

clouds. He passed rhododendrons in bloom. On July 7 he ascended the slopes, passing some fine banyan trees. Crowds of beggars and numbers of pilgrims coming down the mountain were met—also many women on foot, some quite old and with small feet, trudging down with the aid of a stick. As he ascended higher there were splendid views up narrow valleys with well-wooded sides and a raging torrent coursing down them. Rain unfortunately came on and spoilt much of the enjoyment.

The monks (hou-sheng) of the lower class, fourteen in all, welcomed him at the Wan-nien-ssu monastery with great cordiality, and gave him some fine, big, clean rooms. And up there it was quite cool. In the afternoon he visited the famous bronze elephant, said by Baber to be the oldest cast bronze figure of any great size in the world. It stands about 12 feet high and is gilded over. Very well modelled, its thick legs stand on four bronze lotuses. It is surrounded by a wooden cage like in a zoo. It supports on its back a huge lotus on which sits a fine Buddha with a crown of glory.

The temple, which Baber says is, after the Great Wall, the oldest Chinese building in existence, has a square base. But by an ingenious arrangement of triangles, segments of circles and projections, it supports a dome. In a neighbouring chamber an old monk showed Pereira one of the four teeth of Buddha. It was a piece of ivory, evidently the molar of some mammoth.

On July 8 he ascended Mount Omei, 10,940 feet. There was a continual stream of pilgrims