

towards a temple. Advancing from the left, the party, on foot, is just issuing from a wild, mountainous region by a pass opening on to a verdant plain at the foot of the hills. An intervening river, running between low hilly banks, is spanned by a rather slender trestle bridge, over which four advanced members of the expedition (one wearing a conical Chinese hat) are cautiously crossing. In the foreground a camel, laden with gifts for the shrine, is led by a man towards the stream, probably to a ford, the bridge being too slight to sustain so much weight. Behind follow others with a group of ponies, one man in the foreground wearing a Chinese hat similar to that of the man on the bridge. He and the four persons with him fold their hands in reverence as the sacred building comes within their view. The temple or shrine which is doubtless the immediate goal of the pilgrims is a timber-framed building of Chinese architecture, with boldly projecting eaves supported on triple brackets, and comprises a central block flanked by adjoining wings of slightly less lofty elevation, all roofed with tiles. It stands within a quadrangular walled enclosure, and is placed well back, leaving a spacious forecourt between it and the wide entrance gateway facing it, and giving access to the enclosure.

The surrounding plain or *bāg* affords amenities for those who minister at the shrine or for visiting worshippers. Varieties of trees give grateful shade to those desiring rest for contemplation or agreeable conditions for discussion. Two persons under a tree, one kneeling and gesticulating with his right hand and facing a seated companion, seem to be in lively debate. Another pair farther to the right are more sedate, and have wisely provided themselves with a rug to sit upon. On the other side of the enclosure is a man dressed in a short tunic, standing under a tree. Near the end of the picture a label, provided for the usual Chinese inscription, is blank.

It is a pleasing scene, such as might have been witnessed when Buddhist priests and envoys from China made their arduous pilgrimages to the sacred places of Śakyamuni's teaching and to the hallowed relic shrines in northern India, halting frequently at the many monasteries, where they were courteously received and hospitably entertained.

The perished condition of the surface of the picture is deplorable and makes recognition of detail difficult and in many parts impossible. The work seems to have been executed by Chinese painters, whose pigments and technique were not quite suitable for mural painting.