted up beside an entrance was translated for our benefit. It was signed by the governor and contained an order to the soldiers, divided up into seventeen points, to see to it that no damage was done in the temples. Anyone who destroyed or stole anything was liable to punishment. One fine day a force of seventy soldiers arrived at the Hsin-kung, with orders from higher up to quarter themselves in the galleries round the temple-courtyard. They ruthlessly smashed up the woodwork to use it as fuel. The chief lama complained to the governor. An enquiry was held and the culprits were actually punished. Afterwards they hunted up the lama who had reported them and beat him so mercilessly that he was confined to his bed for four months. »Now we don't dare to report the soldiers any more«, they said. And acts of vandalism continue as long as there is anything left to destroy.

And who were the men who carried off about twenty large chests from the Potala in two lorries in broad daylight? What did these chests, that we saw with our own eyes, contain? An inventory had long been made in the dwellings of the old gods; and we arrived just at the eleventh hour of the general distraint, when the last objects that might have any value for curio-dealers or any interest for collectors were being dragged out of their ancient halls, so rich in associations and memories of the past.

Before KUANG HSÜ's time nothing is supposed to have been taken away from the temples in Jehol. But during his reign there were two large-scale removals, when a vast quantity of precious objects were transferred to the Imperial Palace in Peking. After his death in 1908, coinciding with the decease of the notorious Dowager Empress Tz'u Hsi, these objects went to his adoptive son, the young HSÜAN T'UNG, the last emperor of China.

The first considerable theft in Jehol during the republic was committed by a Manchu official, TING JE, who took all the pearls and precious stones to be found in the temples on the occasion of his dismissal. His example was followed by an increasing number. All who had access to the temple took part in the plundering; from the present governor of the province downwards.

On July 1st the monks of the Potala read prayers over the images of the gods and the *stupas* that we had seen on the occasion of our first visit, but a couple of days later they were gone¹. Ephemeral indeed are the lovely things of earth! When the Emperor HSIEN FENG ended his miserable days in the Summer Palace and the afterwards so notorious concubine YI left the venerable place in the land of the Kharchin Mongols in the year 1861, the sun set for ever over Jehol.

¹ The late Japanese professor TADASHI SEKINO has written a brief guide-book: *Summer Palace and Lama Temples in Jehol* (Tokyo 1935), according to which the remaining treasures in Jehol are being collected by the Manchukuo Government and transported to the Museum in Mukden. F. B.