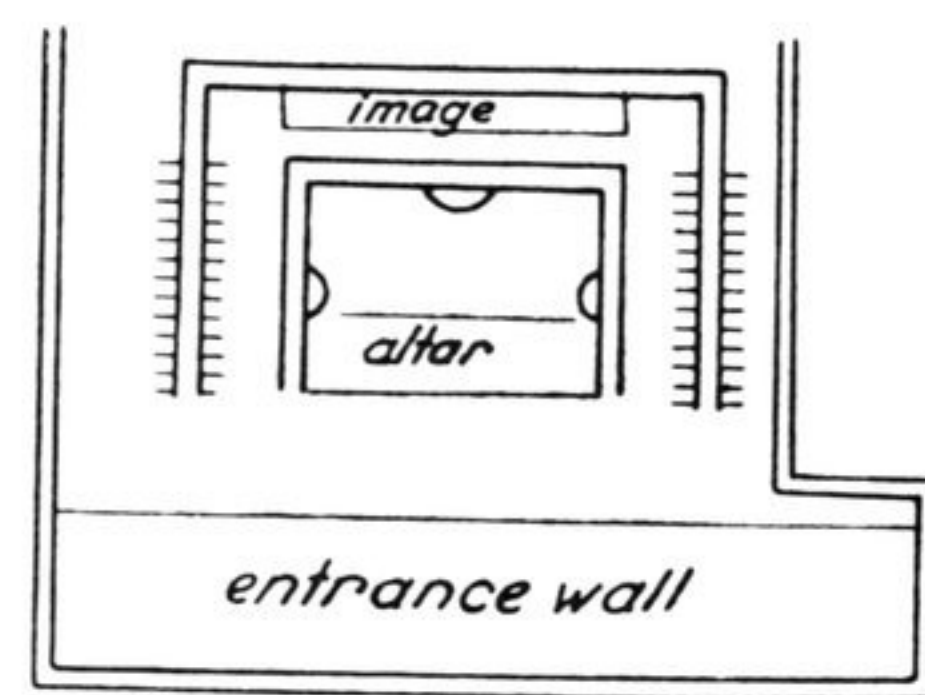




*Temple with lions and incense burner of cast-iron near the southern gate at Tsimusa.*

About 2 1/2 miles to the SW there is an interesting temple on the edge of the northernmost spur of the mountains, where many Chinese from surrounding places (including Urumchi) congregate annually. The building was put up recently to replace one that was destroyed during the last revolt. It looks well high up on the slope, painted white and embellished with dark wooden columns supporting the roof with its curved corners. The mighty pile of mountains with its white shoulders forms the most striking background imaginable. A decorative incense burner in the form of a lion stands in the brick courtyard between the main building and its two wings. In the temple itself there are two horseshoe vaults, one, enclosing the other, something like this:

One wall of the back of the larger vault is occupied by »the god of sleep», a giant burkhan, 10 paces long, lying on his side. It is of clay and coloured, the head being black with curly negro hair and a large knob in the middle of the forehead. Nine figures of Buddha, about 1 metre in height, are placed in niches along the outer wall on either side of the side entrances of the vault. In the inner vault there are 3 large images of Buddha in 3 recesses in the wall.



The walls in both vaults are also decorated with hundreds of small painted clay images of Buddha, placed on wooden sockets. Some of these are missing, others have been replaced by new ones. They are supposed to make women fruitful and are therefore much sought after by childless women. The temple takes its name »the temple of a thousand burkhans» (I tchiän fu tung miao) from the great number of Buddha images. The temple, which is new, was built as a shelter for the burkhans (including the large one) that survived the Dungan revolt. The local population assured me that the large image was of stone and very