SUMMER PALACE AND LAMA TEMPLES IN JEHOL

KOKUSAI BUNKA SHINKOKAI
Sliuce-gate and Ta-hung-t’ai
(Main Red Bldg.) P’u-t’o-tsung-ch’eng Miao
or Potala
SUMMER PALACE
AND
LAMA TEMPLES
IN
JEHOL

by

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Dr. Tadashi Sekino (b. 1868) was graduated from the Tokyo Imperial University in 1895. After graduation he held many important government positions connected with architecture, including his teaching at his Alma Mater from 1901 to 1928, when he was honored with the title of Professor Emeritus. He was sent abroad to study on two occasions and also travelled widely in China and Korea, making architectural studies.

He is the foremost Japanese scholar in the history of Oriental architecture and architectural decorative art, and has made many valuable contributions in these fields. His foremost works are: “The ancient Capital Nara, and Its Imperial Palace”; “Pictorial Album of Ancient Remains of Chosen” (1915–29) nine volumes; “Buddhist Monuments in China” (1925–28) and “Jehol” (1934) four volumes.

He visited Jehol twice during the period 1933–34, and spent over three weeks in that city so little known to outsiders.
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I

POSITION OF THE CITY OF JEHOL

UNTIL about two years ago the road to the city of Jehol was very bad, and means of communication quite undeveloped, but, since the present state of order and security has been restored, the government has built a railroad from Chao-yang to Ling-yüan. From there to the city of Jehol, extending a distance of one hundred miles, a fine road has been built, and we can get there by automobile in a day. It is expected that the railroad will be extended to that city within this year, so that when this is completed access will be greatly improved, although we can now fly from the city of Chin-chou to Jehol in only two hours. Still another way to that city from the south is by a bus which runs daily between Peiping and Jehol. Thus, you can now reach that
city, hitherto little known to outsiders, with considerable ease and security.

I firmly believe that the city of Jehol is the most beautiful spot in that vast country, Manchoukuo, and with improvement in communications with the outside world, that city becoming a favorite place for visitors and tourists, will be looked upon as Nikko of Japan, Agra of India, and Alhambra of Spain.

II

HISTORY OF THE CITY OF JEHOLO

In olden days the site of the city was covered by a thick forest, and wild animals and game such as tigers, panthers, deer and rabbits were found in large numbers. From about the sixteenth year of his reign (1677) Emperor K'ang-hsi (1662-1772) used to hunt game there every year, and he loved the scenery so much that in the forty-second year of his reign (1703) he started the construction of his summer palace, which was completed five years later. From that day on throughout the Emperor Ch'ien-lung's rule this palace played a very important role in the history of the Empire.
SKETCH MAP OF JEHOL
Of Jehol Emperor K'ang-hsi is said to have remarked, "I have been beyond the River Yang-tsekiang on the south, and as far as the Province of Shen-si on the west; to the north beyond Lung-sha, the Mongolian desert; and as far as Chang-po Shan, or Long White Mountain, to the east; but never have I found a spot so beautiful as this. At the same time it is so near the capital, Peking, that I can visit back and forth with ease. By making use of those beautiful hills and ravines I wish to build a villa to spend the summers there every year." Thus the palace came into existence and was called Pi-shu Shan-chuang, the Summer Palace.

He spent every summer there with his August mother, the Empress Dowager, and chose thirty-six scenic spots in the Imperial Park, composing poems on them himself as well as having his followers do the same.

In the fifty-second year of his reign (1713) he had reached his sixtieth year. To celebrate the occasion the Mongolian tribes built for him two temples, P'u-jên Ssū and P'u-shan Ssū at the east of the palace.

The next Emperor, Yung-chêng (1723-35), did not make use of the palace at all. However, the following Emperor, Ch'ien-lung (1736-95), also loved
this place and spent every summer there. He chose thirty-six other beautiful spots besides those of his grandfather, Emperor K‘ang-hsi, and likewise composed poems on each of them.

He built a temple, Yung-yū Ssū at the north-east corner of the Park in the sixteenth year of his reign (1751) with a magnificent pagoda of nine stories, two hundred and fifty feet high. He also built in the Park nine more Lama and Taoist temples—Pi-fēng Ssū, Chan-t’an-lin, Chiu-yūn Ssū, Chu-Yüan-Ssu, Kuang-yüan Kung, etc. In addition to these, he built many towers and pavilions, such as Yen-yu Lou, Wên-yüan and others, besides Wên-chin Ko, a library to store one of the seven sets of the Ssū-k‘u-ch‘üan-shu, a large collection of Chinese books, ancient and contemporary. Furthermore, he had built, outside the palace wall on the east side of the River Jehol, two temples, P‘u-lo Ssū and An-yuan Miao, so-called Ili Miao from its Ili style of architecture; on the north-east the temples P‘u-yu Ssū and P‘u-ning Ssū or Ta-fo Ssū the name given because of the large and beautiful Avalokiteśvara there; on the north beyond the Lion Valley at the foot of the hill the temples Hsū-mi-fu-shou Miao or Hsin Kung, P‘u-t‘o-tsung-ch‘eng Miao or Potala, Shu-hsiang Ssū,
Kaung-an Ssū and Lo-han T'ang (arhat hall). All are of Tibetan style, and they are so huge and magnificent that nowhere in all China or Mongolia can there be found anything approaching their grandeur. To be sure, the reign of Emperor Ch'ien-lung marked the zenith of the Ch'ing Dynasty, just as that of Louis XIV marked the highest point in France.

In 1708, the forty-fifth year of his reign, he had reached his seventieth year, and since at this time he was at the very height of his power, the celebration of his birthday anniversary was held in great pomp and splendour. However, with his death fifteen years later the power of the Ch'ing Dynasty began to decline.

The next Emperor, Chia-ch'ing, only occasionally visited the Palace. Later when Peking was occupied by foreign powers, Emperor Hsien-fêng found a refuge there. This happened to be the last of the Imperial stays in this city, and things had to be left to weather time as best they could. Still, while the Ch'ing Dynasty lasted, considerable care was given to the upkeep of the Palaces and the Park as well as the Temples.

But, in 1912 when a change in the form of government was brought about, the Palaces under the
new State were used by military commanders as their stations, and the buildings began to deteriorate badly. During this period some of the buildings were not only carelessly used, but many of them were even torn apart, and innumerable trees were cut down. It is said that one particular building was razed and the materials used to build an opium refinery in the Park. Furthermore, those magnificent temples outside the Palace wall had lost their caretakers and were left with no income. Here the trees were cut down by thousands and buildings demolished for their materials also. Then, too, many images and pictures of Buddha were sold or carried away with the natural result that the temples suffered immeasurable losses. This sad misfortune was, however, not confined to the temples, the same misfortune having befallen the Palaces, one of which was used as a storeroom for ammunition. Expensive furniture, manuscripts written by the Emperors K‘ang-hsi and Ch‘ieng-lung, and many valuable treasures were also carried away.

At present the Manchoukuo Government is collecting them with the object of exhibiting them as national treasures at the Museum in Mukden when it is completed. Furthermore the Government has
made a decision to take all necessary steps to preserve for posterity the cultural remains of the Ch'ing Dynasty. Already an office has been established at Jehol to commence activity from the coming spring with an appropriation of ¥5,000,000 for repair work.

III.

THE PALACE

Next, as to the topography of the Park, it has hills and mountains on the north and west; and open land to the south and east. As it is surrounded by high walls eight miles long, you can easily imagine the size of the Park. There are springs within the grounds and the water is artistically used in making a lake, ponds, marshes and small streams. On the south side of the grounds there are three Palaces standing east to west. Of the three, the West Palace was used by the Emperor himself, the Middle Palace by the Empress Dowager, and the East Palace for social functions. Of course, the West or the Principal Palace is the most important one and includes many subordinate buildings. It fully gives the fitting impression of a summer resort, but instead of
being decorated with the deep colors characteristic of Chinese buildings, the wood-work of the Principal Palace is left unpainted. This appeals more to our Japanese taste. In the East Palace there is a four-story building called Ch‘ing-yin Ko, surrounded with two-story galleries, where dramatic performances were given. At the farthest point in the rear of the Palace grounds there was large building called Ch‘in-chêng Tien, which was destroyed by fire two years ago. Fortunately the other buildings were all saved. The Park with its palaces, towers, and temples built at various elevations amongst the dense bushes and groves presents a most attractive sight. It is quite unlike ordinary Chinese gardens, which call for an artificial treatment of nature. The famous Imperial Gardens of Wan-shou Shan and those of Peiping are examples of the latter type. The special feature of the Jehol Park is that its natural form is preserved above all things, even at great cost, and in this respect it much resembles Japanese gardens. The only other garden of this type in China was the famous one in Peiping known as Yuan-ming-yüan, but its scale is much smaller and it has no variation of hills and ravines. Unfortunately this was destroyed by fire some seventy years ago when Pe-
king was attacked by foreign armies. In the Park there are hundreds of deer roaming at large, and in the water, spanned by rustic bridges, there are silver carp and many other kinds of fish lazily swimming about. In the trees exotic birds enhance the beauty of the Park with their songs. At the south of the Palace lies the city of Jehol, and at the east, across the River Jehol, is a mountain range, at the foot of which are four large temples. On the north again there are, across Lion Valley, important temples, such as, Hsü-mi-fu-shou Miao, or Hsin Kung, P‘u-t‘o-tsung-ch‘êng Miao, or Potala, with a range of mountains at the back, while at the northeast there towers another temple, Ta-fo Ssü. Taking all these magnificent buildings in their attractive environment, there is nothing lacking to make this spot one of the most beautiful places in the world.

IV.

THE LAMA TEMPLES

At the foot of the mountain east of the Palace there are two temples, P‘u-jên Ssü and P‘u-shan Ssü, built in the fifty-second year of Emperor K‘ang-
hsi's reign. The rest of the temples now remaining were built by Emperor Ch'ien-lung. On the north-east of Pu-shan Ssū are P'ü-lo Ssū, built in the thirty-first year of the Ch'ien-lung era (1766), and on the north of it Ili Miao, built in the twenty-ninth year (1764). The latter was modelled after the Ili style since it was built to commemorate the event of the territory of Ili, located some 1500 miles to the north-west of Jehol, having become subject to the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1759. Hence its style is quite distinct from ordinary Chinese architecture. Then, at the northeast of the Palace are two more temples—also at the foot of the mountain—namely, P'ü-yu Ssū and P'ü-ning Ssū. The former used to be a very large temple, but it is now damaged beyond repair. The latter was built in the twenty-first year of the reign of Ch'ien-lung (1756) in memory of the restoration of peace in Ili, and was constructed on an immense scale after the fashion of the San-mo-yeh Miao of Tibet. There is a huge building called the Buddha Hall, at the rear of which, on a terrace, stands a magnificent edifice called Ta-ch'êng Ko towering into the sky. This Ta-ch'êng Ko is a large structure, five stories high, having a main, square roof with an independent unit at each corner. Inside, standing in
the center of the building, there is a huge Bodhisattva Kwan-yin or Avalokiteśvara. It is carved of wood, stands seventy two feet high, and may safely be claimed the largest image of its kind in the whole world. This huge Buddha has thirty-six arms in all, and each one of them is about twenty-five feet long without visible means of support so that it is really surprising how they all stay on as they do. This Bodhisattva, not only for its size, but for its proper proportion, good pose and beautiful face, must be admired as a piece of artistic workmanship. This may certainly be taken as one of the finest art examples of the Ch'ing Dynasty.

Around this Ta-ch'êng Ko there are four pagodas of different colours and shapes, besides many other smaller buildings, but all of them are of the Tibetan style.

At the north of the Palace, across the Lion Valley, there are more temples. The two largest ones are Hsü-mi-fu-shou Miao or Hsin Kung on the east, and P'u-t'o-tsung-chêng Miao or Potala on the west. The former was built in the forty-fifth year of Ch'ien-lung's reign (1780) for the occasion of the Panchen Lama's special visit from Tibet to celebrate the Emperor's seventieth year. This is also of the Tibe-
tan style. The latter was built in the thirty-fifth year of his reign (1770) in memory of the restoration of Tibet to the Ch‘ing Dynasty, and was copied from the palace of the chief priest, the Dalai Lama, in Lassa, Tibet. These two are the largest temples in Jehol. The former temple includes a three story building, Ta-hung-t’ai (Main Red Building) with a beautiful pavilion at the inner court, and has at the rear a tall ceramic pagoda which towers high into the air. The latter has a gorgeous ten story building with the so-called Golden Pavilion in its inner-court. This Golden Pavilion is a wonderful masterpiece of architecture, roofed with gilded copper tiles and shows such painstaking workmanship that it has no equal in any part of China. For this reason, a faithful reproduction of this pavilion was erected in the grounds of the World Fair at Chicago in 1933.

When you look at these temples from some distance, you will be impressed with their resemblance to a well-situated Western cities. I have travelled extensively in India and the Western countries, but have never been more deeply impressed nor felt more ecstasy than when I found these two Lamaseries.

I shall not take your time in describing these magnificent buildings in detail, but I might mention two
outstanding features. First of all, the buildings are adapted quite freely to fit the ground, and in this respect they differ from the characteristic Chinese construction adhering to the strict rules of symmetry which we find in all forms of their buildings, old or new, sacred temples or private dwellings. In these two temples, however, you will find no such influence exerted. Secondly, the temples are located in such a position that at the front, facing the south, there is a high rise leading up to the hills. In such a setting these groups of beautiful Tibetan buildings, with towers and pavilions of square, hexagonal and octagonal shapes in different colors present not only variety in appearance but really dazzle one's eyes with beauty and wonder.

As we go westward from these temples, we come to another, called Shu-hsiang Ssū. This temple, of purely Chinese style, was built in the thirty-ninth year of Ch‘ien-lung (1774) after the style of the temple in Wu-t‘ai Shan of Shan-sí Province. There is a huge Buddha Hall which contains an octagonal pavilion two stories high with an image of Mañjuśri within mounted on a wooden lion.

Farther westward from this temple we find the remains of another, called Kuang-an Ssū. This was
built by Emperor Ch‘ien-lung in memory of the celebration of the seventieth birthday of his August mother, the Empress Dowager. Unfortunately it was destroyed after the Ch‘ing Dynasty.

Still farther to the west there is a temple called Lo-han T‘ang (built in 1774) which awes and impresses the spectator by its collection of five hundred life-size Arhats. These statues of the disciples of Buddha are solemnly arranged in labrynthine ailes, and each, being highly individualistic in posture and facial expression ranging from passive benevolence to lively humor is worthy of painstaking examination!

As the last of the chain there is the site of a large palace called the Lions Court, where Emperor Ch‘ien-lung was born, but now, having met the fate of the Kuang-an Ssū, only its ruins remain.

This brings us to the end of the temples. To summarize briefly, first, the Potala and Hsin Kung temples are purely of Tibetan style; secondly, Ta-fo Ssū, too, is of Tibetan style and has the largest wooden carved image of Bodhisattva in the world; thirdly, Ili Miao is copied from Ili architecture, and Shuhsiang Ssū and some others, the Chinese style. Thus you can readily see that there is a wide collection of
different styles of architecture which adds much to the visitor's interest. Furthermore, finished in various colors and decorated with intricate carvings, their interiors are so beautiful that they are almost beyond description. This leads me to the conclusion that the Lama Temples in Jehol occupy a most conspicuous and outstanding position in Chinese architecture.

It is most deplorable from the standpoint of world culture that such valuable treasures have been so long neglected, and left to weather the storms of time. To aggravate the situation the objects which have been taken away or destroyed are, in most cases, irreplaceable.

Fortunately, however, the Manchoukuo Government has already undertaken to preserve and restore these remnants, which would otherwise, in the course of a few years, be permanently lost to the world.
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All illustrations are cited from the "Jehol" by Dr. T. Sekino and Mr. T. Takeshima, Published by the ZAUHO PRESS, Hongo, Tokyo.
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