

Last night I was present at a service in the temple, in which my quarters are situated. Only one Chinese lama, clad in yellow, officiated, standing with hands folded for prayer at the height of his breast. He wore an oblong, black cap. Ten musicians were placed in two rows facing each other, 5 on either side of the altar. They were dressed in blue. The instruments included large, hollow wooden balls, with an opening like a monstrous mouth and painted red with some gilding, 3 small brass cymbals suspended on two short, parallel sticks, short clarinettes and a peculiar instrument consisting of a bundle of narrow pipes of different lengths with a few holes on the sides and a mouthpiece like that of a trumpet. The music was extremely monotonous, but not unpleasant, as Chinese music often is. At a distance its plaintive, curiously melancholy notes might be taken for a choir of women or boys. When I heard them in the silent evening on my veranda, they created a certain mood. The temple was full of praying Mongolians, Tanguts and Buriats. Wrinkled old men's faces, Mongolian women with bald heads drooping under silver brooches and corals, Tanguts with one shoulder bared, gnarled hands lifted in supplication, backs bowed with age and trouble, tottering steps, deep obeisances, all to the eternal repetition of the same heartrending melancholy tones of the clarinettes. Occasionally the music ceased. The lama raised his hands and murmured a prayer. The congregation raised their hands high above their heads and cast themselves full-length on the ground, touching it with their foreheads, and the music resounded once more. The broad stairs outside were thronged with people. A wide wooden floor had been laid to enable the people to kneel more easily. It was polished smooth by diligent worshippers. It was all reverent, but the curious mixture of Chinese and nomadic people prevented my having the same complete impression as in Tibet or among the Mongolians.

Among the temples I visited Lohu sy with 3 temples built in parallel lines behind each other. In the first Wang shui pusa, approximately lifesize, was seated with a large gilded semicircle behind his head. A great many images were placed in front of him. Four individuals were placed beside him, two on either side. Along each side-wall there were 8 seated gilded idols. Above them, hundreds of niches with small statuettes. Masses of banners, ribbons, bronze urns, silver ornaments, images, emblems etc. The back wall of the second temple was occupied by 3 large seated images. A few smaller images were arranged on the gilded halo behind each of them, forming a frame, as it were, round the main figure. 6 standing images, 3 on either side, formed two short rows in front of the central figure which represents the god Shui-chan-fu. Banners, emblems and other ornaments complete the furnishing. — The third temple contains the god «Abita-fu» in three gilded images, sitting with their backs to each other in a lotus blossom. This group revolves on its axis, while the petals open and close. At the foot of the flower there is first a ring of individuals, about 1/2 m in height, who seem to stretch upwards to the flower; further off in two rows facing the flower a number of similar figures, but all equipped with crowns.

Sientung sy lies very beautifully with 2 parallel temples built at the foot of the hills, on which the Dalai Lama lives. At the end of the temple courtyard a dense mass of temples, stairs, towers etc. climbs a good way up the slope. Among them a tower, about 14 feet high,