

straight pine. Around me are open patches, where the sun gets in and goes to sleep, and the winds come so finely sifted that they are as soft as swan's down. Above me towers a mountain eighteen hundred feet high; below me is a deep ravine. Crimson, blue and white flowers are seen everywhere, while richly-coloured birds soar aloft, and with one strong note swoop down into the hospitable tree-tops.

Here is situated the celebrated monastery 'Clear Water,' which dates as far back as A.D. 265, founded in honour of Puhsien, the 'wide-spreading sage,' who is believed to have come from the spirit mountains of India upon a white elephant. Vast multitudes of pilgrims come every year to this spot. Of the pilgrims I saw fully one-half were women, and they as a rule were above forty years of age. I also observed a curious custom they have of travelling in companies of seven. The rich and poor walk together, and kneel in the same circle around the altars of their gods. Here comes a queenly dowager with retinue of servants, her head adorned with gold and pearls, and heavy gold rings in her ears. An ornamented head-dress of satin folds tightly about her glossy black hair. Her dress, which descends nearly to her lily-flowered shoes, is of brocaded silk or satin, with a thin jacket of rich material. The poor are clad in homespun blue, green or red cotton stuff. Groups of tired women sat chatting and drinking tea at the tables. As I pass them their voices are hushed as if by magic; their uplifted teacups are held suspended; consternation is depicted upon their faces as they gaze upon the strange apparition. I sit down at one of the square tables beyond them, lay aside my staff like a veritable pilgrim, take off my helmet—the same one I wore four years ago when leaving Toronto—wipe the drops from my brow and survey my surroundings.

"What gigantic form is that which towers up before me? I am in the presence of a bronze image, once covered with gold. It is an image of Omīto-Buddha, and dates back to the tenth or twelfth century. This Omīto is by all odds the most popular of Buddhas with the Chinese. He has several titles, as 'Eternal,' 'Boundless Light,' 'Sovereign Teacher of the Western Heaven,' 'The All-Merciful,' 'The All-Sympathizing.' I have seen worshippers go the round of all the gods in a temple and repeat without intermission 'Omīto-foo.' If a man is particularly good and kind to others he is sometimes spoken of as an Omīto-foo man. This god is believed to take great delight in helping mortals in their troubles and able to save humanity from the endless cycles of trans-migration, and to give safe transit across the high-billowed bitter ocean into the happy land.