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A HISTORY OF EARLY CHINESE PAINTING

VOLUME ONE



A HISTORY OF EARLY CHINESE PAINTING

BY

OSVALD SIRÉN

VOLUME ONE:

FROM THE HAN TO THE BEGINNING OF THE SUNG PERIOD

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Dedicated to
H.R.H. GUSTAF ADOLF
Crown Prince of Sweden



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PREFACE

This book has a longer story than can be told here, but a few words about its origin and gradual development may, however, not be out of place.

The cause of it was primarily the spiritual appeal exercised by certain kinds of Chinese painting which seemed to me to express in symbols of nature or in rhythm of brush-work much that I had felt only as an implication in the works of early Italian painters. It brought home to me a new conception of painting as a spiritual activity, its power to convey, without any intellectual elaboration, impressions of unseen realities.

My first contact with Chinese painting, which took place nearly twenty years ago in the Boston Museum and in the collection of Charles L. Freer in Detroit, became thus of decisive importance for my further relations with the subject. The knowledge that it brought me may not have been of a very wide or inclusive kind, but it attuned me to some of the essential æsthetic features of this art and gave me a *point d'appui* for further studies. When I started for the Far East, I was to some extent prepared, or at least provided with a great enthusiasm, and I missed no opportunities, particularly during my first two protracted visits to China and Japan (in 1918 and 1922), to penetrate deeper into this alluring forest where the individual trees seemed numberless. But the more my studies were directed towards the historical aspects of the material, the more I realized the extraordinary difficulties that it presented for a presentation in accordance with principles of European history of art. Setting aside the serious difficulties of the language, it was evident that the standards of classification were rather vague, that copies often were passed as originals, and that a few great names were abundantly used, at least for the benefit of unlearned foreigners. With the growing knowledge came a stronger realization of the fragmentary state of the still existing materials and of the disproportion between them and the historical records.

When finally, after a third visit to the Far East (1929-1930), I began to write a short review of the development of Chinese painting, my intention was simply to discuss certain important aspects of this art and to dwell as little as possible on the historical traditions, but I soon discovered that this would not go very far to improve our knowledge about Chinese painting, particularly during its early periods. Consequently I tried to penetrate a little deeper into the native sources of historical and æsthetic information. I found that they contained material of the greatest importance for the reconstruction of the early periods of Chinese painting and that the partial discrepancy between these and the existing paintings made them by no means less important for my purpose.

This caused a gradual modification in the plan of the book; it swelled out beyond the proposed limits through the steadily increasing historical material

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drawn from native sources, and it soon became evident that the whole thing could not be compressed into two volumes. A line had to be drawn, at least for the time being, at the end of the Yüan period. The development of the work along purely historical lines may to some extent have thrown my original intentions of concentrating on the stylistic evolution into the background, but if something of this was lost or obscured, there was a compensation in the added amount of historical information. This seemed, after all, worth while, because all attempts to draw definite lines of æsthetic classification may prove futile before the native sources have been properly studied.

It is true that a certain amount of work along these lines has been done by prominent sinologues, such as Professor H. A. Giles and Mr. A. Waley, whose well-known publications may, indeed, be called indispensable to every student of Chinese painting, but however much they contain of historical information, they are more or less detached from the artistic aspect of the subject, i.e. the still existing paintings by or after the masters mentioned in the records. Nor should we omit to mention here with gratitude the critical contributions to the history of Chinese painting made by Professor Paul Pelliot and Professor O. Kummel in their articles concerning various painters, though these are mostly of a biographical nature and of more limited scope.

The work of all these and other Western scholars (whose contributions are mentioned in the Bibliography) is very valuable as far as it goes, but it covers only minor areas within the large field of Chinese painting. Most of the native sources and much of the artistic material have as yet not been critically sifted and scrutinized. Nor do I pretend to have done much in that respect, but I have placed before my readers a larger amount of original information concerning the painters and periods under discussion than has been done in previous publications and combined it, whenever possible, with the artistic remains. In fact, it has been my endeavour to treat the history of early Chinese painting mainly as a discussion of the stylistic development centred around certain leading personalities whose individual characteristics could be, at least to some extent, defined on the basis of still existing paintings and to use the historical records mainly as a support or a complement for this purpose. The painters whose artistic activities could not be traced in any pictures known to me, whether originals, copies or imitations, have been left out or only briefly mentioned. It is evident that the value of the copies and imitations after lost paintings is very unequal; some are quite dead repetitions of classical motives, others high-class works of art, but whatever their individual merits may be, they serve us in the first place as records of lost masterpieces. The weakness and strength of Chinese painting were both most closely connected with its faithfulness to definite traditions of style inaugurated by the great masters, and in so far as the copies can help us to grasp these they have certainly their place in a history of Chinese painting.

But no attempt to piece together the scanty remains of early Chinese painting

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would suffice to form a basis for a historical presentation of the subject if it were not supported by the records of contemporary or somewhat later, though well-informed critics. Some of these writers were prominent connoisseurs with a wide experience and a considerable faculty of characterization. I have quoted them extensively whenever their words seemed to help in the understanding of some artistic personality, and in doing so I have tried to convey their meaning in English without departing more than necessary from the Chinese mode of expression. I am fully aware that many of my translations could be improved, but I trust that they will serve their purpose; it seemed to me incumbent to keep to my own understanding of the Chinese records even when the same passages had been rendered into English by earlier translators. Translations of this kind become always more or less interpretations, and in trying to understand the artists, we must try to grasp the meaning of their verbal expressions or those of their friends and followers. The most valuable assistance in this respect was offered to me by Professor Pelliot, who kindly corrected some passages translated from *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi* and Kuo Hsi's treatise. Only some minor quotations are borrowed from the well-known translations by Giles and Waley and they are clearly marked as such in the text.

The publication of this book would not have been possible without the kind support of a number of collectors and museum officials who have facilitated my studies of the works in their possession or in their care and in some cases supplied me with photographs or other reproductions. The names of the former appear in the text, and it may thus not be necessary to enumerate them here; among the latter I should like to mention in particular Mr. John E. Lodge, Director of the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, and Mr. K. Tomita, Curator of the department of Far Eastern Art in the Boston Museum, as well as the Directors of the Palace Museum in Peking, who through the intermediation of Mr. Tung-li Yüan supplied me with a number of valuable photographs, and the authorities of the National Museum in Peking, who allowed me to have some of the pictures in their museum photographed. Important services have also been rendered me at various periods by my friends in Japan, who have made it possible for me to study the Chinese paintings in their museums, temples and private collections. I feel particularly indebted to Professor S. Taki for many services in past years and for his kind permission to reproduce pictures which have appeared in the *Kokka*, to Mr. T. Akiyama for similar permission in regard to pictures published in the *Sogen meigwashu*, and to Mr. J. Harada for obtaining photographs of several important pictures in Japan.

The Chinese index at the end of Vol. II contains the characters for all the names and terms which may not be familiar to the average student or which appear more or less incomprehensible without their Chinese equivalents. But I have not repeated in the index the names of the authors and the books which are listed in the Bibliography at the head of Vol. I, nor have I loaded it with

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comparatively familiar names that can be easily identified in historical handbooks, as for instance of emperors, periods, well-known places, etc. The English transliterations are according to the Wade-system, except in the names of provinces and particularly well-known places (like Peking, Sian-fu, etc.) for which the familiar spelling of the Chinese post office has been adopted. In the transcriptions of the Japanese names, which are included in the English index, I have also allowed myself certain concessions to popular custom. Valuable assistance was given me in the establishing of the Chinese index by Dr. Lionel Giles, and Mr. Ch'i Ts'ang-t'ien, while my experienced friend M. Jean Buhot has helped me with the English index and also with the reading of the proofs.

The production of the plates of the book was made possible through a substantial grant from Humanistiska Fonden and the personal interest of Dr. Axel Lagrelius, Director of A. Börtzell's Tryckeriaktiebolag in Stockholm, where they were printed. As this partly took place in the absence of the author, a few minor mistakes have crept into the titles, but they are corrected in the lists of the plates. The text was printed in England, and for this part I have enjoyed the friendly co-operation of Harry Lawrence of the Medici Society, who assisted me with the proof-reading and smoothed out many practical difficulties. My indebtedness to all these kind and helpful friends is very great; if it can be requited, it will be only through the success of the book for which they too have exerted themselves.

OSVALD SIRÉN.

LIDINGÖ, SWEDEN.

October, 1932.

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PLATE

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2. Engraved designs from Hsiao T'ang Shan, Shantung (before A.D. 129). After Chavannes, *Mission Archéologique.*
3. Engraved designs from the Sacrificial Hall of Chu Wei. Chin-hsiang, Shantung. After O. Fisher, *Die Malerie der Han Dynastie.*
4. Animal Fight (one half). Painted brick slab. *Boston Museum.*
5. Men in Conversation. Painted brick slab. *Boston Museum.*
6. A Man with a Baby and other Figures. Painted brick slab. *Boston Museum.*
7. Young Ladies. Painted brick slab. *Boston Museum.*
8. Ku K'ai-chih, Lady Pan refuses to ride with the Emperor. *British Museum.*
9. Ku K'ai-chih, A Landscape with a Hunter. *British Museum.*
10. Ku K'ai-chih, A Man seated at a Lady's Bed. *British Museum.*
11. Ku K'ai-chih, A Husband with his Family. *British Museum.*
12. Ku K'ai-chih, A Lady listening to her Husband's Reproaches. *British Museum.*
13. Ku K'ai-chih, The Instructress writing before two Ladies. *British Museum.*
14. After Chang Sêng-yu, Brushing the Elephant. *Freer Gallery, Washington.*
15. A Donor's Family. Tomb-painting (V-VI cent.) Shinchî-do. Korea. After Chôsen Koseki Zûfu.
16. Winged Dragon. Tomb-painting (V-VI cent.) Guken-ri. Korea. *Photo O. Sirén.*
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18. Early Wall-paintings at Tun Huang. 1. Cave 110; end of V cent. 2. Cave 135; beginning of VI cent. 3. Cave 120 N; beginning of VI cent. After Pelliot, *Les Grottes de Touen Huang.*
19. Fresco-paintings from Kara-khodja (VII-VIII cent.). *Berlin Museum.*
20. Vaiśravaṇa after Wei-ch'ih I-seng. 1. Early copy. *Palace Museum, Peking.* 2. Late copy. *Freer Gallery, Washington.*
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39. Copies after Yen Li-pên's pictures: 1. The Tribute Bearers. *National Museum, Peking.*
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43. Copy after Li Ssü-hsün. Landscape scroll. *Freer Gallery, Washington.*
44. Li Chao-tao, attributed to. A Summer Palace. *Boston Museum.*
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50. Copy after Wu Tao-tzû. The Birth and Presentation of Buddha. Mr. T. Yamamoto. Tokyo. *Photo Peking.*
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63. Tai Sung. Water-buffaloes fighting. *National Museum, Peking.*
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65. Copy after Chang Hsüan, Women preparing Silk. *Boston Museum.*
66. Copy after Chang Hsüan, Women preparing Silk (second part). *Boston Museum.*
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69. Painting from a tomb at Kara-khodja. Early VIII cent. Museum, Delhi. *After the Burlington Magazine.*
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75. Shih K'o (?). "Two Patriarchs with their Minds in Harmony." Shōhōji. Kyoto. *After the Kokka Magazine.*
76. Huang Ch'üan. Cocks and Rose-Mallows. Part of a scroll. *Photo Otsuka.*
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- 89A. Kuan T'ung, Mountain Landscape. *Palace Museum, Peking. After Ku Kung Shu Hua Chi.*
90. Li Ch'êng, Travellers on Snowy Hills. *Boston Museum.*
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91. Hsü Tao-ning, Mountain Pass in Snow. *Palace Museum, Peking. After Ku Kung.*
92. Hsü Tao-ning, Mountain Landscape. *Mr. Wang Hêng-yung, Peking.*
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94. Tung Yüan, Part of the scroll: "A Clear Day in the Valley." *Boston Museum.*
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100. Fan K'uan, Snow by the River. *Boston Museum.*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

In my list of books I have included only such Chinese books which have been consulted for the present work. A full bibliography of Chinese books dealing with or referring to painting before the Ming period would include many more items, though hardly of great importance for the subject, as the later writers mostly repeat the information of their predecessors. Unfortunately, my knowledge of the Japanese literature on the subject is very limited, in so far as it has not been translated into Chinese or European languages, though I have had a certain number of Japanese articles specially translated for me at various times. The standard works of pictorial reproductions published in Japan are, however, to a large extent provided with English text. I have therefore included them as well as certain Japanese articles, known to me, in the list of foreign books, which otherwise contains the titles of English, French, and German publications devoted in part or entirely to Chinese painting. Several of them are popular books which cannot be used as sources of original information, but they may nevertheless be of interest to some readers. The titles of the books are often quoted in an abbreviated form in the footnotes, but they can be identified without difficulty in the Bibliography where the complete titles are given. Minor articles, which are not listed in the Bibliography, are quoted under their full titles in the notes and, if they are Chinese, their names can be identified in the Chinese Index at the end of Vol. II.

The *Chinese Books* are arranged in chronological order and accompanied, whenever possible, with indications as to their date of publication, but for the *Foreign Books* such an arrangement seemed rather impractical, and they are consequently listed in the usual alphabetical order.

I

Chinese Books

- Hsieh Ho 謝赫, *Ku Hua P'in Lu* 古畫品錄 (c. 500). Edit. Chin Tai Pi Shu 津逮秘書 and Wang Shih Hua Yüan 王氏畫苑 (see below).
- Yao Tsui 姚最, *Hsü Hua P'in* 續畫品 (before 557). Edit. as above.
- Li Ssü-chên 李嗣真, *Hsü Hua P'in Lu* 續畫品錄 (c. 689). Edit. as above.
- Wang Wei 王維, *Shan Shui Chüeh* 山水訣 (probably made up in the North Sung period). Edit. Wang Yu-ch'êng Chi and Wang Shih Hua Yüan.
- Chang Yen-yüan 張彥遠, *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi* 歷代名畫記 (finished 847). Edit. Chin Tai Pi Shu and Wang Shih Hua Yüan.
- Yen Ts'ung 彥悰, *Hou Hua Lu* 後畫錄 (preface dated 635; the original book was lost, the present one made up from quotations and incomplete). Edit. Chin Tai Pi Shu and Wang Shih Hua Yüan.
- Chu Ching-hsüan 朱景玄, *T'ang Ch'ao Ming Hua Lu* 唐朝名畫錄 (composed at the end of T'ang period). Edit. Wang Shih Hua Yüan.
- Huang Hsiu-fu 黃休復, *I-chou Ming Hua Lu* 益州名畫錄 (written second half tenth century, edited by Li Tien, 1005). Edit. Wang Shih Hua Yüan and modern reprint.
- Liu Tao-ch'un 劉道醇, *Shêng Ch'ao Ming Hua P'ing* 聖朝名畫評 (written first half of eleventh century). Edit. Wang Shih Hua Yüan.
- Liu Tao-ch'un 劉道醇, *Wu Tai Ming Hua Pu I* 五代名畫補遺 (preface by Ch'ên Hsün-chih, dated 1059). Edit. Wang Shih Hua Yüan.
- Kuo Jo-hsü 郭若虛, *T'u Hua Chien Wên Chih* 圖畫見聞志 (finished 1074). Edit. Chin Tai Pi Shu and modern reprint, Shanghai, c. 1920.
- Kuo Hsi 郭熙, *Lin Ch'üan Kao Chih* 林泉高致 (compiled and edited by his son, Kuo Ssü 郭思, c. 1100). Edit. Wang Shih Hua Yüan.
- Mi Fei (1051-1107) 米芾, *Hua Shih* 畫史. Edit. Chin Tai Pi Shu and Wang Shih Hua Yüan.
- Su Tung-p'o (1036-1101) 蘇東坡, *Ch'üan Chi* 全集, vol. 70 (colophons), and also his poems with comments by Wang Shih-p'êng (c. 1130-75).

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- Tung Yu 董道, *Kuang-ch'üan Hua Po* 廣川畫跋 (colophons written in the reign of Hui Tsung, 1101-25, edited later). Edit. Wang Shih Hua Yüan.
- Hsüan-ho Hua P'u 宣和畫譜 (the catalogue of Emperor Hui Tsung's collection, probably compiled about 1120). Edit. Chin Tai Pi Shu.
- Ching Hao 荆浩, *Pi Fa Chi* 筆法記 (made up probably at the end of the North Sung period from records about Ching Hao). Edit. Wang Shih Hua Yüan.
- Li Ch'êng 李成, *Shan Shui Ch'üeh* 山水訣 (probably composed by Li Ch'êng-sou 李澄叟, whose treatise, *Hua Shan Shui Ch'üeh*, dated 1221, contains practically the same material besides a general conclusion). Edit. Wang Shih Hua Yüan.
- Têng Ch'un 鄧椿, *Hua Chi* 畫繼 (completed 1167; biographical notes and discussions of paintings). Edit. Chin Tai Pi Shu and Wang Shih Hua Yüan.
- Yang Wu-chiu 楊无咎, *Hua-kuang, Mei P'u* 華光梅譜 (a compilation, at least in part by Yang Wu-chiu, middle of twelfth century, who may have used some earlier records). Edit. Mei Shu Ts'ung Shu 美術叢書.
- T'ang Hou 湯厚, *Ku Chin Hua Chien* 古今畫鑑 (notes on paintings written in 1329, completed by his friend Chang Yü). Edit. Mei Shu Ts'ung Shu.
- Huang Kung-wang (1269-1354) 黃公望, *Hsieh Shan Shui Ch'üeh* 寫山水訣. Edit. T'u Hui Pao Chien and Hua Hsüeh Hsin Yin 圖繪寶鑑, 畫學心印.
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A HISTORY OF EARLY
CHINESE PAINTING

INTRODUCTION

Remarks about Painting and Calligraphy

It may be said of Chinese painting, as well as of other forms of early Chinese art, that it appears from the beginning almost full-fledged. The earliest specimens known to-day reveal an art which has reached a high degree of independence and maturity not only as decoration, but still more as a means of expressing visual ideas, be they of a subjective or an objective kind. These remains of early Chinese painting, which may be dated to the Han period, are no longer primitive in the proper sense of the word; they contain no traces of a struggle with the technical methods or the formal problems, but rather a realization of the expressional possibilities of pictorial art, and a technical dexterity which are essentially those of a far developed art. Their limitations—obvious to any Western beholder—are to be found in the field of naturalistic representation and mainly due to the fact that the problems connected with this kind of painting (which has taken such a preponderance in European art) did not enter within the scope of the early Eastern painters. Their main endeavour lay in a different direction.

Painting was to them from the earliest times pre-eminently a means of expressing ideas, a twin sister of the art of writing, and it acquired thus a more direct spiritual or intellectual significance than we are wont to find in naturalistically developed forms of pictorial art. The old Chinese historians tell us over and over again that the art of writing and the art of painting had a common origin,¹ and even in later times, when these two arts had developed quite far along divergent roads, their criterion remained the same; it was to be sought in the quality of the brush-stroke, the way in which the brush transmitted to the paper the flash of creative thought.

This may, indeed, also serve to explain the relative perfection of painting at an early date, when it still remained comparatively abstract and unconcerned with the representation of objective reality. It had already at this time the power of suggestion and of definition by means of lines replete with the rhythm of life. By such means form and movement were conveyed no less successfully than in more naturalistic types of painting, and the painter could express all he wanted to in a beautiful and convincing fashion.

It should, however, be remembered that when we speak of line in Chinese painting, something different is implied than when the same word is used in reference to Western art. It is not the tracing of a pen or a metal point, nor the sketchy or blurred outline of a soft pencil or crayon, but the clean definite stroke of a brush that may be as thin as a knife's edge, or almost as broad as a broom. This instrument is managed by a hand which does not rest on the paper, but moves freely at the wrist, and as the medium used is a thin flowing ink or water-colour,

¹ Thus, for instance, Chang Yen-yüan who, in his description of the origin of Chinese painting in the first chapter of *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*, writes: "When they could not express their thoughts (in painting), they made characters, and when they could not express shapes (in writing) they made paintings." The same point of view is expressed by Emperor K'ang Hsi in the preface to *P'ei Wên Chai Shu Hua P'u*.

even the slightest pressure or accent of the hand is reflected in the traces of the brush. The picture or idea in the artist's mind is thus transmitted in the most direct and immediate fashion; there is no possibility of posterior changes or corrections. The Chinese painter does not work as painters in oil or like students who make elaborate drawings from nature. He conceives the picture completely in his mind, and writes it down quickly and unhesitatingly, and it is of comparatively little importance whether he fills it with washes of colour or leaves it as a record in black and white. The stroke of the brush is always the decisive element from the point of view of artistic significance and expression.

Painting was thus most closely associated with writing both by its creative methods and by the materials used. Writing was the most abstract form of painting, and its expression depended also largely on the quality of the brush-strokes, the way in which the pictorial signs were written. Even when these had lost their immediate likeness to natural objects and become combined with ideograms or with symbols of sounds, they had to be written with a decision and speed that required a high degree of concentration and skill. Such qualities could of course be obtained only through long and assiduous training, a practice which must have contributed to prepare the ground for the technique of painting. The fully developed ideographic writing was one of the most exquisite plants that grew in the soil of the indigenous Chinese civilization, but when it burst into flower, it was no longer calligraphy, it was painting.

According to the popular Chinese tradition, the writing brush, made of camel's hair or some similar material, was first introduced by Mêng T'ien (d. 209 B.C.), one of the famous generals of Emperor Ch'in Shih Huang Ti, who is also known to have directed for some time the building of the Great Wall. Like so many similar traditions, this is hardly to be taken literally; brushes were, no doubt, in use for writing as well as for painting before the Ch'in period, but it is probable that great progress was made at this time. Mêng T'ien may have perfected the hair brush and made it a more appropriate and flexible instrument for writing.

The earliest specimens of Chinese writing with the brush known at present are from the Western Han dynasty, but they reveal a degree of freedom and skill which seem to indicate a rather important preceding evolution. When this first started, when the Chinese characters were first used, is a question that hardly needs to occupy us in this connection; the engraved or carved inscriptions on bone, metal, or stone from earlier periods may be of epigraphic importance, but offer very little artistic interest.

By the introduction of the camel's hair brush for writing, the Chinese script gained a new life and expression. The characters were no longer shaped with a view to the requirements of the graver and materials such as wood, bone, or metal, but could be written with flowing strokes that admitted of an infinite variety of individual accents and stylistic refinements. The brush-stroke thus gradually acquired an ever-growing importance in the art of writing, it became the essential element by which the character and accomplishment of the writer were revealed,

a test of culture and will-power as well as of training and skill. "If the heart is upright, the brush is firm," as said by Emperor K'ang Hsi.

The historical records of the Chinese contain various classifications of the different kinds of writing which were developed *pari passu* with the growth of indigenous civilization. Sometimes four stages are indicated: (1) Chung Ting tzū (characters on ancient bronzes), (2) Chuan shu (seal characters), (3) Li shu (the established form of writing with an exact number of strokes), and (4) K'ai shu (the model style, introduced by Wang Hsi-chih in the fourth century); but other historians distinguish no less than ten different kinds of writing. It may, however, be sufficient to recall here that the large seal characters were in use until the Ch'in dynasty, when they were modified into the so-called minor seal, or hsiao chuan, while the established form of writing (li shu) was introduced during the Han period. The final perfection of the Chinese script was, however, obtained only in the fourth century, when Wang Hsi-chih (321-379) created the k'ai shu style, which is still considered the unsurpassed model of Chinese writing.

But beside the "model style" Wang Hsi-chih also used "grass characters", perfecting the earlier form of the "running style", which had been in use since the Han period, into a more artistic mode of writing. This is explained by Chang Yen-yüan, in *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*, ii, 2, as follows: "Formerly Chang Chih¹ learned the running style from Ts'ui Yüan² and Tu Tu³; but he modified it into the present day running style which is written with a continuous stroke and rhythm without any break. Wang Hsi-chih was, however, the only one who realized the real secret of it, consequently he always made the first word of a column connect with the last of the previous column. This is called 'one stroke writing'."

No artist in China has, as a matter of fact, become the object of a more universal admiration than Wang Hsi-chih. Poets have sung his praise, emperors have vied to obtain some specimens of his writings, and thousands of scholars have spent years of their life in trying to imitate his mysteriously living brush-strokes. The still existing writings, which are connected with his name, are probably copies of the T'ang period, or possibly a little earlier, and the same is probably true of the specimens attributed to his son, Wang Hsien-chih (344-388), who was hardly less famous as a calligraphist than his father. (Pl. 1.) According to an early Chinese critic, Wang Hsi-chih's writing was "light as floating clouds and vigorous as a startled dragon", attributes which may serve to give some idea of the extraordinary admiration the Chinese connoisseurs had for the intrinsic beauty and vitality of the perfectly written characters. If we are unable to discover such supremely artistic qualities in the brush-work of the great Chinese writers, this may be due to our lack of imagination and understanding of the Chinese mind.

¹ A noted calligraphist of the Han dynasty, sometimes styled Ts'ao Hsien, the Perfect Grassist, because of his skill in grass writing.

² Ts'ui Yüan or Ts'ui Yü was a scholar and mathematician of the former Han dynasty who is said to have composed a treatise on grass characters.

³ Tu Tu or Po Tu was the teacher of Ts'ui Yüan. Chang Chih is reported to have said: "I am not equal to Ts'ui and Tu but certainly better than Lo and Chao (contemporary writers)."

THE HAN PERIOD

Practically all the paintings which are described or simply mentioned in the chronicles of the two Han dynasties seem to have been wall decorations executed in the imperial palaces or in public buildings. Their motives were of an allegorical or moralizing tenor, and they were executed for the edification of the rulers and their subjects, or as records of important events and ancient personalities. Pictures of a similar kind may also have been executed in the tombs of important people, which, as we have shown in a previous publication, were arranged as dwellings for the terrestrial soul of the departed.¹ But we receive hardly any information from these historical sources about the more intimate kind of paintings on scrolls which gradually came to form the most important part of the pictorial production in China. And yet, such pictures may well have existed already in the former Han dynasty (206 B.C.—9 A.D.), although we have no definite information about pictures on silk until the time of the Emperor Ming Ti (A.D. 59–75), and no records of the use of paper until the reign of the Emperor Ho Ti (A.D. 89–106). During this period collections of paintings were brought together in the imperial palace, and a court painter was included among the officials.

The wall paintings in the palaces of the earliest Han emperors as well as those executed for their predecessor, Ch'in Shih Huang Ti, represented mainly mythological motives,² and similar subjects were also painted in the Ling-kuang palace of Prince Liu Yü, Duke of Lu in Shantung (about 154–129 B.C.). These have become known through the versified description by the poet Wang Yen-shou, who mentions "Heaven and Earth, strange spirits of the sea, gods of the hills, the five dragons with joined wings, Fu Hsi with his scaly body, Nü Wo with serpent limbs, Huang Ti, and the Great Yü; furthermore the Three Kings and many riotous damsels and turbulent lords, loyal knights, dutiful sons, mighty scholars and faithful wives", etc.³—a highly fantastic picture-chronicle based on the ancient mythological or quasi-historical traditions of the country. The general arrangement and manner in which such motives were treated is also known to us through some of the reliefs which decorated the mortuary chambers of the Wu family at Chia-hsiang in Shantung.

The later emperors of the Western Han dynasty seem to have preferred portraits of famous men, generals and historical characters such as Chao Ch'ung-kuo and Confucius and his seventy disciples, and this kind of historical picture increased in vogue during the residence of the Eastern Han dynasty in Lo-yang. But they had also a moral import, and it is specially told of Emperor Shun Ti's (A.D. 126–144)

¹ *A History of Early Chinese Art*, vol. i, pp. 22–6; vol. ii, pp. 7–17.

² Cf. Omura's text to *Toyo Bijutsu Taikwan*. Tokyo, 1910, vol. viii, and Otto Fischer, *Die Chinesische Malerei der Han Dynastie*, Berlin, 1931, pp. 2–3.

³ Translation by A. Waley in *The Temple and Other Poems*, London, 1923.

consort that she had pictures of dutiful wives arranged on either side of her room. Under the art-loving Ming Ti a large composition relating to the first introduction of Buddhism in China was executed in the White Horse temple, and under one of his later successors, Ling Ti (168–188), portraits of Confucius and his disciples were again executed in a hall at Lo-yang. Chang Yen-yüan of the T'ang dynasty is evidently echoing the opinions of earlier art-historians and chroniclers when he makes the following remarks in the first chapter of *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*: "The records of shapes and appearances were made as inspiring examples of great virtues and to transmit the successes and failures of the past. Biographies may describe the actions (of the people), but they cannot convey their appearances; poems and ballads may sing of their beauty, but they cannot give the shapes; only by the art of painting both purposes may be served."

He goes on to quote some earlier writers as to the great moral and even political influence of painted records of well-known characters, but cites finally the rather divergent opinion of the philosopher Wang Ch'ung (1st century A.D.), who said: "When one looks at paintings of ancient people, one sees only the faces of the dead men, but one does not perceive their movements; it is far better to read about their doctrines, as written on bamboo tablets and silk scrolls, than to look at their pictures on the wall." To which the author adds: "I cannot help smiling at this kind of ridiculous talk. It is a kind of scholarship that seems to me like putting food into the ear or playing music to a cow."

Nothing has been preserved of the great wall paintings of the Han period, but some more or less faithful translations of them in flat reliefs or engravings on stone have survived. Best known among these are the stone slabs from the mortuary chambers at Hsiao-t'ang shan and Wu-liang tz'ü in Shantung, completely reproduced in the publications of Chavannes and Sekino,¹ but besides these several detached reliefs from other tombs in Shantung, and large bricks with engraved or stamped figures may serve to convey an idea of the designs and the style of the destroyed paintings.

We have elsewhere pointed out that the reliefs from Wu-liang tz'ü (executed c. A.D. 150) illustrate in part similar motives to those mentioned by Wang Yen-shou in his poetical description of the paintings in the Ling-kuang palace, and also discussed their very significant decorative style, the well unified stylization of the men and the animals in broad silhouettes and rhythmic lines.² The same kind of flat surface designs are also characteristic of the stone slabs at Hsiao-t'ang shan, though the figures are not raised in relief, being carved out and engraved into the surface of the stone (before A.D. 129). They have more likeness to representations in the flat than to sculptures, but the attempts at spatial composition are here very slight. The figures are mostly placed in horizontal rows, the one on top of the

¹ E. Chavannes, *Mission Archéologique dans la Chine Septentrionale*, pl. 1, Paris, 1909. T. Sekino, *Sepulchral Remains of the Han Dynasty in the Province of Shantung, China*, Tokyo, 1916 (in Japanese).

² Cf. *A History of Early Chinese Art*, vol. iii. *Sculpture*, pp. 9–12.

other; it is only in exceptional cases that space has been suggested by men or horses which move abreast or in rows, the one behind the other, as for instance in the battle scenes.

The general impression produced by these rubbings is that of reproductions in black and white of primitive paintings. The comparatively small figures are almost without exception presented in side-view, but they are full of life and pass before our eyes as the images in a shadow-play. The movements of the various animals such as horses, camels, elephants, tigers, dogs, stags and others are characterized with great accuracy, and so are the postures and actions of the men. The artist has brought out the decisive features of the animal and human forms and emphasized a continuous rhythm in their movements by the fluency of his strokes. The lines are so sensitively and skilfully drawn that one is almost apt to forget that they are hollowed out in stone and not drawn with the brush. It seems as if very little indeed had been lost of the original impetus and sensitiveness in the translation. (Pl. 2.)

The same is true of a number of other engraved or carved representations on stone from various tombs in Shantung and also of some of the images on large hollow bricks, executed either in low relief or in carving, which have been taken out of many minor tombs in Honan and Shensi. Their motives are mostly derived from Taoistic legends about the life of the departed or from mythological stories; they include hunting scenes, fights, processions of carts and riders, and they fascinate us, when at their best, by the extraordinary rhythmic vitality in the lines.¹ They are executed by artists who possessed the faculty of presenting not only form and movement, but also individual character and expression by the sweep of a line.

Most interesting in this respect are the engraved representations of a sacrificial ceremony executed at the tomb of Chu Wei, one of the generals who fought against the usurper Wang Mêng and contributed to the re-establishment of the Han dynasty (c. A.D. 25). His tomb is at Chin-hsiang hsien in Shantung, and here on the walls of a partly ruined small stone chamber, are some engraved drawings of a remarkably fine artistic quality, as may be seen in the rubbings which have recently been published by Professor Otto Fischer.² Their importance for the appreciation of the pictorial style of the Han dynasty is comparatively greater than that of the other engravings or the flat reliefs, because they are not repetitions of current motives, but representations of actual scenes which the artist may have observed in life. Two long horizontal compositions have been preserved (probably those of the two side walls), both representing a number of people gathered to

¹ Some characteristic examples of such brick slabs from Han tombs are reproduced in our volume on *Sculpture*. The raised images on these are usually produced with dies pressed into the wet clay; they are repeated in series and have seldom the freedom and fluency of line, the wonderful draughtmanship, which may be found in the engraved or carved images.

² Cf. Fischer, *op. cit.*, pls. 32-53. We have no means of deciding the exact date of these engravings, but even if they were not executed shortly after Chu Wei's death, as assumed by Professor Fischer, they must have been executed in the Han period.

sacrificial ceremonies, some being seated on the floor at low tables, where food and drink are served, others being present either as kneeling servants, or as onlookers on raised balconies at the two ends of the festival rooms. All these persons playing a more or less active part in the sacrificial meal. (Pl. 3.) The engravings are now in a rather fragmentary state of preservation, but we receive from them nevertheless a clear and convincing impression of an actual event or experience—the quiet and measured performance of certain ceremonies and their reaction on the onlookers. The figures stand out with their bodily volumes on a scene of considerable depth, and although their movements and postures show no great display or emphasis, they appear as actors in a drama which becomes quite intelligible to the beholder.

The means by which the artist has achieved this is almost exclusively line. There are no tonal values, no shading in these engraved images; the volumes are conveyed by the contours, the movements by the rhythmic flow of certain leading lines. The wide garments, in which the figures are enveloped, lend themselves most naturally to the synthetic presentation in broad masses, but the artist makes us also realize the softness of the material, the flow of the folds according to positions and movements. And by the same means he gives convincing presentations of the heads, their shapes and individual characteristics. Some of these heads may indeed, as pointed out by Professor Fischer, make us realize the artistic importance of the portraits painted by order of the Emperor Ming Ti in one of the palace halls in Lo-yang. They deserve a closer study than we can devote to them here, because they are the earliest real portraits known to us in Chinese art. The loss of all the great wall-paintings that decorated the imperial palaces of Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang can no longer be properly estimated, but we have every reason to believe that they held the same position in comparison with later Chinese paintings as is held by the sculptures in bronze, clay, and stone of the Han period in comparison with those of the T'ang dynasty. They were very possibly among the most monumental and powerful paintings ever executed in China.

The importance of these stone and brick slabs with engraved or carved images as documents for the history of Chinese painting is obviously limited by the fact that they are translations not executed with the brush, but with harder instruments, and by the absence of colour. Fortunately, however, there have also been found in some tombs (in the province of Honan) large brick slabs, as well as vessels in bronze and clay, decorated with paintings of human figures and animals, which may serve to give us some idea of the pictorial style of the period. Some of the vessels, such as the bronze *lien* with painted birds or dragons on the inside of the lid, have been mentioned in our discussions of the minor arts of the Han period,¹ and we may here limit our observations to some of the larger brick slabs with paintings of human figures.

The best series of such slabs, known to us, is now in the Museum in Boston.

¹ Cf. *A History of Early Chinese Art*, vol. ii, p. 44, pl. 55.

There are five pieces in all, two long rectangular slabs (measuring together 2.40 m. in length by 19.6 cm. in height) which have formed the lintel of a doorway, and three other slabs which together formed the pediment above the lintel.¹ The side pieces are consequently triangular (measuring 75 × 55 cm.). They are like most of the tomb tiles quite thick and hollow, and they were decorated on both faces with paintings on a white slip, which very easily comes off. It is therefore not to be wondered at that the paintings on the back of the pediment are now practically obliterated; those on the front, however, can still be quite clearly discerned.

The main motive is here an animal fight; a tiger and a bear are ready to jump at each other, while two other animals of the same species are held in reserve by the attendants, of whom there are at least six. (Pl. 4.) Most of these men are provided with short spears or whips, which probably serve them to keep the beasts in subjection. The long rectangular pieces below are decorated with frieze-like compositions of standing and walking figures, but the real import of these compositions remains obscure. On the front we see a score of figures, mostly male, in long garments, some standing in conversation, others approaching respectfully a more prominent member of the company, others again running away or attacking a neighbour. (Pls. 5 and 6.) On the opposite side of these horizontal bricks the figures are female, with the exception of one, who seems to be a vendor of jewels or the like. Two of the young ladies are occupied in adorning themselves with necklaces, and the others are grouped together as if they were playing or dancing. (Pl. 7.)

The figures are executed with dark lines, like Indian-ink drawings, on the white ground, and inside these leading contours thin washes of colour have been used—bright red, pale green, light brown, and other tones—which, however, now are largely obliterated. The brush-work is exceedingly sure, swift, and unhesitating, without the least trace of alterations or posterior elaboration. There is no modelling whatsoever; the drawing of the faces, for instance, is simplified to the last degree: a contour and some dots or thin strokes for the mouth, nose, and eyes. Yet, every one of them has a definite character, which in some instances is pushed almost to caricature. They move and act and gesticulate with the spontaneity of living beings who have been caught in quite casual situations; some of the men are absorbed in very lively conversation, and the frail ladies seem to flutter and wave about like playing sprites. The sleeves and flowing folds of their long stiff garments almost seem to carry them like wings. There is something unearthly in their slenderness and the swiftness of their movements. But such was the ideal of womanly beauty already in those times.

The grouping of the figures is singularly effective. They may at first sight appear to be jotted down quite casually, some in groups, some isolated, but at a closer study it becomes evident, that they are arranged with exquisite art and a remarkable faculty of spacing. It would hardly be correct to speak of a continuous

¹ For a detailed description of these bricks and their paintings, see Otto Fischer, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–89.

movement of line in these compositions, such as we observed in the engraved stone slabs, although the swift and spontaneous brush-strokes are the same all through. Yet, there is a kind of continuity in this frieze-like composition, spanning the intervals like the reverberation of sounds or the recurrence of rhyme. It is supported by the expressive postures and gestures, the very suggestive quick turnings and movements of the figures, but the main element of unity is the impression of space, which the artist has evoked with the simplest possible means. There is no definite stage, only the unified white background, but the actors turn and move in different directions, leading our eyes inwards as well as sideways. The intervals between them become something more than bits of a dead wall; they serve to increase the impression of a wide room or open space in which the figures appear. We meet here for the first time that peculiar faculty, so characteristic of the best products of Chinese painting of various periods, to utilize the intervals, the apparent emptiness between the forms, to increase the significance of the representation.

We have no means of an exact dating of these paintings, but circumstantial and stylistic evidence makes it most probable that they still belong to the Eastern Han dynasty, though presumably to its very end. They are closely related in style to other minor pictorial representations, be they on brick slabs, clay vessels, or lacquer boxes which have been excavated from Han tombs,¹ and one may also find parallels between the ladies painted on these slabs and some of the most graceful and characteristic tomb figurines of the Han period. The essential characteristics of the art of this period are, indeed, so definite that they hardly can be mistaken, and they remain the same in whatever materials the artists work. No period in the evolution of Chinese art has reached a more perfect combination of refinement and simplicity, or offered more expressive translations in line of the beauty and significance of objective forms. It is thus only natural that the mature pictorial products of this period should become highly expressionistic works of art, in which the essentials of the motives are suggested with a few rapid strokes.

From the scanty remains and literary records that are known to us it may be concluded that Chinese painting passed through a rather important evolution during the four centuries of the two Han dynasties. At the beginning of this era pictorial art seems to have been mostly in the nature of large wall-paintings in the imperial palaces, ancestral halls, and similar buildings, and the purpose of it was more of a didactic than of a decorative kind. The step from such pictures to the representation of ceremonial meals and the like, or other important events from

¹ A particular interest is attached to one or two of the lacquer objects with figure and animal designs which have been excavated near Heijo in northern Korea, a region which in the Han period formed part of China. Some of them are dated by inscriptions, as for instance the round plate of the year A.D. 69, on which may be seen pictures of Hsi Wang-mu with an attendant on the Ku-lun mountain, and of a tiger and a dragon, and a small box, decorated on the lid with an ornamental composition including human beings and genii. These figures are executed in a wonderfully spontaneous and free manner, with rapid strokes of the brush, and their colouring is very delicate, as may be seen in the coloured reproductions in *Kokka*, no. 446, and in the recently published *Report on the Excavations of Wang Hsü's tomb in the Lo Lang province, an ancient Chinese colony in Korea*, by Professor Y. Harada. Tokyo, 1930.

the life of the departed (as for instance in the hall of Chu Wei), may not have seemed very long; yet, it must have become an inducement for the painters to a closer observation of actual life and character and a freer development of their power of representation. And once this new road was found, it led to rapid progress, particularly in the direction of characterization and the representation of space, plastic form, and movement.

The early stages in this evolution may be observed to a certain extent in the carved designs on the stone slabs from Hsiao-t'ang shan, Wu-liang tz'ü and other tombs of the first and second century A.D. The human figures and the animals are here represented in highly characteristic attitudes and movements, not simply as abstract symbols, but as living organisms, though rendered almost exclusively by means of linear drawing. The attempts at tridimensional composition are in these scenes as yet only tentative; this relative flatness and primitiveness may, however, have become still more accentuated by the stonemasons. A somewhat later stage in the rendering of form and space is illustrated by the engraved designs in the memorial hall of Chu Wei. The figures appear here in well-defined rooms, or on stages, which are seen from above and recede obliquely towards the background as in so many later Chinese paintings. It is true that they are not drawn from the same point of view as the interiors, but they move and act with remarkable freedom, and they have the full plastic volume of actual human bodies. Yet, it is less the rendering of the shapes as such that lends such an extraordinary interest to these engravings, but the perfect co-ordination of the figures in a dramatic situation. Every movement has a significance, every head has a character of its own, which depends on its form and features as well as on its position. The accents are quite subdued, but the artistic significance is surprisingly strong. Such must have been the style of the great wall paintings of the Han period.

The coloured paintings on the brick slabs in Boston, which may be still later, are specimens of a rather different class of pictorial art. They were made for the tomb, and like many things of this same category, prepared in a somewhat cursory fashion. The paintings have the ease and lightness of sketches, jotted down in haste, exaggerated in part, but alive with that spontaneous movement and touch of the brush that is the quintessence of Chinese painting. In fact, the virtuosity of the brush-work is here driven to such a pitch that one might be inclined to characterize this art as over-ripe or sophisticated, were it not that it is entirely unconcerned with the pictorial problems of more advanced epochs and charmingly simple in the characterization of the human figures. Yet, to judge by examples like these, painting at the end of the Han period must have reached a relative perfection within certain limits, and been able to express in values of line and space not only movement and form but also those intangible elements which give a deeper significance to the artist's ideas.

II

THE PERIOD OF THE THREE KINGDOMS AND THE SIX DYNASTIES

(1) *The New Religious Inspiration*

The literary traditions about the Chinese painters who were active before the T'ang period are quite extensive, but in so far as they cannot be combined with still existing works, they hardly need to be repeated here. It may simply be noted that, according to critics such as Chang Yen-yüan and his predecessors, the most famous early painters were Ts'ao Pu-hsing (c. 222-77), Wei Hsieh (fourth century), Ku K'ai-chih (c. 350-412), and Lu T'an-wei (c. 440-500). Both Ts'ao and Wei are praised as masters of the highest importance, the former particularly for his paintings of dragons, barbarians, and animals, the latter for his mythological and religious compositions, but their works seem to have been lost already in the T'ang period. Chang Yen-yüan writes: "Ts'ao Pu-hsing's fame was dominating at his time, but nowadays there are no works by him, and it is impossible to know if he should be classified above Wei Hsieh."

These artists were active in South China, in the state of Wu, and from the little we know about their lives and work, it may be inferred that they also came within the influence of the new religion which, already in the third century, had taken a firm foothold in that part of the country. Indian missionaries arrived from time to time by sea to the Southern Capital and exercised a growing influence on the cultural development, including the figurative arts, to which they brought new inspiration and fresh scopes. Prominent among these was the priest Sêng-hui, who came about 247 and converted many prominent people, including the court painter Ts'ao Pu-hsing.¹ We may well assume that converts like Ts'ao Pu-hsing and Wei Hsieh became important propagandists of the new religion, as they devoted their artistic activity to a large extent to the representation of Buddhist subjects. From this time onward Buddhism spread with great rapidity all over China. The three first centuries of its propagation marked an almost continuous success; most of the rulers and leading men became adherents of the new "Western" faith, and temples decorated with paintings and sculptures were erected in great numbers both in the South and in the North. A rather severe reaction was brought about in 446, inspired mainly by the Taoist leaders, who saw their influence waning, but it did not last more than a year or two, after which Buddhism regained a dominating position and flourished more gloriously than ever.

It should, however, be remembered that the religion which thus gradually struck such deep and wide-spreading roots in the soil of China was no longer the primitive Buddhism of India, known as the "Lesser Vehicle" (Hinayāna), but mainly the "Larger Vehicle" (Mahāyāna), a more universal and mystic form of religion which had developed mainly in Central Asia during the early centuries of

¹ Cf. Waley, *An Introduction*, etc., p. 37.

our era. And the further this form of Buddhism penetrated into China, the more it was modified in accordance with the earlier religious traditions of the country. The Chinese never accepted anything from foreign sources in the realm of spiritual or intellectual activities without transposing it according to their own ideas. This fact was several times brought out in our discussions of the early creations in bronze and stone, and it is certainly not less noticeable in the Chinese transformation of the Buddhist religion and Buddhist art. Some of the new sects which gradually were founded in China became strongly coloured by Taoist ideas, or brought in harmony with the traditional ancestral worship of the Chinese people, whereas Buddhist painting in China became an almost independent form of art, connected by its iconography with the Indian sources, but very free in its artistic translation of the new motives and ideas. Buddhist religion became gradually a most important source of inspiration, a strong impetus to further artistic development and creative activity, but this followed along lines or in moulds, which existed in China long before the introduction of the new religion. It opened to the Chinese a world of new ideas and motives and widened the scope of painting as well as of literature. "It showed the Chinese painters something new; saints preaching the law with a gesture of authority, and deities of infinite compassion inviting supplicants to approach their thrones. And with them came the dramatic story of Gotama's life and all the legends of the Jātakas."¹ This was something much more definite and tangible than the Taoist stories about the Isle of the Blessed and the fairy queens, and it had a moral import, a spiritual significance that hardly could be found in the earlier legends of a corresponding kind. Buddhism also "offered a creed and ideals suited to the artistic temperament: peace and beauty reigned in its monasteries; its doctrine that life is one and continuous is reflected in that love of nature, that sympathetic understanding of plants and animals, that intimate union of sentiment with landscape which marks the best Chinese pictures"². Yet it seems evident that the Chinese never would have been able to give such noble expression to Buddhist ideas, had they not been prepared for the task by their earlier experiences in the field of religious thought, and by their traditional conception of art as a sybolic means for the expression of ideas and the inner significance of things. The consequence was that most of the great artists henceforth represented with equal success Taoist hermits and Buddhist saints; these merely became different symbols for an artistic activity that was deeply stirred, but not fundamentally changed by the advent of the new religion.

(2) *Ku K'ai-chih, Lu T'an-wei, and Chang Sêng-yu*

The most famous among all the early painters was Ku K'ai-chih, who worked during the second half of the fourth century in the Southern Capital. His extraordinary fame, which survives in entertaining records, rests not only on his

¹ Cf. Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, London, 1921, vol. iii, p. 242.

² Cf. Eliot, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

merits as a painter but also on his intellectual gifts; his highly imaginative genius in life as well as in art. Many characteristic utterances about art or similar matters by Ku are quoted by Chinese critics of the T'ang and later periods, and even if they are not to be accepted verbatim, their general tenor may be taken as an indication of Ku K'ai-chih's ideals as a painter and his characteristics as a man. To him painting was not the representation of outward shapes, but the revealing of an inner character, the spirit or soul of things. Therefore he considered portrait painting the highest form of art, and in representing human beings, the most important features were to him the eyes.

In the Annals of the Chin dynasty, an interesting account is given of Ku K'ai-chih's characteristics as a painter which may be quoted here in the form it appears in *Shu Hua P'u* (vol. 45):—

"Ku K'ai-chih, whose *tzu* (style) was Ch'ang-k'ang and *hao* (nom de plume) Hu-t'ou (Tiger Head) came from Wu-hsi (Kiangsu). He was a learned and witty man, particularly skilful in handling colour; his paintings were wonderful. Hsieh An¹ admired him greatly; he thought that there never had been anybody equal to Ku in the world.

"Whenever K'ai-chih painted human figures, he did not put in the eyes for several years. Someone asked him about the reason for this, and he answered: 'The limbs may be beautiful or ugly; they are really of little importance in comparison with those mysterious parts (the eyes), through which the spirit may be expressed in portraiture.'

"Once K'ai-chih painted a portrait of a neighbour's girl on a wall and stuck a sharp thorn through her heart. The girl fell ill and got pains in her heart; but when he took away the thorn, the girl recovered.

"K'ai-chih admired Chi K'ang's² four word poems and made pictures to them. He remarked: 'It is easy to paint "The hand playing on the five strings", but difficult to represent "The eyes follow the returning geese".'

"He was unsurpassed at his time as a portrait painter. Once he made a portrait of P'ei K'ai³ and added three hairs on his chin, which made the beholder feel very strongly the sagacious character of the man. He also painted a portrait of Hsieh K'un⁴ among rocks and peaks and said: 'This man must be placed in a scenery of hills and valleys.' When he wanted to paint a portrait of Yin Chung-k'an,⁵ who had sick eyes, the man objected, but K'ai-chih said: 'Your most characteristic features are, indeed, the eyes; their pupils seem like bright spots rubbed over with thin white. I will make them like the moon covered by light clouds. Wouldn't that be beautiful?'

"K'ai-chih once made a case into which he put some of his pictures and wrote on it: 'To be delivered to Huan Hsüan.' Hsüan opened the case secretly, took out the pictures, closed it again and returned it to the painter, pretending that it had not been opened. On receiving it, K'ai-chih simply remarked: 'What wonderful pictures, which have changed into living beings and escaped like men, who have become spirits,' He showed no anger.

¹ Hsieh An (320-385), a famous general, calligraphist, and art-lover. (Giles, 724.)

² Chi K'ang (223-262), one of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove. (Giles, 293.)

³ P'ei K'ai (third century), a high official noted for his sagacity and learning. (Giles, 1631.)

⁴ Hsieh K'un, a scholar and musician of Ku's generation.

⁵ Yin Chung-k'an, a famous scholar and high military official, who for some time employed Ku as a secretary. His eyes had grown sick through his long weeping over his ailing father.

"It was commonly said that K'ai-chih was a threefold genius, exceeding in wit, in painting, and in foolishness."

Hsieh Ho, the painter and art-critic who lived a century after Ku K'ai-chih, summarized his opinion about the painter in the following words: "His style was fine and subtle, his brush made no mistakes, but his strokes were not equal to his ideas. His fame surpassed his real merit." And most of the later critics take a similar position in praising his creative spirit and extraordinary imaginative faculty rather than the strength of his brush-work.

In the *Discussions of Paintings* (*Lun Hua*), which pass under Ku K'ai-chih's name, the writer points out that "of all kinds of painting figure painting is the most difficult; then comes landscape painting, and thirdly animal painting, dogs and horses. Terraces and buildings are definite things, difficult to accomplish but easy to handle in a thoughtless way." He also criticizes an earlier picture (by Ts'ai Yung of the second century), known as *The Small Heroines*, and makes the following remarks about the proper manner of representing women, which are interesting, because they have application to some of the works still associated with his name: "In order to represent women in a beautiful way with their costumes and coiffures they should be shown looking up and down (moving freely) in every place and be combined into a picture of grace and charm. Their proud and humble, noble or plebeian appearance may seem easy to represent, but the difficulty surpasses by far that of the present picture" (i.e. *The Small Heroines*, which were too masculine in appearance).

Several of Ku K'ai-chih's paintings are known through their titles, enumerated in the *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi* and other books; quite a number of them are Buddhist, but there are also Taoist subjects, portraits, representations of animals and illustrations to poems and legends. Among these is *The Lady of the Lo River*, a picture known through an early copy in the Freer Gallery in Washington (and a later copy recently acquired by the British Museum), but not the more important scroll, now in the British Museum, which represents *The Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*. By the seals on the picture and other records it becomes evident that this picture existed in the Sung dynasty, and possibly already about the middle of the T'ang period.¹

The picture consists of a series of illustrations to a text by the poet Chang Hua (c. 232-300), which are arranged in nine groups (originally ten?) evenly distributed over the not too long scroll, each one accompanied by a few lines of writing. Full translations of Chang Hua's text are offered both by Waley and by Ferguson; it may suffice here to indicate the scenes with the shortest possible references to the texts.

¹ The historical vicissitudes of this precious picture are related in great detail by Waley, op. cit., pp. 58-9. Dr. Ferguson states that there were two copies of Ku K'ai-chih's *Admonitions* in the Ch'ien Lung collection (which, however, does not appear from the printed catalogue); one identical with the picture in Brit. Mus., the other different, provided with seals of Mi Fei and Chao Meng-fu (not to be seen on the picture in Brit. Mus.) but now lost. Cf. Ferguson, *Chinese Painting*, p. 53.

(1) Lady Fêng, who rescues Emperor Yüan of Han from the assault of a bear, which has broken loose from its keepers.

(2) Lady Pan, who refuses to ride in the same litter as her imperial master in order "not to distract his thoughts from affairs of state".

(3) A hunter kneeling at the foot of a mountain with his bow drawn, ready to shoot some of the birds or animals which play on the mountain: "In nature there is nothing high which is not soon brought down . . ."

(4) A group of ladies at their toilet: "Men and women know how to adorn their persons, but few know how to embellish their souls."

(5) "If the words that you utter are good, all men for a thousand leagues around will make response; but if your heart depart from this principle, even your bed-fellow will distrust you." A man seated at the side of a curtained bed is speaking to a lady in the bed, who looks rather defiant.

(6) This scene shows a man in the midst of a large family; the text reads: "Let your hearts be as the locust, and your race shall multiply."

(7) "No one can endlessly please; affection cannot be for one alone; if it be so, it will end one day in disgust." The picture shows a lady listening to her husband's reproaches.

(8) "Fulfil your duties calmly and respectfully"; the good advice is illustrated by a lady who kneels in a humble attitude.

(9) The last scene shows a lady writing on a tablet, which she holds in front of her, while two other ladies are standing near by exchanging some remarks. The text indicates that this is the instructress charged with the duty of admonishing the ladies of the harem.

By this division into a number of distinct groups or scenes and the intersection of texts which, at some places, even intrude on the pictures, the unity of the whole scroll is to some extent impaired; it is to be enjoyed in sections rather than as a whole. The designs of the various scenes are, however, admirably balanced, the figures are highly expressive, the execution in many parts very delicate and refined, though perhaps lacking in strength. A closer study reveals that the picture has passed through many vicissitudes and been extensively restored. There are many new patches, especially at the beginning of the scroll, and also all along the lower edge. According to the estimate of a Japanese specialist (Professor Fukuji),¹ about 40 per cent of the whole painting is made up by later repairs and restorations, whereas the rest gives the impression of a very early work.

The silk on which the picture is executed is exceedingly fine, pale yellowish brown with some darker stripes and patches; the colouring is subdued, the most prominent tones being cinnabar red in the borders of some of the garments, and deep black in the hair of the ladies, but there are also some pale aubergine, orange, and grey pigments. The colours are used in a purely decorative sense, filled in between the carefully drawn thin outlines.

¹ Quoted in Dr. T. Naito's article on the history of Chinese Painting in *The Bukkyo Bijutsu*, no. 7.

The first scene, representing the lady who intercepts the furious bear, is one of the least interesting, as the figures have been much restored. More important is the second one: Emperor Ch'êng (32-7 B.C.) is seated in a litter in the company of a young lady who seems to be patting a kid. (Pl. 8.) He is turning with a startled expression towards another lady who is walking just behind: evidently the virtuous one who refuses to follow the invitation of the emperor. A thin net is extended on bamboo poles over the broad litter, which is carried by eight men, of whom five are fully visible. They form an excellent contrast to the graceful ladies: strongly built, walking with long and firm strides, they exert themselves to the utmost in carrying the litter with the heavy load. These sturdy porters are represented with a perfect realization of their physical exertion and with a tinge of humour which, no doubt, was characteristic of Ku K'ai-chih.

The third scene, which represents the hunter with his bow kneeling at the foot of a mountain, aiming at some birds, rather reveals the limitations of Ku K'ai-chih's art. (Pl. 9.) The small scale of the mountain in proportion to the figure makes a primitive impression, but each part, taken separately, is perfectly rendered. The artist's intention may have been to suggest a certain distance between the mountain and the hunter, which does not, however, become clear. The figure is quite convincing in form and movement, but the mountain is hardly more than a symbol, or a support for the animals and birds which are gathered there. Landscape painting, in the proper sense of the word, was altogether a later development; it did not become of equal importance with figure painting until three or four centuries later.

In the fourth, or toilet scene (which is most frequently reproduced), the painter reveals again his remarkable faculty of observation and his admirable draughtsmanship. The group, consisting of a tall girl combing the hair of her mistress, who is seated on a mat, is very graceful and expressive, but the rather obtrusive toilet boxes in the front look as if they had been added later. As in all these scenes, there is no actual stage or horizontal plane, but nevertheless a suggestion of depth, which is conveyed by the placing of the figures (slightly diagonally), and by the indication of a definite foreground by means of the boxes.

Still more remarkable in this respect is the bed scene which follows next. (Pl. 10.) Here the artist has actually created a room in which the figures appear. The canopied bed is drawn in reversed perspective and stretches obliquely towards the background. The emperor is seated at the side of the bed, turning with a distrusting look towards a lady, who sits further away in the bed and meets his look with a proud expression. The characterization of the figures is so subtle, and yet so obvious, that the meaning of the scene at once becomes clear. The setting is a little masterpiece of archaic composition.

The sixth scene represents another ethical ideal of the Chinese: the big family, which results when "you let your hearts be as the locust". (Pl. 11.) The artist has here suggested a third dimension by arranging the figures in a triangular group, the

apex of which is pointing towards the background. They appear actually behind each other, and the distance is emphasized by their gradually diminishing scale, even though they are not kept strictly on a horizontal level. To the right in the foreground sits the paterfamilias (an emperor?); at his side is a princess, who seems to be calling one of the children, but these are occupied at the opposite side by two other ladies, likewise with high ornaments on their heads. Furthest away two older children are seated on either side of a man; they are all holding scrolls; evidently a scene of teaching and reading.

The seventh scene is composed of only two figures, but their attitudes are very expressive and convey a clear idea of the painful truth, enunciated in the text, that "the husband's affection cannot be eternally for one alone". (Pl. 12.)

The eighth scene is a single lady, kneeling respectfully, but the figure is particularly beautiful from a decorative point of view; the flowing scarfs are painted with a sensitive hand; the costume, as usual, has been restored in parts, but the face is well preserved.

The same qualities of refinement and decorative beauty are prominent in the last scene, where the instructress stands writing upon a tablet with a brush, while the two accompanying ladies emphasize her admonitions with some gestures. (Pl. 13.)

The slender ladies in trailing garments are closely akin to the female figures on the above-mentioned painted brick slabs in Boston; they are representatives of the same ideal of womanly grace and refinement, although executed in a finer medium, with less spontaneity and impetus, in rather a calligraphic fashion. This may be partly due to the fact that the picture is not an original work, but a translation in which the style has been somewhat modified or subdued. The closest parallel to the landscape may be seen in a painting on a musical instrument (a *biwa*) in the Shōsō-in collection, which is considered a piece from the beginning of the eighth century, although rather archaic in style, and it may also be added that the low bench in the bed scene and the utensils in the toilet scene are very similar to some of the most exquisite early objects in Shōsō-in. The picture contains, as a whole, no elements which would prevent us from accepting it as a work of the Six Dynasties period (or shortly before), though it must be admitted that there is not enough comparative material to prove this in a positive sense. It may, however, be safely said that stylistically it holds a position between the Han paintings and those which can be ascribed to the T'ang period.

The present condition of the picture, which, as pointed out above, is far from intact, complicates the problem of its actual date. The original picture has in many parts been impaired by later restorations; it has been extensively patched, lines have been retraced, and the most prominent colours, such as the red and the black, may have been freshened up. Consequently it becomes rather a matter of subjective opinion whether this original picture was a work of Ku K'ai-chih or an early copy. The latter opinion is most common among European critics, most of whom consider

it a copy after Ku K'ai-chih executed in the early part of the T'ang period. Divergent opinions, however, have been expressed by Chinese and Japanese connoisseurs; the greatest of all Chinese critics, Tung Ch' i-ch' ang (1555-1636), accepted it as an original by the artist, though much restored, and according to prominent Japanese specialists, such as Professors Fukuji and Naito, it is a picture executed in the Six Dynasties period, even if it is not an original by Ku K'ai-chih. Professor Naito finds his argument in favour of an early date particularly in an analysis of the written texts, which evidently have been added on to the picture some time after its execution. He says in conclusion: "Even if the scroll is no original by Ku K'ai-chih, it must have been painted in the Six Dynasties period not very long after the death of Ku."¹

The other picture by Ku K'ai-chih which has come down to posterity through an early copy (now in the Freer Gallery in Washington) is the *Lo Shên* scroll, which illustrates a ballad by the poet Ts'ao Chih (about A.D. 222). It is a highly fantastic fairy-tale about the Nymph of the Lo River, and Ku K'ai-chih's illustrations, no doubt, did justice to the imaginative element of the text, which may be read in Waley's English translation. It seems superfluous to dwell here on this painting in detail, because it is an obvious copy, rendered in a style which hardly can have more than a remote resemblance to Ku K'ai-chih's own manner.² The composition is, however, very interesting as a whole, because it is continuous, not divided up into a number of separate scenes as in the *Admonitions*, the connecting element being a landscape scenery of winding waters, small hills, and large trees. These are all represented in a quite primitive fashion as decorative silhouettes. Yet, here is a realization of spatial unity which is not to be found in the picture of the *Admonitions*. The picture is in this respect an important document in the history of the evolution of landscape painting in China, even though it is inferior in technical execution and expression to the *Admonitions*. This may be due to the copying artist who evidently was further removed from Ku K'ai-chih's own time and style of painting.

A third picture by Ku K'ai-chih, which is known not only through historical records but also through later copies or reproductions, is the so-called *Lieh Nü Chuan*, Record of Eminent Women. This again consisted of a series of illustrations, to some stories (of the first century B.C.) which had already been illustrated twice before Ku K'ai-chih, i.e. in the second century A.D. by Ts'ai Yung and in the fourth century by Wei Hsieh (see above). The former rendering was called "the Small Heroines",

¹ Cf. T. Naito, *The History of Chinese Painting*, ii; *The Bukkyo Bijutsu*, no. 7, 1926. The following passage from Dr. Naito's article may be quoted: "If one studies carefully the writing on Ku K'ai-chih's scroll, it is possible to observe a close resemblance with the "*Chien tsü wen*" by Chih Yung, the famous calligrapher of the Ch'ên dynasty (557-589). This resemblance is much closer than with any writings of the Sung period, be they by Kao Tsung or others. (Some Chinese critics have claimed that the writings might be by Emperor Kao Tsung.) From this may be drawn the conclusion that the painting was executed not later than the time of Chih Yung, i.e. shortly before the beginning of the T'ang period."

² Reproduced for inst. in *Chinese Paintings in American Collections*, pls. 1-2.

the latter "the Large Heroines", and they are said to have served as models for Ku's illustrations. The stories were edited with the illustrations in wood-block printing in the eleventh century and later again in 1825. Through this last edition Ku's illustrations have become known, though in a style thoroughly modified by double translations.

Beside the above-mentioned three pictures a number of others are named in the various historical chronicles, but as we know nothing about them beyond the titles, it may be superfluous to quote them here. It is of greater interest to us to note what Chang Yen-yüan has to say about Ku K'ai-chih's brush-work: "Ku K'ai-chih's brush-stroke was tight and strong, connecting and continuous, moving as in a circle, exceedingly swift, accomplishing the design with freedom and ease. It was like a gust of wind or a flash of lightning. The ideas existed before he took up the brush; when the picture was finished, it contained them all, and it was filled with the breath of the spirit."¹ Chang Yen-yüan, who lived more than four hundred years after Ku, belonged to a generation which always idealized the masters of antiquity at the cost of the contemporary painters and was inclined to reiterate the echo of their traditional fame rather than to subject their works (which already at that time were exceedingly rare) to a critical examination.

Hardly less famous than Ku K'ai-chih was Lu T'an-wei, who worked under the Liu Sung (420-479) and Ch'i (479-502) dynasties in Nanking. His particular importance in the history of Chinese painting is connected with his mastership in the handling of the brush: He is said to have applied to painting the same kind of free rhythmic brush-stroke as Wang Hsien-chih introduced in writing, doing a whole picture without a break in the lines. But it was not done by a dash of the brush as in many later works; "Lu T'an-wei's brush-stroke was fine and sharp, yet smooth and graceful; it was quite new and strange in its subtlety. His fame rose very high in the Sung dynasty and nobody at that time was his equal." (*Ming Hua Chi*, ii, 2.)

He painted some excellent portraits, as for instance one of his patron the Emperor Ming Ti of Sung (456-473), but he also painted horses and birds, and particularly Buddhist subjects. Of the ten pictures mentioned under his name in the *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*, seven represent Buddhas or Devarājas, the three others were: The portrait of Wang Hsien-chih, Five Horses, and a picture of Mārīchī, the Queen of Heaven. But none of these pictures are known to-day even in a copy, and we have thus no chance of forming as much of an opinion about Lu T'an-wei as about Ku K'ai-chih, who according to some of the early Chinese critics, were of almost equal artistic importance.²

¹ *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*, ii, 2. On the Brush-work of Ku, Lu, Chang, and Wu.

² Mi Fei gives in his *Hua Shih* the following description of a famous painting by Lu T'an-wei: "In Kan-lu ssü (the Temple of Sweet Dew) in Jun-chou there were four Bodhisattvas 4'1 feet high painted by Chang Sêng-yu, and a picture by Lu T'an-wei representing a spirit with yellow face and teeth protruding at the corners of the mouth, wearing a golden armour and holding a banner in his hand. At his feet was a white lion of frightening appearance. On the ceiling of the great hall was a "Mirror of Heaven" under a bright

Somewhat younger than Lu T'an-wei and Ku K'ai-chih was Chang Sêng-yu, but his name is often coupled with those of his great predecessors, and he is considered their equal by most of the early historians. His activity developed in Nanking under the Liang dynasty (502-557), where he became a highly honoured official and much employed painter of Emperor Wu Ti (502-549). According to the records communicated in *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*, he served in the T'ien-chien era (502-519) as a secretary to Prince Wu-ling and as a keeper of the paintings in the Chih-sui pavilion, and later on was made a general of the Right and governor of Wu-hsing; probably honorary titles rather than actual charges. Emperor Wu Ti employed him to execute wall paintings in many of the newly erected Buddhist temples, and ordered him also to make portraits of all the princes who were living away from the capital. When they were finished, and the emperor looked at them, he thought that he saw the men themselves before him.

Among his wall paintings is particularly mentioned one in T'ien-huang ssü, representing *Loshana Buddha* together with *Confucius and Ten Wise Men*, and *Four White Dragons* in An-lo ssü. Chang had left the dragons without eye pupils, because he claimed that they would fly away if he put in the eyes. Some people thought, however, that this was simply extravagant talk and asked him to prove it; whereupon Chang painted in the eyes on two dragons. "At once the air became filled with thunder and lightning, the wall broke down, and the dragons ascended on clouds to heaven. But the two other dragons who had no eyes remained at their places." By this and similar stories the mystic power of this great master is illustrated; his "pictures had more spirit than can be explained".

The only writer who takes a somewhat more critical attitude towards Chang Sêng-yu is Yao Tsui of the Ch'ên dynasty (557-589). He says that the wall paintings of Chang surpassed all other paintings of the same kind, but the gaze of his Immortals was wanting in spirit and life. He should thus be placed in a lower class than his predecessors. This criticism met, however, opposition not only from Chang Yen-yüan but also from a somewhat earlier critic, Chang Huai-kuan, who

vault. In the room were two pictures by Wu Tao-tzu representing itinerant priests. I had these transferred to the Ching-ming chai to protect them against wind and rain. In the Hui-ch'ang era (841-46), when temples were destroyed during the persecution of Buddhism, this temple was spared, because it harboured a large bronze statue of Emperor Ming Huang. But at the end of the Yüan-fu era (1098-1100) it was unexpectedly destroyed by fire, and all the remains from the Six Dynasties were swept away. In the country along the lower Yang-tzû no traces of Chin paintings are now to be found. (In this temple were previously preserved writings of the Six Dynasties); the trees planted by Li Wei-kung, all the beautiful buildings, etc., were destroyed by fire, only Li Wei's T'ieh t'a (Iron Pagoda) and the two rooms of Mi-lao-an remain. I wrote a poem of lamentation about it." According to Ferguson (op. cit., p. 53), a picture representing "A Lion and Two barbarians", formerly in the Tuan Fang collection and now in the Charles L. Deering collection in Chicago, would be an old copy of Lu's famous lion picture in the Kan-lu temple at Jun-chou, near Chin-kiang. The original was probably destroyed by fire in 1098, but the said copy would have been executed by imperial command in 1076. The picture was exhibited a few years ago in the Chicago Art Institute, and according to a reliable authority of the Museum, it was found to be an imitation of much more recent date and of no artistic importance.

writes: "I cannot agree with these words; Chang's thoughts were like bubbling wells, his talents were divine. With one or two strokes of the brush he accomplished a whole portrait. As a portraitist Chang Sêng-yu painted the flesh, Lu T'an-wei painted the bones, and Ku K'ai-chih painted the spirit." The same remarks from *Hua Tuan* are quoted in *Shu Hua P'u*, but there they are wound up with the following interesting words: "Compared with the calligraphists, Ku and Lu were like Chung Yu,¹ but Chang Sêng-yu was like I-shao (Wang Hsi-chih)." This seems to imply that he painted with a long flowing stroke full of energy and expression. Yet Chang Yen-yüan remarks in another connection² that "when Chang Sêng-yu painted in a sketchy fashion, he used dots and short strokes. He followed Mme Wei's³ *Pi Chên t'u*; every point and every stroke had its meaning; they were like hooked spears and sharp swords, very serried and dense." To this striking characterization of Chang Sêng-yu's brush-work may still be added a remark of a much later critic, Yang Shên of the Ming period (1488-1529)⁴ who claims to have seen a wall painting by Chang in the I-ch'êng temple which "when seen from afar appeared to the eyes as in relief, but when seen near by was quite flat" (like the flower paintings of Wei-ch'ih I-seng).

Fifteen pictures by Chang Sêng-yu are enumerated in *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*; among them are stellar divinities, Buddhas and dragons, but also portraits, horses, birds, and genre scenes, and a similar variation may be noted in the list of his sixteen works in the *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*. These may not have been originals, but the motives and compositions were, no doubt, Chang Sêng-yu's. Among them appear also a picture known as *The Brushing of the Elephant*. The motive was often repeated by later painters, and it has been proposed in an article in the *Kokka*, no. 259, to identify Chang Sêng-yu's composition with a rendering of the same subject by Ch'ien Hsüan. The combination seems to us, however, for reasons of style and design, far from convincing; we would rather be inclined to trace Chang Sêng-yu's composition in a different rendering of the same subject known through a picture in the Freer Gallery and other copies, sometimes attributed to Yen Li-pên, because he too is known to have painted *The Brushing of the Elephant*. (Pl. 14.) It is difficult to say exactly when the picture was executed, but it was evidently done by a man who knew how to preserve the characteristics of its earlier style. The composition may be seen in our reproduction, and it may also be observed there that the figures are of a very strange and early character. The picture is not a dead copy (like later renderings of the same composition), but a thing artistically alive; the drawing has a peculiar rhythmic quality, the lines are sharp, very serried in the folds of the garments and the elephant's callous skin, every detail is defined with unusual energy and exactness. This kind of

¹ Chung Yu, d. 230, particularly famous for his skill in *li*-writing (model characters).

² *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*, ii, 2.

³ Wei Fu-jen, d. A.D. 140. The wife of Governor Li Chü and famous as a calligraphist in the *li* style.

⁴ Quoted in *Shu Hua P'u*, vol. 12, l. 8, recto.

drawing corresponds better to what we know of the masters of pre-T'ang time than to the linear characteristics of Yen Li-pên's paintings. If the present picture is based on a painting by Yen Li-pên (which is by no means certain) this must, in its turn, have been a copy after an original by Chang Sêng-yu.

Yen Li-pên is, as a matter of fact, classified by most of the old critics as a faithful follower of Chang Sêng-yu; he seems to have felt an ever increasing admiration for his predecessor of a hundred years earlier and to have copied several of Chang's works. Some critics, like P'ei Tu, claimed that Yen did not equal his model, but Chang Yen-yüan is of the opinion that they both belonged to the highest class. We are told that when Yen for the first time met with a work by the older master, he said: "This painter is simply a great name," but when he saw the picture again the next day, his opinion was: "The man was a good artist among his contemporaries"; and at the third examination he remarked: "The fame of the artist is certainly not an empty pretence." The picture then fascinated him completely for ten days; he remained before it day and night, and would not even go home to sleep, but lay down in front of the picture. He studied it very closely in all its details.¹ The very close connection between the two masters is furthermore illustrated by the informations that have been transmitted in regard to their pictures of *The Drunken Priest*, but these may be reserved for our chapter on Yen Li-pên, because the version of the picture which is still known seems to be based on Yen Li-pên's painting.

(3) *The Korean Tomb Paintings*

We have no means of forming an opinion of the relative importance of Chang Sêng-yu's dragon pictures, nor of those of any other painter before the Sung period; yet, there are still in existence some large mural paintings of dragons and other fabulous animals, which to some extent may serve as substitutes or as supports for the imagination when we try to reconstruct the lost masterpieces. They are provincial paintings, not to be found in China proper, but in northern Korea, in the neighbourhood of the old capital Ping-yang (Heijo), yet they are executed in a style which is thoroughly Chinese, and by artists who were, indeed, no mean masters. So long as no complete tombs with painted decorations have been unearthed in China, some of these Korean tomb paintings may well serve as examples of the stylistic tendencies in the pictorial art of the Six Dynasties period. Their style is essentially the same as that of Chinese bronzes and stone sculptures from the fifth and sixth centuries.

It would take us too far to give a full account of the various tombs at Baisan-ri, Shinchî-do and Guken-ri, nor would it be relevant to our purpose, because the paintings in the earlier of these tombs are so badly worn that they can be distinguished only with the greatest difficulty; they are seen much more to their advantage in some of the Japanese books of reproduction, such as *Chōsen Koseki*

¹ Tung Yu, *Kuang Ch'uan Hua Po*, iv.

Zufu, vol. ii, than in the originals. In the inner room of the large pillared tomb at Shinchido one may still distinguish some lightly sketched charming small figures, executed with reddish, yellow, green, black, and white colours on the plastered walls. (Pl. 15.) In the centre there is represented an interior of a small house, with a man and his wife seated on a platform, while servants are entering from the sides, and on the one side wall are rows of standing figures and men on horseback. The intimacy and artistic expressiveness of these figures make them very entertaining even in their present fragmentary condition.

A little later in date (probably from the end of the sixth century), and much better preserved, are the paintings in the so-called Kosai tombs at Guken-ri. These were opened more than a generation ago, and then found to be empty. According to tradition, they were made for some kings of the Kokuri dynasty (c. 400–600), but nothing definite is known about their occupants. There were originally three, but only two are in a fair state of preservation; they consist of a stone-lined quadrangular chamber and a short entrance shaft or corridor. The paintings are executed directly on the huge, carefully trimmed stone blocks. On each wall is a large animal; the green dragon on the east wall (Pl. 16), the white tiger in the west, the black tortoise (encircled by the snake) in the north (Pl. 17), and the red bird (doubled) at both sides of the door on the south wall. On the upper part of the walls are ornamental borders composed of winding honeysuckle or similar tendrils, and on the broad slabs encorbelled over the corners are painted soaring apsaras, flowers, and birds. The quadrangular slab which forms the top of the ceiling is decorated with a coiling dragon.

The decorative beauty and expression of all these fantastic animals (the largest of them measuring over 2 m.) depend mainly on the supreme energy of the drawing. It matters little whether they are called dragons or tigers, they all have the same long, slim bodies on elastic spring-like legs, with wings at the shoulders, the same thin necks, curving in S-like fashion and supporting big, horned heads. They are akin to those proud chimæras and winged lions which stand at the tombs of the Liang dynasty near Nanking, they are offshoots of the same imaginative race, but instead of being bulky and static as the stone animals, they are light and fugitive as if they were soaring across the wall, disappearing in the dim light of the tomb. This impression of fugitive visions, of a movement which is almost freed from material bonds, is no doubt heightened by the veil of age and dust which softens the colours and fuses the forms with the grey stone slabs on which they are painted. There is still enough of the white, the bluish green, the black, and the vermilion to emphasize the decorative value of these paintings, but as the colours have become subdued, the energy of the drawing stands out more dominating, the forms become almost transparent, dissolved into sheer movement.

When provincial painters at the borderland of China were able to produce such magnificent dragons and tigers, we may indeed suppose that the same subjects treated by the leading contemporary masters were truly great works of art. No

wonder that the dragon paintings by Chang Sêng-yu gave rise to stories about their supernatural fierceness and faculty to move at will. However fantastic the wording of these stories may be, they have a certain interest as indication of the general tendency of this art to emphasize in rhythmic lines the fleeting vision and the soaring movements. The general stylistic character of these paintings must have been akin to that of the best sculptures of the Northern Wei and Northern Ch'i dynasties, which impress us by their tersely synthesized form and the supreme energy of their lines. The correspondence between the painted animals in the Korean tombs and the statues at the Liang tombs has already been referred to, but it may be added that the same ornamental borders, composed of energetic tendrils and palmettes, that we find in the Korean tombs, also appear in the Yün-kang caves. In spite of the difference in scope, and material, and technique, the art is essentially the same, and the style has the same qualities of linear strength and beauty.

(4) *The Vicissitudes of the Early Picture Collections*

The almost complete loss of the original works by the famous masters of the early periods was already deplored by writers of the T'ang dynasty, such as Chang Yen-yüan. "Only their fame is left behind," is his laconic reflection, and he offers a condensed historical account of how this irreparable loss, particularly of the imperial collections (which contained the best pictures), was brought about by wars, floods, and fires, which may be worth quoting, in part, as it gives a vivid illustration of the vicissitudes of picture collecting in China and the practical impossibility of obtaining a first-hand knowledge of the early epochs of Chinese painting. He calls this account *The Rise and Fall of Painting*, and writes as follows¹:

"The emperor Wu (141-86 B.C.) of the Han dynasty caused a hall to be built for the keeping of his paintings and calligraphies. Emperor Ming (A.D. 68-76), who was a lover of paintings, had another building constructed for the same purpose and also a school of art called Hung (Giles 5269). Beautiful things from all over the country were gathered together thick as clouds. But when at the time of Tung Cho's rebellion (A.D. 190) the court fled westwards to Shan-yang, the silk paintings were taken by the soldiers and made into tents and bags. There were more than seventy cartloads. They met heavy rains, which made the roads difficult, and half of them were lost.

"Again in the Wei (220-264) and Chin (265-419) periods certainly a great number were collected, but when the Hu barbarians entered Lo-yang, they were all burned.

"The emperors of the Sung (420-477), Ch'i (499-501), Liang (502-556), and Ch'en (557-587) dynasties had good taste and appreciated beautiful things. During the Chin dynasty, when Liu Yao (d. 328) started a rebellion, most of them were scattered. Then came Huan Hsüan (another rebel, 369-404), who had a great passion for beautiful and rare things. All the calligraphies and famous paintings of the country were brought to him. At the time of his revolt he took hold of all the valuable objects of the Chin court. Ho Fa-shêng relates the following in his book *Chin Chung Hsing*. The rebel Liu Lao-chih sent his son Ching Hsüan to Emperor Huan Hsüan to offer his submission. Hsüan was delighted and showed him his calligraphies and paintings, which they admired

¹ *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*, chap. i, part 2. Waley included the main portion of this account in his article: "The Rarity of Ancient Chinese Paintings," *Burlington Magazine*, June, 1917.

together. When he was defeated (419), Sung Kao Tsu sent Tsang Hsi to the palace to take possession of them. Kao Ti (479-483), of the Southern Ch'i dynasty, had the most valuable ones classified and recorded, and this classification was made not according to periods, but according to merit. There were 42 names from Lu T'an-wei to Fan Wei-hsien arranged in 42 sections, 27 classes comprising 348 scrolls. And when he was free from affairs of state in the mornings and evenings, he took them out and enjoyed them.

"Liang Wu Ti (502-547) added many valuable and rare things and was always trying to complete the collection. Yüan Ti (552-555) was very accomplished and talented in the arts; he was himself a good painter. Precious and rare old things were accumulated in the palace.

"At the time of Hou Ching's rebellion Prince Kang dreamt several times of Ch'in (Shih) Huang and that he burned again all the books. And it really happened so: Several hundred pictures in the palace were burned by Hou Ching. When peace was re-established after Hou Ching, all the pictures still left were transported to Chiang-ling (in Hupeh) and then destroyed by General Yü Chin of Western Wei (535-554). When Yüan Ti was going to abdicate, he brought together all the most famous pictures, calligraphies, and classical books, some 240,000 pieces in all, and ordered a servant of the inner apartment to burn them. The Emperor wanted to throw himself into the fire, to burn with the pictures, but a palace lady seized his garment and saved him. He took the precious sword from Wu Yueh, and trying to break it against a pillar, he exclaimed: 'O, that Hsiao Shih-ch'eng (a name for himself) has come to this. Learning and culture have come to an end to-night.'

"Yü Chin and his followers took out of the ashes more than 4,000 books and paintings and brought them to Ch'ang-an. Therefore Yen Chih-t'ui wrote a song called *Kuan Wo Shêng*. Millions of people were captured, a thousand cartloads of books went up in smoke. Nothing like this had been known in history. All literature was destroyed.

"In the T'ien-chia era (560-66) of the Ch'ên dynasty the Emperor Ch'ên did his utmost to search for more (pictures), and he got together a good number. When the Sui conquered Ch'ên, two official recorders, P'ei Chü and Kao Kung, were appointed to take care of them. They collected more than 800 pieces. Sui Yang Ti (606-616) built at the Eastern Capital (Lo-yang) behind the Kuan-wen tien two towers; the eastern was called the Miao-k'ai (Excellent Patterns) tower and served for the conservation of old writings; the western was called the Pao-chi (Precious Things) tower and served for the storing of old pictures. When Yang Ti went to Yang-chou (605) he took them all with him. During the journey the boat was upset, and more than half (of the pictures) were lost. When Yang Ti died, all his pictures came in the possession of Yü-wên Hua-chi. When Hua-chi went to Liao-ch'êng (these pictures) were all taken by Tou Chien-tê, and those left at the Eastern Capital came in the possession of Wang Shih-ch'ung. When the holy T'ang dynasty, in the fifth year of Wu-tê, had conquered the rebels and captured the two false leaders, the precious things kept at the two capitals and those taken to Yang-chou all came in the possession of the House of T'ang. An official of the Ministry of Agriculture, Sung Tsun-kuei, was appointed to bring these (treasures) by boat (to the capital), but as he was going westward and was near the capital, the boat sank in the midst of the river and only one or two tenths of the pictures were saved.

"At the beginning of the present dynasty there were only 300 pictures together with those of the Sui and the previous dynasties" . . .

After having described at length the collecting of paintings in his own family, Chang adds:—

"From old times war and fire often destroyed the pictures (of the imperial collections) and floods impaired them; and the older the pictures, the more of them were lost. If in those times the emperors did not take an interest in the paintings, nobody searched them out. There were no connoisseurs to appreciate them, nobody to distinguish the

good from the bad. Then no great talents appeared and even things poor as a dead rat were gems. Truly, nowadays the people are very numerous, but the fine arts are very scarce, and painting in particular has much decayed. Though the people do not take the ink spot for a fly,¹ yet their tigers are like dogs."

(5) *The Early Cave Temples at Tun Huang*

After all the destructions that have taken place, it would be presumption to expect to find any authentic works by the great masters of the Six Dynasties period. Yet there *are* some pictures still existing of this early epoch, though not on silk or paper, nor by any known masters. We refer to the wall paintings in the Buddhist temple caves at Tun-huang, on the extreme western border of China, which still are preserved in part.

These famous cave temples at a place, where the pilgrims who went by the northern caravan route to India stopped to rest and to seek divine protection before they crossed the desert, were begun shortly after the middle of the fourth century; the first was founded by the śramana Lo-tsun in 366, but the earliest ones were probably all destroyed during the Buddhist persecutions in 445-46. The temple caves still remaining seem to date from the second half of the fifth to the eleventh century, not to mention a few later ones, which were added in the thirteenth century. They are abundantly decorated with wall paintings and clay sculptures executed in adherence to the prevailing styles of the respective periods, but unfortunately in many cases badly preserved or grossly defaced by later "restorations". A thorough discussion and appreciation of the original characteristics of these decorations is thus hardly longer possible, particularly not for students who, like ourselves, never visited The Thousand Buddhas Caves (as these Tun-huang temples are called) at the desert border of China. Our source of knowledge is simply the plates in Professor Pelliot's well-known publication, *Les Grottes de Touen Houang*,¹ and it is quite obvious that this is far from sufficient, the publication containing only a selection of the very large material in none too clear reproductions.

It seems, however, possible to recognize in the plates certain general features of style, characteristic of the different periods at which the pictures were executed. The painters who worked here may not have been among the leading masters of their respective periods, but their works reflect the stylistic currents and acquire thus a great historical interest. This is particularly true of the earliest among them, as other pictures of pre-T'ang times are no longer to be found in China. Our knowledge of the style of the Six Dynasties period is mainly based on the sculptures and one or two minor painted monuments in Japan, such as the famous Tamamushi shrine in Hōryūji, and it is *ex analogia* with these that the earliest caves at Tun-huang may be approximately dated. Whenever these caves contain some plastic works beside the paintings, in a not altogether defaced condition, little doubt need

¹ Reference to a story about a famous picture by Ts'ao Pu-hsing.

² Vols. i-vi, Paris (Librairie Geuthner), 1920-7.

remain as to their approximate period of execution; the correspondence with the almost contemporary and better-known cave temples at Yün-kang is in such cases most obvious, and as this correspondence with the Yün-kang caves also extends to the painted decorative designs, the dating of the earlier Tun-huang caves becomes mainly a matter of visibility. In so far as the stylistic patterns and decorative motives can be distinguished in the plates, the period of the work is evident, because, as already pointed out, the characteristic features of the style remain the same, independent of the material in which they are expressed. In regard to the figures and illustrative scenes it may be observed that they in some instances reveal features of a more foreign type, indicating that the influences from Central and Western Asia were more strongly felt here at Tun-huang than for instance at Ch'ang-an or Lo-yang. The correspondence between some of these figures and the earliest frescoes from Kucha in the von Le Coq collection in the Ethnographical Museum in Berlin has been pointed out by Dr. L. Bachhofer in his scholarly analysis of the representation of space in early Chinese painting.¹

The earliest caves from which Professor Pelliot offers some reproductions are probably nos. 110 and 111a (Pls. 89-92). The sculptures give a clue to the period of decoration, which may have been executed in the last quarter of the fifth century or thereabout. Closely connected with these in style, though possibly a decennium or two later, are the caves 103 (Pl. 86) and 111 (Pls. 93-4), the sculptures in the latter showing great similarity with the plastic decoration in Shih-fo ssü at Yün-kang. Probably of the same period is also cave 101 (Pl. 179), though the view of the ceiling alone may not be sufficient for establishing the date. The next stage in the stylistic evolution may be observed in caves 135 (Pls. 280-85) and 120n (Pl. 251-68); the sculptures in the former remind us of certain stelæ (for instance in the Gualino collection) which can be dated about 520-4, and also of some of the figures from Kung-hsien (c. 530); the latter cave (120n) is dated by inscription 538-9. The pictures in these caves show, however, a more foreign, "Tocharian" character. The same painted plinth as on the altar in cave 135 returns in cave 129 (Pl. 275), which thus may be contemporary. Then follow probably caves 137b (Pl. 296) and 126b (Pls. 273-4), which also shows figures of "Tocharian" type and sculptures which may have been executed about the middle of the sixth century or shortly after. Finally may be mentioned cave 77 (Pls. 154-7) which probably leads us into the seventh century; the painted decoration shows here a combination of decorative motives surviving from the Six Dynasties period and figures and landscape in early T'ang style.

The painted decorations in these early caves at Tun-huang are evidently of

¹ Cf. L. Bachhofer, "Die Raumdarstellung in der Chinesischen Malerei des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.," *Münchener Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst*, 1931. The article includes the best chronology of the Tun-huang cave paintings as yet published, mainly based on stylistic analysis but also in one instance (cave 135) supported by a private communication of M. Pelliot. The relative chronology of Dr. Bachhofer seems to us well founded, even if some of the proposed dates may need some slight modification, particularly with a view to the somewhat disturbing foreign influences in the paintings.

varying stylistic character and artistic importance, and it seems indeed as if the artists in most cases had been men from the "Western countries" rather than from China proper, who had assimilated certain elements of Chinese art. Most interesting from a pictorial point of view are the landscapes with figures as in caves 110 and 135. In the former some large animals and figures are placed between miniature mountain ranges. (Pl. 18, 1.) They appear more or less as silhouettes, though well characterized by a linear definition of their forms and their movements. In the somewhat later pictures in cave 135 the Jātaka stories are developed in a much richer fashion with masses of small figures and animals moving with great freedom between the mountain ranges, which still are drawn on a small scale as rows of pointed tents and used for the division of the long compositions into compartments. (Pl. 18, 2.) These long compositions are like horizontal scrolls (*chüan*), and they are continued in three tiers, the one below the other, so as to afford sufficient space for the illustration of a great number of successive incidents. Each scene forms a separate picture, but a certain decorative unity or continuity is created by the ever recurring ranges of peaks and by the trees. The small figures on foot or horseback and particularly the animals display great variety in their movements and attitudes, but they are still comparatively isolated, and there is no cohesion between them and the landscapes. The same cave contains also hieratic compositions of Buddhas accompanied by rows of adoring Bodhisattvas and soaring apsaras, stiff and thin figures whose scarfs and draperies are drawn out like pointed wings or feathers. Their connection with the paintings from Kucha and other centres of Buddhist art in Central Asia is at least as close as the correspondence with the remnants of Northern Wei art in China proper, and they form thus interesting proofs of this Western influence, which at the beginning of the sixth century must have been a very important feature in the religious painting all over China.

A similar foreign element is also clearly noticeable in the larger figures in cave 120*n*, and it appears here more to its advantage as the paintings are better preserved. (Pl. 18, 3.) The free and easy drawing imparts life to the figures as well as to the decorative motives which are spread in extraordinary abundance over the whole room. Every square inch of the walls and the ceiling is covered by paintings; the compositions include not only the traditional Buddhas and Bodhisattvas but also figures of a more mythological origin, demons and earthly spirits who support the divinities, adoring monks and donors in great numbers, soaring apsaras, birds, and dragons among spiralling clouds and raining flowers, and around them, framing the different partitions and niches, are borders of angular fringes and waving draperies, flame-like palmettes and tendrils, curving like steel springs. The painters have evidently reproduced traditional ornaments and patterns of design and mixed them freely with this medley of figures, which seem to be drawn in a rather local style. Their concern was not any kind of architectural division of the large spaces; their paintings are rather like colourful tapestries hung over the walls, a kind of festival decoration, to be enjoyed less in detail than in its entirety. The artistic

quality of these paintings is evidently not of a very high class, but the execution bears witness to great technical skill and a stupendous facility to fuse varied motives into a highly entertaining decorative ensemble. The painters who worked at Tun-huang may not have been great creative masters, but they were well trained decorators, and their works should not be forgotten in a study of early Chinese painting, particularly since the more important paintings of a corresponding kind in the temples of central China are all lost without a trace.

Our knowledge of Chinese art in the period of the Six Dynasties is, indeed, very fragmentary, but the remnants of this art that still are preserved all tend to prove a fundamental unity of style in spite of various foreign influences and local schools. It was of little consequence whether the works were executed with the brush or with the chisel, on the eastern or on the far western border of the wide empire, whether for tombs or for temples and palaces, their essential elements of style remained the same. They are expressed in the terse linear rhythm, in the peculiar combination of angular stiffness and soaring mobility and, when at their best, ennobled by a youthful freshness and spiritual beauty, which hardly any other epoch has attained.

(6) *Hsieh Ho's Six Principles of Painting*

The period of the Six Dynasties formed an important chapter in the history of Chinese painting not only through the activity of certain great creative personalities, whose works and styles are described by the old critics, but also because the general principles of Chinese painting, which have remained in force all through the ages, were then formulated. The art of painting had already reached a stage when it became subject to a kind of æsthetic interpretation, and it is remarkable that the very terse and definite terms, in which this found expression, have been accepted as fundamentals in practically all later interpretations or critical appreciations of painting in China.

Hsieh Ho's short treatise *Ku Hua P'in Lu*, Notes about the Classification of Old Pictures, is not only the first of its kind in the history of Chinese art but also the one which offers the most comprehensive precepts or principles for the criticism of painting. The author was a portrait painter of moderate importance, who worked during the Southern Ch'i dynasty (479-501) in Nanking, more famous for his learning and knowledge of the old masters than for his own creations. "The practice of copying earlier artists began with Hsieh Ho, and his method subsequently became, from its easiness of execution, a kind of royal road, though it was found difficult to transfer the inspiration. True copying consists in studying the thought, not the lines of a picture."¹

It would hardly be correct to consider Hsieh Ho's Six Principles as quite new and original inventions of his own; the essential ideas of these principles were probably more or less known and accepted at the time, though Hsieh Ho was the

¹ Cf. Giles, *op. cit.*, p. 28; translation from an unnamed source. Hsieh Ho's position as an able, though not very strong portrait painter is defined by his successor Yao Tsui in his *Hsü Hua P'in*.

first who combined them into a canon of painting, which also has served to carry his name through the ages. For the formulation of these principles he seems to have been dependent on the Book of Changes (*I Ching*), the most venerated of all the Confucian Classics. Similar treatises on poetry and calligraphy were also written about the same period, i.e. Chung Yung's *Shih P'in* and Yü Chien-wu's *Shu P'in*, and they reveal the same inspiration as Hsieh Ho's essay, which originally was called simply *Hua P'in*.¹

Hsieh Ho writes: "All pictures should be classified according to their merits and faults. There are no pictures which do not exercise some influence, be it of an elevating or a debasing kind. The silent records of past generations are unrolled before us when we open a picture. Although the Six Principles (always) existed, few (artists) have been able to apply them all, but from ancient to modern times there have been those who were good in one (or the other).

"Which are these Six Principles? The first is: Resonance of the Spirit; Movement of Life; the second is: Bone Manner; (i.e. Structural) Use of the Brush; the third is: Conform with the Objects (to obtain) their Likeness; the fourth is: According to the Species Apply the Colours; the fifth is: Plan and Design; Place and Position (Composition); the sixth is: Transmitting Models by Drawing.

"Only Lu T'an-wei and Wei Hsieh have applied completely all (these rules). There have always been good and bad paintings, because art as such is the same whether it is old or modern. I have now carefully arranged some painters of old and modern times and classified them according to the above principles. I enter in no lengthy discussion of the origin (of painting), but transmit simply what has come down from the Immortals (*shên-hsien*), not what has been seen or heard."

Then follows an enumeration of twenty-seven painters divided in six classes of gradually decreasing merit, each name being accompanied by a word of characterization (but no historical informations). At the head of the list, in the foremost class, stand Lu T'an-wei, Ts'ao Pu-hsing, and Wei Hsieh; the second class comprises three little known painters: Ku Tsun-chih, Lu Sui, and Yüan Ch'ien in the third class we find Ku K'ai-chih, and Tai K'uei, besides seven other rather obscure painters, and in the following classes names of men who are practically forgotten in Chinese history.

Hsieh Ho's words of introduction and his concluding remarks make it clear that he claims no originality for his six canons or precepts of painting. He transmits what has come down from the ancient sages, which may refer to Confucian as well as to Taoist philosophers, and formulates certain conditions which must be fulfilled by good painting, and which consequently also may be taken as a basis for classification of pictures. He attaches a moral import to painting and looks upon it also as a revelation of ancient history, in conformity with the earlier tradition. He is not a critical historian like Chang Yen-yüan of T'ang, still less an æsthetic like the writers of the Sung period, nor is he a poet or a pantheistic nature worshipper, like Wang

¹ Cf. Sei-ichi Taki's two articles on Hsieh Ho's principles in *Kokka*, 338, 339 (in Japanese).

Wei, Ching Hao or Kuo Hsi. He has, as a matter of fact, no interest in nature as such (in the stricter sense of the word) and keeps his whole attention fixed on figure painting. Landscape painting did not exist as an independent branch at the time of Hsieh Ho.

It is therefore misleading when Hsieh Ho has been credited with a whole philosophy of art or at least with the foundation of the principles of art-appreciation in China, or when his first and all-inclusive rule has been interpreted in conformity with the ideas of later romantic or pantheistic art-philosophers. Chinese critics and art-historians quote him very liberally and seldom hesitate to use the formula of his first principle, "*ch'i yün*," as a characterization of the highest quality in art, but none of them has found it necessary to give a stricter definition of what the old painter meant by this. It was something general and broad enough to be found in every kind of painting, and it could be made to hold Confucian as well as Taoistic or mystical Buddhist ideas. We will find that already the earliest followers of Hsieh Ho among the art-critics, like Li Ssü-chen and Chang Yen-yüan, did not agree with Hsieh Ho's classification, which they found more or less arbitrary.

Modern writers in Western languages have given various interpretations of this first principle, no doubt sometimes in closer accordance with a far more developed art and philosophy than with Hsieh Ho's thoughts. When Giles translates "Rhythmic Vitality", or Okakura writes: "The Life Movement of the Spirit through the Rhythm of Things," their translations imply ideas which certainly go beyond the historical and intellectual limitations of Hsieh Ho.¹ Petrucci, on the other hand, explained Hsieh Ho's Six Principles entirely from a Taoistic point of view, assuming that he still considered pictures as a kind of magic creations, which actually could be transformed into the things they represented.² Such ideas may not have been quite foreign to the old painter, but the terms he used seem, however, to have been derived from Confucian rather than from Taoistic sources. Professor Taki and Waley are of the opinion that the "Spirit" Hsieh Ho speaks of is not Tao, but the Confucian "Spirit of Heaven and Earth", the "subtle Spirit" of the *Book of Changes*.³ The distinction between these different conceptions of the spiritual power that imparts life and significance to material forms, may after all, not have been very clear in the mind of the old writer, and it seems thus futile to go into further discussions of this point.⁴

¹ Cf. Giles, op. cit., p. 29. Okakura, *Ideals of the East* (London, 1905), p. 52.

² Cf. Petrucci, *Kiai Tseu-Yuan Houa Tsouan, Encyclopédie de la Peinture Chinoise* (Paris, 1918), pp. 7-16.

³ Cf. Taki's articles in *Kokka*, 338, 339, and Waley, op. cit., p. 73.

⁴ Some interesting comments on the meaning and importance of *ch'i-yün* are offered by Kuo Jo-hsü in *T'u Hua Chien Wen Chih*, from which the following may be quoted: "The five principles can be learnt but the *ch'i yün* must be inborn in the painter; it cannot be reached by skill or care, or be acquired by practice or experience. It grows in the silence of the soul quite unconsciously."

In examining the masterpieces of old, we find that most of them were done by high officials, great and virtuous men or hermits and scholars who devoted themselves to painting in order to express the deepest, loftiest, and most beautiful concepts. Since their characters were high and noble, they could not but reach the *ch'i yün*; and when the *ch'i yün* was strong, it was naturally followed by the life-movement (*shen-tung*). It is like the saying "the spirit of the spirit which reveals the very essence".

How ever the translations of Hsieh Ho's first principle may vary, it is quite evident that it refers to something beyond the material form, call it character, soul, or expression. It depends on the operation of the spirit or on the mysterious breath of life, by which the figures may become as if they were moving and breathing. Only the greatest masters possessed this in a complete way; Chang Yen-yüan says that Wu Tao-tzŭ had it to such an extent that it hardly could be confined in his paintings. He was truly great, because "a divine power worked through him", and this was evidently more or less the case with all the great painters of antiquity, as explained by the old critics. Some of them may have conceived this power as Tao, others as the Spirit of Heaven and Earth; the name matters not very much, it is only a symbol like the works of art. Their value depends on the degree in which the resonance of the spirit is manifest in them and becomes intelligible through the brush-work and the other qualities defined by Hsieh Ho. Each one of these is of importance for the result as a whole, though none of them is as far-reaching as the first principle.

The structural use of the brush has indeed, as already explained, always been a *conditio sine qua non* in Chinese painting. We shall have frequent occasions to point this out and need hardly dwell on it in this connection.

The demand that things should be represented in accordance with their natural shapes, and that they should be coloured accordingly, may seem rather self-evident, but it must not be forgotten that early Chinese art was of a comparatively abstract kind, and rarely dependent on direct studies from nature. Hsieh Ho lived in a transition period when observation of natural objects was a growing interest among the painters, and his own special merit is said to have been a great fidelity in the representation of his models, their costumes and peculiarities down to the minutest hair. This was evidently to him a principle of greater importance than it was to many painters of later ages.

The principle referring to the proper design or composition of the pictures might give rise to a discussion of this highly important element in art, but as it stands quite unqualified without any indication of how the compositions should be arranged in order to correspond with the ideals of Hsieh Ho, it may be better to leave the discussion until we have studied some further specimens of Chinese painting. Many of the later writers, particularly among the landscape painters, have enlarged upon the subject abundantly, and the artistic significance of the figure paintings is also quite often pre-eminently a result of their designs.

Transmission of classical models by copying (in drawing or colour) is something that the Chinese have carried to the extreme; it became, as a matter of fact, a fundamental feature in their artistic activity. The transmission of classical models meant to them, however, not only an exact reproduction of earlier masters' works, done either by tracing over the picture (*mu*) or by free-hand copying (*lin*), but also a repetition or translation of the old masters' motives and styles in works of individual merit. A large number of the Chinese paintings still preserved are works of this

class, and it is from them that we in some instances may gain an idea of the classical paintings of earlier times. It is evident that their value depends entirely on the ability of the copying or interpreting painter. The method was a safeguard against too easy individual extravagances, but it acted, no doubt, also as a retardating element in the evolution.

Hsieh Ho's six precepts were, after all, principles of classification and criticism rather than practical advice for painters, and he illustrates this himself by the list of painters which is divided in six categories. It is possible that his classification of the painters was meant to correspond more or less to the six principles, which also may be said to be of gradually decreasing importance, though this correspondence remains rather obscure. Li Ssü-chên, who at the beginning of the T'ang dynasty wrote a continuation to Hsieh Ho's treatise, known as *Hsü Hua P'in Lu*, is reported to have opposed in particular Hsieh Ho's classification of Ku K'ai-chih¹; he said: "How could trifles like Hsün Hsü and Wei Hsieh be placed quite arbitrarily at the head of the list and also Ts'ao Pu-hsing above Ku K'ai-chih? Hsieh Ho's criticism is certainly not correct. Ku's ideas were wonderful and creative; he reached the mysterious and was inspired by the gods. He was great enough to outstep Lu T'an-wei and to make Hsün Hsü fall quite flat . . . I would place Ku and Lu together in the highest class."

Chang Yen-yüan devotes a special chapter in his *Ming Hua Chi* to a discussion of Hsieh Ho's six canons, and though he does not offer anything in the way of explanation, some paragraphs of his essay may be worth quoting as historical illustrations of the estimation of Hsieh Ho's writings in the T'ang period:—

"Few painters of old mastered all (the six principles), but I will here discuss them further. Some of the ancient painters knew how to transmit form notwithstanding structure and life (or spirit); yet, the art of painting should be sought for beyond form. This is, however, difficult to communicate to common people. Paintings of to-day may possess outward likeness, but the resonance of the spirit does not become visible in them. If a painting is filled with the resonance of the spirit, then it also has outward likeness.

"The most ancient pictures represent quite crudely ideas in a simple style, yet, they are beautiful and true. Among those early painters were Ku K'ai-chih, Lu T'an-wei, and others. The pictures of the middle ancient period are more carefully worked and full of fine details; they also attain beauty. Chan Tzū-ch'ien, Chêng Fa-shih,² and others were of this time. Pictures of more recent date are luminously brilliant, and also perfect in their way. The works of present day painters are faulty and confused without any meaning, as if they were made by artisans.

"Likeness to nature must be observed in the shapes, but these should have bone (i.e. structure) and spirit (i.e. life). Structure, spirit and shape originate in the directing idea and are expressed by the brush-work. Therefore, those who are skilful in painting are also good in calligraphy."

The writer then speaks about the quaint shapes and appearances of ancient figures, horses, and buildings, and quotes Ku K'ai-chih as to the relative difficulty of painting human figures in comparison with animals, landscapes, and buildings:

¹ Quoted in *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*, iv (Biography of Ku K'ai-chih).

² Two painters of the Sui dynasty, mentioned in our next chapter.

"Ghosts and human beings possessing life and movement must show the operation of the spirit to be perfect. If they do not have this resonance of the spirit, it is in vain that they exhibit fine shapes, and if the brush-work is not vigorous, their colours are useless. Such pictures cannot be called wonderful.

"As for planning and design and right positions (i.e. composition), it is the most general thing in painting.

"The pictures by Ku and Lu and their followers are very rare, and it is difficult to discuss them in detail, but if we look at Wu Tao-hsüan's paintings, it may be said that they contain all the six principles and are perfect in every respect. A god guided his hand; he was creative to the utmost, and the resonance of the spirit was so overwhelmingly strong (in his work) that it hardly could be confined on the silk. His brush-work was very bold and free in the dashing painted wall-pictures, but his small pictures were executed with utmost care. They were divine things.

"As for transmitting models by drawing, which is the least important (of the six principles), the painters of to-day are fairly good in drawing the outer form and in obtaining some likeness, but they give no resonance of the spirit. Their pictures may be prepared with colours, but they are wanting in brush-work. How can such things be called painting? Alas, for men of to-day, they do not reach the art.

"The painters of to-day mix their brushes and their ink with dust and dirt and their colours with mud producing simply dirty silk. How can that be called painting? In ancient times the great painters were highly cultured and noble minded men, retired scholars and high officials who exercised an influence on their time and whose fame has been transmitted for ages. Truly no worthless and mean loafers could do what they did."

III

THE TRANSITION PERIOD

(1) *Political and Religious Conditions*

The historical events which led to the overthrow of the Northern Ch'i (550-557) and the Northern Chou (557-581) dynasties by the founder of the Sui dynasty have often been retold and need hardly detain us in this connection; their influence on the artistic development was only of an indirect kind. The unification of the whole country under the Sui emperor seems, however, to have implied a concentration or a revival of the creative forces of the nation, a beginning of the national Renaissance which reached its full development during the early part of the T'ang period.

This first became manifest in regard to the Buddhist religion, which during the early years of the Sui dynasty (581-618) was raised into a more dominating official position than it had held before; in fact, it is said of the founder of the Sui dynasty that he used Buddhism as a basis for restoring the unity of the empire. His zeal for erecting and restoring temples and for their decoration with statues and paintings must have been extraordinary. According to the traditional records, no fewer than 3,792 new temples were built, 106,580 statues of gold, silver, sandal-wood, ivory, and stone were made for the sanctuaries, thousands of old temples and statues were restored, and from the little we know about the buildings, it may be assumed that many of them were decorated with wall paintings.

The pictorial art of this period must, to a large extent, have been of a religious type, and much of it was done by monks or by painters who specialized in Buddhist art. But it has all perished, partly in the severe persecutions of later times, when so many temples were burned, and partly through the decay of the wooden buildings, which had comparatively little power of resistance. We have no longer any genuine examples to fall back upon for a closer study and characterization of the pictorial art of the Sui dynasty, but if we may base some conclusions on an analogy with the plastic arts, it is evident that the religious painting of the Sui period was of rather a hieratic type, and that it held stylistically an intermediary place between the relatively abstract linear mode of the Six Dynasties and the more plastically developed manner of the T'ang period. We are told about certain painters of the Sui period that they were aiming at effects of relief and a kind of pictorial illusion, which hitherto had been unknown. They took an interest in problems of modelling and tridimensional representation, which had hardly existed before, though their means of expression probably were still closely akin to those used by the previous generation.

Parallel with the modification of the pictorial style went a gradual change in the religious iconography. In the earlier temple paintings Maitreya Buddha and Shākyamuni had held the most prominent places and been the objects of popular worship, but these divinities were now more and more over-shadowed by Amitābha Buddha, the Lord of Boundless Light and Ruler of the Western

Paradise. Amitābha became the centre of the great religious compositions; the scenes of his paradise the most popular motives of the painters. A kind of counterpart to Amitābha's Western Paradise was formed in the Eastern Paradise of Baishaiyaguru, the Buddha of Healing. Besides these Buddhas the great Bodhisattvas, Avalokiteśvara, Samantabhadra, and Mañjuśrī, reached an increasing popularity, and were represented in thousands of pictures and statues. We have good reason to believe that the iconographic modes which prevail in the Tun-huang paintings of the ninth and tenth centuries were already introduced in the Sui period in the art of Central China.

The preponderance of religious art during the generation that preceded the T'ang dynasty should not make us forget, however, that there were prominent painters who devoted themselves to other subjects, such as legendary illustrations, portraits, animals, buildings, and natural scenery. The long scrolls representing continuous views of mountains and water already existed at this time, though the compositions may have been of a more map-like kind than in the later landscape scrolls. We are informed that some of them were executed in colour, but as not one of them has been preserved, it seems futile to speculate on their style or artistic importance. The two great Sui emperors, Wên Ti (581-604) and Yang Ti (605-616), had both important collections of paintings and calligraphies, but if we may accept the account of Chang Yen-yüan, as quoted in a previous chapter, they were almost completely destroyed in the havoc wrought by wars and other catastrophies, so that only 300 remained when T'ang Kao Tsu took possession of the imperial palaces.

(2) *The Leading Painters*

One of the most influential of the early painters of this transition period was Ts'ao Chung-ta, who lately has been made the subject of critical investigations. His foreign-sounding name has been interpreted by Waley as an indication that he came from the country of Ts'ao, a small kingdom near Samarkand, but Professor Pelliot considers it more probable that he was of purely Chinese origin.¹ We know for certain that he was the pupil of a Chinese painter and that he was invested with an official title. His activity started during the Northern Ch'i dynasty, and was continued under the first Sui emperor. Most famous among his works were the

¹ Cf. Waley, *op. cit.*, p. 86. Professor Pelliot has given a highly interesting critical account of all the records relating to Ts'ao Chung-ta in his article "Les Fresques de Touen-houang, et les Fresques de M. Eumorfopoulos," *Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, vol. v, n° iii-iv. Students interested in the literary sources of the history of early Chinese painting can wish for no better reading than this article, which contains an analysis of the various historical, literary, and philological problems *re* the traditions surrounding Ts'ao Chung-ta. From this it may also be realized that a critical history of early Chinese painting can hardly be written before more preparatory studies of the same kind have been accomplished. A characteristic example of the confusion created by an uncritical use of the Chinese sources is the priest Kabodha or Ka Fo-t'o, who on the authority of Chang Yen-yüan, has been described by Bushell, Hirth, Giles, and other modern writers as a leading master of the Sui period. Professor Pelliot, in his article, *Notes sur quelques peintres des Six Dynasties et des T'ang*; *T'oung Pao*, vol. xxii, 1923, has shown that this priest lived nearly a hundred years earlier, and that his only historically known work was a painting of some Buddhist figures over the doorway to a monk's cell at Shao-lin-ssü.

great wall paintings in the K'ai-yuan temple in Ch'ang-an, executed somewhere between 577 and 589, but portraits, hunting scenes, and horses are also mentioned among his works. The critics of the T'ang period who write about Ts'ao Chung-ta praise him particularly for his representations of "Hindu" (i.e. Indian or Buddhist) subjects; Chang Yen-yüan goes so far as to consider him one of the principal founders of Buddhist art in China. He writes: "Ts'ao originated the cult of Buddha; there are three manners of painting Buddha; one is the manner of the school of Ts'ao, another the manner of the school of Chang (Sêng-yu), the third the manner of the school of Wu (Tao-tzū)."

The rather startling assertion that Ts'ao "originated the cult of Buddha" is interpreted by Professor Pelliot as an indication that Ts'ao Chung-ta was the originator of the great representations of Amitābha's Paradise, which from now onwards became the most popular decorations on the walls of the Buddhist temples in China. It may, however, also be remembered that another critic of a somewhat later date, Kuo Jo-hsü (c. 1060-1110), points out stylistic differences in the works of Ts'ao Chung-ta and Wu Tao-tzū, which may help to give some idea of the two principal currents in the religious art of the Sui and T'ang periods: "Ts'ao-ta's figures were clad in garments which clung to the body; they looked as if they had been drenched in water, whereas the mantles on Wu's figures were draped in billowing folds and looked as if they had been caught by the wind." He adds that "the same distinction of the Ts'ao and Wu schools existed in sculpture", a remark which makes it clear that the Ts'ao style was the early Indian mode, known for instance from Gupta sculpture and its off-shoots in Central Asia and Northern China, whereas Wu's style was a freer individual manner, reflecting fuller realization of the plastic form and a dramatic pathos which blows like a whirlwind through his conceptions. Without knowing the original works of either of these painters, it is impossible to say how far these differences should be stressed, but the probabilities are that Ts'ao Chung-ta represented the conservative traditions of style, while Wu Tao-tzū was more of an innovator. Some of the great Buddhist compositions representing Amitābha's Paradise or similar motives known to us through the Tun-huang paintings and later specimens from Chinese temples may be based on designs by Ts'ao Chung-ta, who evidently first translated these motives into compositions that became generally accepted and frequently reproduced. Whatever his individual artistic merits may have been, he can hardly be denied a prominent place in the history of Chinese art as a transmitter and originator of certain classic types of Buddhist painting.¹

The painters of the Sui dynasty most commonly mentioned by the Chinese chroniclers are: Chan Tzū-ch'ien, who was famous for his paintings of carriages and horses; Chêng Fa-shih, who excelled in painting festivals and processions; Sun

¹ Cf. Pelliot, *op. cit.*, Extrait, p. 28. "Tout ce qu'on peut dire, c'est que le type des Paradis d'Amitābha auquel restait traditionnellement attaché le souvenir de Ts'ao Tchoung-ta usait vraisemblablement d'un drapé plus appliqué, plus voisin de la 'draperie mouillée', que les étoffes plus flottantes des fresques de Wou Tao-tseu."

Shang-tzū, who was known for his pictures of spirits and devils; Tung Po-jên, whose speciality was buildings, carts, and horses; Yang Ch'i-tan, who painted court scenes and beautiful ladies; and the Khotanese painter Wei-ch'ih Po-chih-na, who was a master of Buddhist subjects. Chang Yen-yüan, who makes the above distinction, adds, however¹: "When I say that they excelled in one thing, it does not mean that they could not master other subjects with equal skill. (Most of them, as a matter of fact, painted also religious motives, but each one had his favourite subjects and was apt to treat them with more zeal and fondness than the rest.) Chan Tzū-ch'ien was also good at painting houses and trees, but not to the same extent as Tung Po-jên." Li Ssü-chên said: "Tung was skilful enough to represent every detail of a large and beautiful building, and Chan could produce the best looking team of four horses, that ever was harnessed." He seems as a matter of fact to have painted a great number of pictures representing horses and travellers; four such motives are among the paintings by Chan mentioned in *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u* and two of his most famous paintings (described in *Ch'ing-ho Shu Hua Fang*) represented *Ch'ang-an Horse-carts* and *Travellers in Spring-time*. They were executed in a very fine manner with soft vaporous colouring. The greater part of his activity was, however, devoted to the many newly erected or restored temples in the capital. Ten different temples with wall paintings by Chan are mentioned in *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*, and there were probably more of them beside scrolls and hanging pictures with Buddhist motives. His greatest artistic achievement was the representation of space, "even the smallest picture of his comprised ten thousand li"—an expression which is often used in regard to later paintings, but, as far as I can recall, not in reference to works of earlier men. He was in this respect an immediate forerunner of Li Ssü-hsün and therefore sometimes called "the grandfather of T'ang painting". Chan Tzū-ch'ien must have been a very important transition master; he started already under the Northern Ch'i dynasty (550-577) and continued his activity to the end of the Sui dynasty (618).²

A painter who reached great fame towards the end of the Sui period, and who probably also enjoyed the favour of the two first T'ang emperors was Wei-ch'ih Po-chih-na. He was a member of the royal family of Khotan, but must have lived for many years in the Chinese capital, because he is mentioned (in *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*) as the painter of several frescoes in the temples at Ch'ang-an. These are, of course, all destroyed long ago, but the Chinese critics tell us that his style was bold

¹ *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*, ii, 1.

² Chan Tzū-ch'ien worked sometimes in co-operation with Tung Po-jên, his nearest colleague among the painters at the Sui court. A copy after a picture made by these two men is said to have existed in the Manchu Household collection. It was shown in an exhibition in Peking, 1923, and Dr. Ferguson describes it as follows: "It represents three mounted men standing in front of a gate half opened by a servant. Inside a thatched fence is a small pavilion in which a man is seated. The seated figure is that of Chu-ko Liang, who led a life in retirement in a reed hut which was thrice visited by Liu Pei before he was granted an interview. This picture is on paper and is richly coloured. It was probably produced during the Sung or Yüan dynasty." (op. cit., p. 59.)

and free, and that his paintings were remarkable for their life-like expression. Beside Buddhist subjects he painted also flowers and curious objects from foreign lands.

The activity of Wei-ch'ih Po-chih-na in Ch'ang-an was continued by his son Wei-ch'ih I-seng who, because of his close association with his father, may be mentioned at this place, though his artistic activity really belongs to the early part of the T'ang period. According to the tradition which is transmitted in *T'ang Ch'ao Ming Hua Lu* (and later works), Wei-ch'ih I-seng was sent by the ruler of his home country at the beginning of the Chêng-kuan era (627-649), because of his skill in painting, to the T'ang capital, and here he executed some very interesting frescoes, for instance in the Tz'ü-ên ssü, a Thousand-armed and -eyed Kuanyin among flowers in relief, and in Kuang-tsê ssü, Descending Devils, of the most extraordinary shapes and with infinite variations. "All that he painted, spirits, human figures, flowers, and birds, he treated in a foreign fashion and not according to Chinese tradition." He was considered equal to Yen Li-pên, and became known as the Little Wei-ch'ih in distinction to his father, who was called the Great Wei-ch'ih. Chang Yen-yüan says that his brushwork was tight and strong like bent iron or coiled wire, while his father painted in a broader manner with a more powerful brush.¹ The particular feature of Wei-ch'ih I-seng's paintings which, however, seems to have awakened the greatest interest and admiration was his way of representing flowers in relief; it is mentioned by various critics as something very unusual, a feature which distinguished his works from those of the native painters. It was evidently something he had learnt at home, in Khotan, a manner of painting which had been further developed in Central Asia than in China.

It seems possible that we may get some idea about this kind of painting through some of the frescoes in the von Le Coq collection in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin, which represent birds and flowers. I am thinking in particular of two paintings which originally formed parts of a temple floor at Karakhodja (in the Turfan district) and which are dated by von Le Coq to the seventh or eighth century, though they may perhaps be a little earlier.² They are executed in a very careful *al fresco* technique and represent billowing water on which some flowers, birds, sea-animals, and dragons are floating. The deep green water is conventionalized with yellowish spirals and on this the flowers, birds, and animals are painted in lighter reddish and yellowish tones almost as if rising out of the water. The whole design has a wonderful sweep, and it may well be said of its various parts, as of Wei-ch'ih I-seng's flowers, that they appear in relief, an effect which may have been still more striking when the painting was seen from above, spread out over the floor. (Pl. 19.) If Wei-ch'ih I-seng's fresco paintings were as strong and bold as this, he was a great painter; it may at least be assumed that he worked in a similar tradition.

¹ *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*, iv, 1.

² Cf. A. von Le Coq, *Buddhistische Spätantike*, vol. iii, Pls. 24, 25.

Of his pictures mentioned in the *Hsüan-ho* catalogue seven represented Buddhist subjects and one foreign people. A combination of these two kinds of motives may be seen in a still existing painting which probably reproduces a composition by the artist, though it is executed at a later date. It belonged formerly to the Tuan Fang collection, but forms now part of the Freer Gallery in Washington; and represents the Lokapāla Vaiśravaṇa (Guardian of the North), crowned and mail-coated, seated on some crouching devils and carrying his emblem, a small pagoda, on the right hand. On either side stands a Bodhisattva (possibly Kuanyin and Vajrapani) and behind them one military and one civil official. The whole group is appearing against the empty background without any other indication of a locality than what is suggested by the canopy, which floats over their heads surrounded by conventionalized clouds. Quite independent of the main group are the figures of the two kneeling musicians and a dancing girl which appear lower down in the picture. They are characterized as foreigners of Aryan type with light curly hair, and the music and dancing which they execute are not of the same kind as such performances in purely Chinese pictures. The somewhat dry and mechanical execution with uniformly sharp lines and great insistence on the ornamental details, for instance in the carpets, reveals a copying hand, which seems to have followed the pattern of the original very closely and to have lost most of the artistic significance in an effort to trace faithfully the forms and the ornaments.

This picture has, however, been published several times as a work by Wei-ch'ih I-seng, because it corresponds to a painting which Chang Ch'ou had acquired and which he describes most enthusiastically in *Ch'ing-ho Shu Hua Fang*, as follows¹: "The Cloud-covered Heavenly King. Paintings by Wei-ch'ih I-seng are nowadays seldom seen, the reason being that his name is not mentioned in the Taoist or Buddhist records of the Chin and T'ang periods. Now for the first time I acquired a coloured picture scroll (*chüan*) mounted in the Sung period, representing T'ien Wang, which caused me an extraordinary joy. I secured it quite recently, though I knew it thoroughly. If I had not seen this genuine work with my own eyes, I would have missed one of the great masters of the country. I expressed my admiration as follows: 'I-seng's manner of painting was clear and perfect. The small picture of T'ien Wang is a very skilfully executed wonderful thing, equal to the works of Ku K'ai-chih and Lu T'an-wei and reaching those of Yen Li-pên and Wu Tao-tzū. I burned incense as I unrolled it, and saw like a fluttering of

¹ While the picture still formed part of the Tuan Fang Collection it was published in the Chinese Art-review, *Chung-kuo Ming Hua Lu* (1909). On the basis of this reproduction Dr. Herbert Müller wrote an article about the picture in *Ostasiat. Zeitschrift*, 1920, extolling it as an original work by Wei-ch'ih I-seng. Waley mentions it *en passant* without pronouncing on its age (op. cit., p. 108), together with a scroll in the collection of Mr. Berenson which contains the same dancing and playing figures and "almost certainly preserves the design of a T'ang picture". These two pictures were again published in an article in *Dedalo*, 1928, by Sir Aurel Stein and Mr. Laurence Binyon. According to the former, the dancing and playing figures would have been borrowed from the Berenson scroll to the Buddhist picture; Mr. Binyon points out that the latter cannot be a work of the T'ang period, but must have been executed at a much later date.

approaching spirits. When Wu Tao-tzū afterwards painted *T'ien Wang under the clouds* and *T'ien Wang holding the pagoda*, he took this as a model, but he could not reach its tranquil depth. (It is mounted in the Northern Sung fashion as a hanging scroll with "sleeves".)' "

In addition to this description Chang Ch'ou enumerates twenty-seven seals on the picture, and quotes a record, according to which, it was remounted in 1032 by order of Emperor Jên Tsung. In a colophon he informs us furthermore that he acquired it in 1629 from the Hsiang family. Its former owner had been the famous collector Hsiang Mo-lin, who also had provided it with at least half a dozen seals and written (in 1582) a most enthusiastic colophon to the picture.

The informations offered by Chang Ch'ou about the picture, its seals, inscriptions and mounting, correspond exactly to what we find in the painting now in the Freer Gallery, and the conclusion seems thus practically unavoidable that it is actually the same thing that was so highly praised by the collectors of the Ming period and probably also the same that existed in the Sung period in the imperial collection. I have not had an opportunity of scrutinizing the picture itself, but judging from the photograph, I should say that it hardly can be earlier than Sung. It may be one of the many copies executed at that time to meet the desire of the imperial collectors. (Pl. 20, 2.) Its comparatively late execution becomes still more evident if we compare it with another replica of the same composition in the Palace Museum in Peking, which bears the following inscription: *Pin-ka-lo with all his treasures by Wu Tao-tzū*. (Pl. 20, 1.) This picture in Peking is executed with deep colours and golden outlines on dark blue silk. It is evidently of great age and may be of the T'ang period, though it is surprising to find a painting executed in this very painstaking, almost ornamental, fashion ascribed to Wu Tao-tzū. But if the information offered by Chang Ch'ou is correct, that Wu Tao-tzū used Wei-ch'ih I-seng's *T'ien Wang* as a model in painting the same subject, one may well be led to the conclusion that the picture in the Palace Museum is a work of his.

However this may be, it is evident that the Chinese artist followed very closely a foreign model in doing his work. The whole thing is not in Chinese fashion and the dancing and playing figures in particular are clearly Iranian or Tocharian types. The whirling dance of the girl is unlike any dance represented in purely Chinese works of art, and the "p'i-p'a" of the red-bearded musician is also a foreign instrument. It may be that Wei-ch'ih I-seng, or some closely related painter, first composed these figures for some other picture, such as *The Dancing Girls of Kutch*, and then also utilized them in the Buddhist composition, where they appear somewhat strange and surprisingly realistic.¹ The Chinese, however,

¹ Waley, *op. cit.*, p. 108, points out that Wei-ch'ih I-seng's picture *Dancing Girls from Kutch* existed in the collection of Chao Tu-ch'eng in the thirteenth century, and expresses the opinion that it may have been the original of the scroll now in Mr. Berenson's collection which, indeed, seems very probable.

admired these foreign figures as well as the fashion of painting flowers in relief greatly and may well have done their best in copying them.

The two Wei-ch'ih, father and son, were evidently the foremost representatives at the beginning of the T'ang period, of the Indo-Iranian or Central Asiatic current of style, which became of great consequence for the further development of religious painting in China. They executed wall paintings in many temples, mentioned in *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*, and as Wu Tao-tzŭ, a hundred years later, painted in some of the same temples he must, indeed, have had excellent opportunities of studying their works and of assimilating certain elements of style from these great foreign masters.

IV

THE EARLY T'ANG PERIOD

The first hundred years of the T'ang dynasty were, in the field of painting, hardly more than an introduction to the brilliant efflorescence, which became manifest in the reign of Emperor Ming Huang (713-755). Painting followed still to a large extent the same tracks as during the Sui dynasty; the majority of the pictures produced during this century were of a religious type; others had a moral or political purpose, as for instance Yen Li-pên's representations of foreign envoys bringing tribute to the Chinese court, but comparatively few were as yet free individual creations such as landscapes, animals, flowers, or scenes of daily life. It was only towards the end of the seventh century that the pictorial renderings of the life of nature began to acquire an independent importance, and painting became a means of expressing spiritual ideas of a different order than those belonging to the Buddhist or Taoist religion.

(1) *Religious Painting*

From the little we know about Chinese painting during these early years of the T'ang period, it may be assumed, that it was rather strongly influenced by the stylistic currents of India and Central Asia. This influence was transmitted not only by foreign painters, such as the above-mentioned Wei-ch'ih I-seng, but also by many Buddhist pilgrims who brought back with them to China reproductions of famous paintings and sculptures which served as models for the artists at home. We hear also about Chinese artists who went to India as, for instance, the sculptor and painter Sung Fa-chih, while another artist, Fan Ch'ang-shou, is said to have illustrated the *Hsi-kuo chih*, a chronicle about Wang Hsüan-ts'ê's travels to the Western countries.¹ The Indian influence may also be observed in many of the finest compositions at Tun-huang in which the designs of the seventh and eighth centuries prevailed for a long time.

The wall paintings in the temples at Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang, of which Chang Yen-yüan offers an abundant list, may in part have been of a somewhat more progressed type; many of them were done by the greatest masters of the time, and they became, no doubt, models for similar paintings in other parts of the country. But no trace of the original paintings remain. Many of them may have been destroyed during the severe Buddhist persecutions in 841-45, and those which possibly survived, have met destruction in later times as the wooden buildings decayed, burned, or were demolished. As far as we know, there are no longer any wall paintings, or so-called frescoes, existent in China, which may be dated to the T'ang period or earlier, though early dates sometimes have been attached to such paintings particularly when sold to foreign collectors or museums.

Only on the utmost western and beyond the eastern border of China have some

¹ Cf. Omura, *Chung-kuo Mei Shu Shih*, p. 65.

great wall paintings survived which may serve to give us an idea of this religious art on a monumental scale, even though not executed by any leading master. Their historical importance is thus greater than their artistic significance, and they are furthermore of great iconographic interest as illustrations to the cult of Amitābha and Baishaiyaguru, or the Western and the Eastern Paradise, which now reached its highest development.

The finest of the still existing wall paintings in T'ang style are not in China but in Japan: in the Kondō (Golden Hall) of Hōryūji at Nara. They were probably executed at the beginning of the seventh century by painters who came from Korea, but whose training and stylistic ideals were thoroughly Chinese. The paintings which they left at Hōryūji are as a matter of fact works of the same noble and strong type as the best purely Chinese products of the T'ang period in stone or bronze.

There are four main compositions, executed *al secco* on the plastered walls, each consisting of a seated Buddha surrounded by standing Bodhisattvas and bhikshus. The best preserved picture is the one on the west wall representing Baishaiyaguru, the Buddha of Healing, seated in western fashion, with both feet on the ground, and holding in his lifted right hand the box of medicine. (Pl. 21.) On either side of him stand two Bodhisattvas, two Lokapālas (the Guardians of the Four Quarters of the World), and a bhikshu (monk). Lower down may be distinguished, rather faintly, two men adoring (now practically destroyed). Over the head of the Buddha spreads a decorated canopy and two soaring apsaras (heavenly dancers or "angels"). The composition is impressively hieratic. The figures are powerful, the tall Bodhisattvas appear still, in spite of their highly decorated skirt-like "dhoti", quite manly; and there is an air of stateliness and refinement about all these divine beings, which carries inspiration, though their beauty has been subjected to the wear and tear of long ages. The colours have darkened (in the central figure), or faded (in the side figures), but the firm, yet highly sensitive drawing is still plainly distinguished.

The other compositions represent: Shākyamuni Buddha, seated on the lotus throne in the dharmachakra mudrā (gesture of teaching), accompanied by only two Bodhisattvas, which are, however, particularly beautiful (Pl. 22); Amitābha Buddha, seated on a high dais, accompanied by four bhikshus and two Bodhisattvas; and Ratnasambhava (the Buddha of Precious Birth), seated on a high lotus pedestal, attended by three figures on either side. This last composition on the east wall, however, is almost obliterated. The same very poor state of preservation makes also the detached Bodhisattvas, four standing and four seated, very difficult to distinguish. They are hardly more than faint tracings or reflexes of a great religious art; but whatever remains of them is of such nobility that we look in vain for anything of the same quality among the frescoes which have been preserved in China. (Pl. 23.)

The only picture, known to us, which in style and quality approaches these

frescoes is the fragment of the so-called *Hokke Mandara*, belonging to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. (Pl. 24.) It represents Shākyamuni seated on the sacred mountain, "the Vulture Peak," surrounded by devas, Bodhisattvas, and bhikshus, a composition which indicates that it was made for a temple of the T'ien-tai school. Unfortunately, the lower portion of the picture is now destroyed, and the landscape in which the figures are placed is hardly visible. The two Bodhisattvas placed at the sides of Shākyamuni resemble rather closely some of the figures in the Hōryūji paintings. But this picture appears more Japanese in style than the frescoes, which may be explained by the fact that, according to an inscription, it was restored by a Japanese artist in 1148. The original Chinese painting is thus rather blurred, but it should nevertheless be remembered as a unique specimen of T'ien-t'ai art of the T'ang dynasty, suggestive of great dignity and mystic beauty.

Not a few of those numerous fresco-paintings which in late years have been transferred from temples in northern China to museums in America (Philadelphia, Cambridge, Toronto) and England (British Museum, Eumorfopoulos Collection) have been hailed as specimens of T'ang art.¹ Such claims are, however, mostly echoes of Chinese traditions, based on the fact that the compositions reproduce old designs, while the execution is of a later period. The lack of corresponding dated specimens makes it exceedingly difficult to propose definite dates for these detached fresco-paintings, but if we may draw some conclusions from a comparison with Buddhist sculpture, it may be presumed that none of them is earlier than the thirteenth century. The three great Bodhisattvas in the British Museum, which by their extraordinary size and refinement are most impressive, may be works of the thirteenth century (or possibly the fourteenth), and the same date may be proposed for the very beautiful Bodhisattva frescoes in the entrance hall of Mr. C. T. Loo's Chinese house in Paris, while the rest of the frescoes in the British Museum, the Fogg Museum in Cambridge, Mass., and the University Museum in Philadelphia probably are works of the Ming dynasty. No period in Chinese history was more active in restoring and redecorating temples than the Yung Lo epoch (1403-1424). It marked a kind of national renaissance; the general endeavour was then to re-establish as much as possible of the lost glories of the great T'ang era. This was often done in a somewhat superficial fashion, but the principles of design were borrowed as nearly as possible from the remains of T'ang art, which at that time may still have existed.

Among the fresco paintings in the Tun-huang cave temples, reproduced in Professor Pelliot's portfolios, are some which show a close resemblance to the Hōryūji wall paintings and consequently may be approximately of the same period or not very much later. The best examples of these are found in cave 146 (Pls. 118, 119) where Amitābha Buddha is represented accompanied by Bodhisattvas and bhikshus in quite the same fashion as Amitābha and Baishaiyaguru in the Kondō of

¹ Cf. L. Binyon, *The George Eumorfopoulos Collection, Catalogue of Chinese Frescoes*. London, 1927, pp. 8-14, and Professor Pelliot's review of this publication in *Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, vol. v, nos. iii-iv.

Hōryūji. These rather simple and well-unified and isolated groups are, however, gradually developed into much richer representations of the Western and the Eastern Paradise with a growing display of figures combined with landscapes and architectural motives. In cave 104 (Pl. 187) the central group has become a large gathering of heavenly beings around Amitābha and above his head is a separate small representation of the Western Paradise, while small illustrations to the Jātakas fill out the free spaces on either side.¹ The evolution becomes still more noticeable in cave 70 (Pls. 118–25) where Amitābha's and Baishaiyaguru's heavenly realms are represented in an entirely new fashion. The central groups are isolated on platforms or balustraded terraces, rising in several steps, and the illustrative legendary scenes are arranged in broad borders at the sides and below. There is no connection between these two elements; the central portion is framed by an abundant display of balustrades, towers, and gateways, seen from above and drawn with a system of converging lines, which suggest a certain depth, while the small illustrations at the sides are scattered over a large landscape, which has no actual unity of space. The landscape is continuous in a decorative sense, but the viewpoint changes with every scene, and it does not matter how far away or how high up in the mountains the scenes are placed, we are always looking down upon them from above, as we are travelling with the artist from the one place to the other. (Pl. 25.) This continuous moving of the viewpoint is the same expedient as in the long picture-chronicles, though it is here combined with a large landscape scenery, which at first sight produces an impression of unity. The method of composition is very much the same as has been applied in numerous Chinese landscapes of later ages with no fixed horizon and no definite viewpoint, i.e. descriptive representations of imaginative scenery, which forms the stage for successive actions in a story.

When a single action is represented in a somewhat larger composition, the result becomes a more complete and finished picture, as may be observed for instance in the representation of the *Battle before the City of Kūsinagara* (when the relics of Buddha were to be divided). (Pl. 26.) The illustration is reduced to its essential elements, i.e. the city and the warriors of the tribes in fighting away; the former consisting of a kind of pavilion or palatial gateway enclosed by high fortified walls, the latter of two rows of five soldiers each, and some other figures, which await the result of the battle or march away in procession. The whole thing is, as usual, presented from above, and every figure as well as every portion of the architectural motive is drawn from a different viewpoint so as to obtain the greatest clearness of detail. But the artist has at the same time accentuated certain leading parallel lines in the drawing of the city walls as well as in the arrangement of the figures, and as these recede obliquely towards the background, the third dimension is brought out in the same fashion as in many Chinese and Japanese picture-scrolls of later times. The

¹ We are following in the main the chronology proposed by Dr. L. Bachhofer in his previously mentioned article in *Münchener Jahrbuch*, 1931.

details have become subject to a relative unity of space, which also supports the very striking decorative effect produced by the contrast between the moving figures in the foreground and the city walls in the background. There is an element of strength and severe grandeur in this composition which many later representations of similar motives lack.

The paintings in this cave no. 70 form evidently one of the most interesting chapters in the great picture chronicle of Tun-huang, which was continued during at least five centuries. They may be from the early part of the eighth century, when Chinese art seems to have reached a relative culmination at this place. About the middle of the eighth century Tun-huang came under the domination of the Tibetans, who remained the rulers here for nearly a century, and during this period some change must have become manifest in the general orientation of the Tun-huang painters. The fundamentally Chinese style is modified by a closer connection with Indian painting, which becomes visible particularly in the hieratic figures.

The relative high artistic level of these pictures from the middle of the eighth century may also be observed in the fragments of fresco-paintings, from cave 140, which Mr. Langdon Warner has brought to the Fogg Museum in Cambridge, Mass. The plates which Professor Pelliot offers from this cave (Pls. 307-311) show no paradise but simply rows of Bodhisattvas and legendary illustrations (besides the poorly restored sculptural group on the altar), and these are arranged very much according to the same continuous manner of composition as in cave 70. The two caves are of approximately the same period, which also is verified by the costumes of some of the female figures (see, for instance, Pl. 307). Two of the fragments in the Fogg Museum represent busts of Bodhisattvas, one of them together with other saints (Pl. 28), while the third fragment shows a group of three men, of whom one is lifting an axe aiming a deadly blow at the monk in front of him. (Pl. 29.) The Bodhisattva heads have the quality of great sculptures; they are not only drawn but modelled with remarkable strength, and the men in the last-named fragment possess a high degree of dramatic expression. We feel the tension in the slim man with the raised axe, the cowardly slyness of the companion who is sneaking behind his back, and the calm composure of the man, who in a moment will have his skull fractured. Not having seen any other original fresco paintings from Tun-huang, I was much impressed by the artistic standard of these, and they made me realize that the Tun-huang frescoes of the best period are by no means common artisans' works or inferior to the pictures on silk or canvas from the same place.¹ It is possible that painting at Tun-huang remained a little behind the art of more central places in China, but I doubt whether the ordinary wall paintings at Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang exhibited a much higher standard of style than these fragments from Tun-huang. Very good painters must have been

¹ Binyon's opinion that the frescoes at Tun-huang are "decidedly provincial and archaic" and inferior to the portable pictures from the same place, is certainly too sweeping. Cf. *Catalogue of the Eumorfopoulos Collection of Chinese Frescoes*, p. 12.

attracted to this place at its time of glory, but the high standard was evidently not sustained during the later centuries of artistic activity at Tun-huang.

One may well speak of an evolution in the representation of space in the later frescoes, as demonstrated by Dr. Bachhofer, but it is of a very formal kind benefiting in particular the architectural elements of the designs. The compositions become thus more clearly divided and better unified in an architectural sense, but as far as can be judged from the reproductions, something of the imaginative freshness and flowing ease in the illustrations was lost, and the style grew more dry and exact. The pictures that illustrate this gradual change are found in the caves 34 (Pl. 72), 31 (Pls. 66 and 67), 120 G (Pl. 249) and 139 A (Pl. 303). Through these examples one may follow the growing tendency towards a definite architectural disposition or partition of the walls. The illustrative scenes are arranged into series of separate pictures and become thus like album leaves instead of being like a continuous vertical scroll. Each one of them is a separate unit or stage, still seen from above and rendered with isometric perspective, which evidently was the method most familiar to the painters of the Far East and best suited to their pictorial imagination. But the large central scenes, Amitābha's or Baishaiyaguru's paradise, are represented from a lower station-point which gradually becomes relatively fixed. It would be wrong to speak about a centralized linear perspective with an absolutely fixed station-point in these pictures, but there is a more or less close approximation to it in the drawing of the architectural framework. If we look at the picture of Amitābha's paradise in cave 139 A as an example, we find that the two staged terraces and the enclosing pavilions and gateways are drawn from a central point, approximately at the height of the upper figures, the upper parts are seen from below and the terraces from above, and the lines are clearly converging. The perspective construction is not strictly carried out in all the parts (see, for instance, the corner-towers!), nor does it include the figures, but it is a very good approximation, which serves to convey a remarkable impression of unified space. It is not usual to find such a close approximation of a perspective construction in Chinese paintings, and it can hardly be explained except by an influence from Indian models. The same influence is also noticeable in the drawing of the figures, particularly the central Buddha with the narrow waist. The picture may date from the beginning of the ninth century when Tun-huang was dominated by the Tibetans.

The figures are placed, as usual, on the different terraces in hieratic attitudes; in the middle a large Buddha on the raised lotus throne; at his sides four somewhat smaller Bodhisattvas, likewise on lotus thrones, and between them minor saints. Pavilions with other saints are placed at the sides, while the background is filled with large decorative gateways in which the canopies of the figures seem to be suspended. In front of this upper terrace are three balustraded platforms rising from a lotus pond; on the middle one a dancing girl is performing her art with great zeal to the rhythmic music produced by two rows of heavenly musicians seated at

either side of the platform. On the two side platforms are seated Buddhas, accompanied by some minor Bodhisattvas contemplating the heavenly dancer.

This kind of courtly assemblies on balustraded platforms, rising from lotus ponds and connected by bridges, are developed with an ever increasing number of divisions and figures in several of the later frescoes. In fact, the compositions become so extensive and rich in details that they hardly can be appreciated in small reproductions. Examples of these later paradises may be seen in the plates from caves 52 (Pl. 90) and 74 (Pls. 134-136). The successive platforms are here so crowded with figures that one may wonder how the slender poles on which they rest will support the weight. The execution is much more schematic than in the earlier pictures, and the types and costumes of the personages, particularly the donors, have changed. This is, no doubt, due to a now predominating influence from the Uigurs, who since 873 had become the masters of the surrounding country and established their capital at Urumchi. Dr. Bachhofer has pointed out the close resemblance between this later art of Tun-huang and the Uigur paintings from Turfan (in Berlin); the stylistic connection is quite evident. The people who acted as donors at Tun-huang in the tenth century must have been almost exclusively Uigurs, and they seem to have been even more eager than the Chinese to have their portraits reproduced on a large scale in connection with the paradises. These frescoes carry us truly to the borderland of Chinese art, stylistically as well as geographically, and into a period when the art of painting in China proper had found entirely different scopes and ideals than those of Buddhist art of the T'ang period.

The paintings on silk and canvas from Tun-huang form an important supplement to the frescoes. They have become comparatively well known to Western students through the large collections brought to London and Paris by Sir Aurel Stein and Professor Paul Pelliot, respectively; of the former collection a great number have been beautifully reproduced in Sir Aurel Stein's publications.¹ The great majority of these pictures are, however, of a comparatively late period, i.e. from the time after the Tibetan occupation when the artistic activity of Tun-huang no longer was at its height. They reproduce quite often earlier designs in a schematic fashion and offer thus more interest from an iconographic than from a purely artistic point of view. The earliest date on any of the pictures in London is 864, the latest 983, but among the pictures brought from Tun-huang by Professor Pelliot and now exhibited in the Musée Guimet in Paris, is a fragment representing the upper part of a Kāśyapa figure, which has a dated inscription that may be read, in accordance with the year A.D. 729. (Pl. 30.) It is an ink drawing on silk, executed with a fine brush in such a way that when it is seen close by, the head

¹ *Serindia*, vol. iv, pl. lvi-xciv, and *The Thousand Buddhas*, etc., with an *Introductory Essay* by Laurence Binyon, London, 1921. The pictures of the Stein collection which now are preserved in the British Museum and the Museum of Central Asian Antiquities, Delhi, have lately (1931) been catalogued by Arthur Waley, but his most valuable book reached us only after the completion of this manuscript.

appears in profile, but when seen at some distance it presents itself in full front-view. The other painting from the same collection here reproduced is considerably later; it represents Kuanyin standing on the waves accompanied by a worshipping donor. (Pl. 30, 2.) The design is elegant, and the execution superior to that of most of the pictures in the Musée Guimet; it may not be a direct copy but a freer individual rendering of this popular motive.

The most important pictures from Tun-huang are, however, in the Stein collections in London and Delhi, and these represent Amitābha's, Shākyamuni's, or Baishaiyaguru's paradise in a similar fashion as the fresco-paintings from the latter half of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century. It seems thus hardly necessary to describe in detail these festival gatherings of heavenly beings on the platforms that rise from the lotus tanks in front of ornamental gateways and pavilions, nor could they be more sympathetically appreciated than by Mr. Binyon in his introductory text to Pls. I-II in *The Thousand Buddhas*, where he writes: "The artist has been able to control his complex material and multitudes of forms into a wonderful harmony without any restlessness or confusion; we are taken into an atmosphere of strange peace, which yet seems filled with buoyant motion and with floating strains of music."

Beside these large compositions, centred around the principal Buddhas, there are numerous representations of the Bodhisattvas, either free-standing or combined with scenes from their legends. The most frequent is probably Avalokiteśvara (Kuanyin) as a deliverer from various calamities, but Kshitigarbha, the saviour from hell, appears also in several pictures, and Mañjuśrī, either together with Samantabhadra, or on his visit to Vimalakirti.

Other classical Buddhist motives treated in the Tun-huang paintings are the Four Guardians (Lokapālas), the Ten Kings of Hell and the Sixteen Arhats. It is evident that this rich display of Buddhist imagery offers an important material for iconographic studies quite independent of its artistic qualities. Stylistically it exhibits more or less the same influences as the fresco-paintings, that is to say: the fundamental Chinese character is in some cases modified by Indo-Tibetan and possibly Uigur features.

One of the most interesting pictures in the collection, reproduced here for historical as well as artistic reasons, is the *Buddha Tejahprabha and the Deities of the Five Planets*, which is dated 897. (Pl. 31.)¹ The Buddha is seated on a high two-wheeled cart, drawn by a white ox, and on the clouds around the cart are grouped five genii, some of very strange appearance, who represent the planets. Mr. Binyon points out that the style of this picture is very early: "it comes nearer to the style we find in Ku K'ai-chih, both in its finer, drier line, in its proportions of the figure, its generally more primitive aspect, and its comparative freedom from Indian influence." The observations seem to us well justified, and they may allow the

¹ Cf. Binyon's Introductory Essay to *The Thousand Buddhas* (p. 8). The picture is described in detail by Sir Aurel Stein on p. 53, and reproduced in colour on Plate 38.

conclusion that the picture was inspired by the work of an earlier Chinese painter of some importance. We know that several of the best masters of T'ang and pre-T'ang times painted stars and heavenly constellations; such pictures are mentioned in the lists of Chang Sêng-yu's, Yen Li-pên's, and Wu Tao-tzŭ's works in the Hsüan-ho collection. The first-named artist did pictures of *The Nine Brightnesses* (i.e. Sun, Moon, and Seven Planets), *The Planet Saturn*, *The Five Planets and Twenty-eight Constellations*, while Yen and Wu both painted *The Five Planets*, and there may have been others by less known men. The Tun-huang picture is evidently a specimen of the same kind of allegorical stellar compositions, and may be a descendant from one or another of these masters' works.

The more or less hieratic compositions of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and the like offered the artists a more limited opportunity of displaying their individual talents and their interest in nature than some of the illustrative motives, which often were treated in the framing borders around the large compositions or on separate narrow banners. The Chinese painters could more easily take certain liberties from traditional rules of iconography and give freer reins to their imagination in the legendary illustrations. Most common among them are the scenes from the life of Prince Siddhārtha illustrating the successive stages on his path to Buddhahood. We see him take farewell of his faithful horse Kanthaka and the groom Chandaka; we see the messengers of his father searching for the prince among the mountains (Pl. 32, 1); we see him cutting his hair and taking farewell of his companions, and finally meditating alone in the wilderness. The effect of these and similar scenes depends largely on the combination of the figures with certain elements of landscape which, in spite of their highly conventional character, contribute to give to the best of these small compositions a tone of solitude and austerity which corresponds to the import of the motives.

In other scenes the artists have represented animals with a remarkable feeling for their characteristics. Examples of this may be seen in the fragments of a banner representing the so-called Simultaneous Births, i.e. the births which took place in the animal kingdom at the same time as that of Shākyamuni. (Pl. 33.) Three pairs of animals remain on these fragments: A sheep suckling a lamb, a cow licking the head of its calf (while milked by a woman), and a mare suckling its foal (which became Kanthaka). The animals are placed against green hills with a few flowering plants and painted in light colours, modelled and characterized each according to its species. Thus the white sheep is soft and woolly, the more sinewy cow is rather bony and is curving its back as it is being milked. The painter has depicted something he knew by actual observation and done it so simply and accurately that his small pictures (in spite of their "primitiveness") have become convincing representations of animal life. Pictures like these prove that the painters who worked at Tun-huang were by no means incapable of stepping outside the traditional furrows of religious imagery.

A more finished composition is the small picture on paper in the Pelliot

collection in the Louvre, which represents a high official on horseback followed by his squire who carries a lance. (Pl. 32, 2.) The figures are apparently watching some situation in front of them; they keep perfectly still, but seem to be ready to move at any moment. The background opens into a landscape suggested by trees and flowering plants which grow on the hillside. The firm drawing bespeaks of a good master, who may have had in mind some great mural painting when he drew this little illustration.

It may not be necessary to go here into further details in regard to the paintings from Tun-huang. They have been discussed by learned authorities from different points of view, and also been more adequately reproduced than most other remains of early Chinese art. Their historical importance is evident from the fact that hardly any other examples of the widely spread and flourishing religious painting of the T'ang period survive in China, but their artistic significance is that of more or less faithfully executed copies. There may be among them fragments of pictures that were imported from China proper or painted by artists who had been educated at the main centres of Chinese art, though it seems hardly necessary to suppose this even in regard to the best of these paintings. Our survey has been limited to pictures which seemed of greatest interest for a general discussion of the artistic evolution, while the great bulk of the material was left out as of relatively minor importance. Many of these pictures transmit, no doubt, by their designs a kind of second-hand information about various aspects of style and iconography, but they are of very little help in our quest for the essential features of the leading masters.

(2) *Yen Li-pên*

In spite of the fact that pictures of the T'ang dynasty are exceedingly rare, it may be said that the great masters of this period still survive as definite artistic personalities. Their lives and works are extensively recorded by Chang Yen-yüan and other early historians, and not a few of their compositions have become known in later reproductions. It is thus by a parallel study of the traditions about their styles and of the copies, or paintings based on their works, that we may reach some idea about their artistic importance. The historical material is, as a matter of fact, in some cases so rich and interesting that it would deserve a much fuller treatment than we can afford in this short survey of early Chinese painting. Yet, it seemed to us of greater interest to concentrate our discussion on the leading personalities than to include a mass of traditional information about minor artists, whose names cannot be connected with any existing paintings.

The oldest of the men of the first rank was Yen Li-pên. He belonged to a family of painters. His father, Yen Pi, was a well-known painter in the Sui period who introduced his two sons, Yen Li-tê and Yen Li-pên, into the art of painting. They were both active at the courts of the great Emperors T'ai Tsung (627-649) and Kao Tsung (650-683) and co-operated in the execution of certain great decorative works as, for instance, the frescoes in Tz'ü-ên ssü. Both of them made an important

official career and were highly esteemed by their imperial patrons not only as artists, but also as administrative officials. The older brother, Li-tê, became in 630 president of the Board of Public Works (Kung p'u) and was at the time responsible not only for the imperial buildings and their decorations but also for the designs for the imperial carriages, umbrellas, hats, and fans. He was succeeded in this office by Li-pên, who became Kung p'u president about 657. Eleven years later Li-pên advanced to the post of one of the two prime ministers of the country, and though he showed no mean ability as an administrator of public affairs, it became a common saying, that the one minister was good in painting and the other (his colleague) was good in war. At the court he was known as "the colour magician", but Emperor T'ai Tsung called him simply "Yen, the painter", and commissioned him with many kinds of picture making. He had to represent Prince Kuai killing the blue tiger, and also the strange bird which the emperor had discovered on the Ch'un-yüan lake while boating with his officials. As Yen had to stoop down to the water's edge and execute his picture amidst the curiosity of the courtiers, he is said to have felt somewhat humiliated and to have remarked to his son afterwards: "In my youth I studied literature and poetry, but now I am known simply as the painter and regarded as a servant. I advise you to keep away from this art." Whether this anecdote be true or not (Chang Yen-yüan expresses strong doubts about it), it is evident that Yen devoted himself with continuous success to the art of painting. When he died in 673 he was honoured with the posthumous title "Wên Chên" (True Scholar), and all the historians of the T'ang period and later times mention him as the greatest painter of the early part of the dynasty.

His fame with posterity is based in particular on his activity as a recorder of past and present personages and events which were considered of political or moral importance in the history of the country. In 626 he was commissioned to paint the eighteen scholars of the Ch'in dynasty college known as the "Abode of the Blessed". In 643 he executed portraits of twenty-four meritorious officials in the Ling-yen pavilion, and these were adorned by writings by the emperor. He made two or more famous paintings of the envoys of Western Nations arriving with tributes to the great emperor, and he is also known to have painted a series of portraits of the ancient emperors from the Han to the Sui dynasty, to which we will revert presently.

Li Ssü-chên, who was almost his contemporary, points out that it was Yen Li-pên who made figure painting prosper again after a period of decay. "He painted the envoys of many countries arriving at court with tributes of jade and other precious things from the T'u Mountain; he painted the processions of these barbarian people with their high hair ornaments, their hu-tablets and their strange and startling manners, such as drinking through the nose and making the head fly, and he did it all with greatest accuracy down to the smallest details."¹

¹ The following quotation from Macgowan's *Imperial History of China*, p. 297, may be of interest as a kind of text to Yen Li-pên's paintings of foreign envoys arriving at the court in Ch'ang-an: "Men remarked upon the variety of costumes that were seen in the open space in front of the palace, and how picturesque they

Best known among Yen Li-pên's pictures of foreign envoys bringing tribute to the emperor were the *Hsi Yü t'u* (Western Nations) and the *Chih Kung t'u*. The former seems to be lost without a trace, but it still existed in the Yüan dynasty, when it was seen by Chao Mêng-fu, who expressed his admiration in the following words: "In painting the most difficult things are the human figures; and the old painters paid also special attention to implements, costumes, and manners. This picture is wonderful in all these respects. Every hair seems to move, and the figures seem to speak as in a vision. It is truly a divine work."¹

The *Chih Kung t'u* (Tribute Bearers) is still mentioned in the catalogue of Emperor Ch'ien Lung's collection, and is said to have consisted of twenty-five sections. It contained many strange things, such as two large lions and several smaller ones with heads like tigers' and bodies of bears, strange and wild beasts unlike the lions painted by other masters. The foreign king was surrounded by singing girls and ten attendants. It may be a part of this picture which still is seen in a copy, often exhibited under Yen Li-pên's name in the Wên-hua tien of the Peking palace. The composition answers quite well to the descriptions of *Chih Kung t'u*; it contains a number of strange-looking men with very large grotesque heads, some in long gowns, others almost naked, carrying all sorts of marvellous objects, such as elephant's tusks, large pieces of petrified wood (or minerals), fans made of colourful plumes, bows and caskets, or leading different kinds of rare and wild animals. (Pl. 39, 1.) The picture is highly entertaining as an illustration; the characterization of the figures is almost dramatic, and though the execution reveals the hand of a copyist, it transmits an art of extraordinary concentration and originality. It makes us realize that the enthusiasm of the old critics for Yen's paintings of strange people and animals was by no means exaggerated.

The scroll representing the Thirteen Emperors has been known for some time through reproductions published in China and Japan, but these are not complete, nor of the kind that would do justice to the artistic quality of the picture. It is only about a year ago, when the picture was acquired for the Ross collection in the Boston Museum, that adequate photographs of it have become available. (Pl. 34.) The picture has now also been described and scrutinized in a scholarly article by Mr. K. Tomita in the *Boston Museum Bulletin*.² We may thus refer the reader to this publication, where all the historical information concerning the picture are brought together, and relate here only a few of the main points in regard to the motive and its artistic presentation.

The thirteen personages who are represented in the picture form a selection of the numerous emperors of various dynasties which reigned in China (or over parts

looked as the ambassadors moved about with their attendants waiting to be received by the Emperor. One of his ministers was so struck by this spectacle that he suggested that artists should be employed to paint from life the different groups as they brought their offerings to court, so that future ages might have some idea of the glory and magnificence of T'ai Tsung's reign."

¹ Quoted in *Ch'ing-ho Shu Hua Fang*, III, 1. 38, from *Hua Chien*.

² Cf. *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, Boston, February, 1932.

of the country) from Chao-wên Ti of the Western Han dynasty (179-157 B.C.) to Yang Ti of the Sui dynasty (605-617). Most of them appear in full regal attire, standing or walking, but there are four exceptions to this rule, figures dressed in simpler garments and not accompanied by their ministers of state, but simply by servants, either male or female. These are all emperors of the short-lived and weak, though artistically gifted, Ch'ên dynasty (557-587), and they form by far the most interesting portions of the whole picture. Thus Ch'ên Hsüan Ti is carried on a litter by four grooms, while other grooms are carrying tall fans on both sides of the emperor (Pl. 35); Ch'ên Wên Ti, the noblest character of this dynasty, sits on a dais with two ladies in waiting behind him (Pl. 36); Fei Ti likewise, forming a somewhat weaker pendant to the former, while the last ruler of the house of Ch'ên Hou-chu, is represented as a small man in long loose garments with simply a train-bearer in attendance. Each emperor with his accompanying servants or ministers forms a separate picture, and these successive groups have no formal connections. The main interest lies in the characterization of the figures, the more or less imaginary portraits, which, no doubt, are based on earlier originals. The strongest emphasis is naturally laid on the emperors, but some of the secondary figures, the ministers, the servants, and the ladies, reveal more intimate features of human character and are perhaps more interesting from an artistic point of view.

The method of expression is mainly linear and in certain of the figures of a somewhat mechanical character, but then too, as pointed out by Mr. Tomita, "there are attempts in modelling of the faces by means of shading in pale red and in various colours on the folds of the costumes—a technique which disappeared from the latter part of the T'ang dynasty (except in Buddhist paintings) . . . The principal colours used on the scroll are black, white, red, green, yellow, brown, and violet; all have deteriorated greatly and are darkened by age, as is the silk on which they are applied."

Several documents are attached to the painting, all containing testimonials by prominent critics as to its execution by Yen Li-pên. The earliest of these writings dates probably from about 1000, or shortly before, and in this it is stated that the picture was painted by Yen Li-pên in the Chêng-kuan era (627-649). Some known scholars of the Sung period have expressed their opinion to the same effect, but one of them, the state minister Chou Pi-ta, qualifies this opinion as applying only to one section of the picture. He saw the picture first in its ruined original condition, and then after it had been remounted in 1188, and wrote on it as follows: "I examined it, and of the thirteen emperors only in Hsüan Ti of the Ch'ên dynasty, his two ministers, the two fan-carriers, two attendants and four litter-bearers, is the vigour of the brush especially excellent. The silk in this part, moreover, is particularly worn. I have no doubt that this portion is the genuine work of Yen Li-pên. The rest appears to me to have been copied from the old, and is therefore somewhat better preserved." This observation is, no doubt, well founded in so far as the picture is not executed uniformly by one hand; yet, it seems far from

certain that Hsüan Ti alone would be by Yen Li-pên. Mr. Tomita has arrived at a different conclusion after a careful examination of the silk and the colours. He admits that the first six groups are replacements of earlier ones, which may have been destroyed beyond repair in the tenth or eleventh century; they show fresher colours and a somewhat coarser drawing than the other seven groups, and the silk is different, but the rest are "all from the same hand", and the silk in this second half of the scroll is uniform: "In fact, the same irregularity of threads in the weaving runs from 7 through 13 inclusively. For these reasons, we believe that if the Hsüan Ti group be genuine, then the groups 8 to 13 must be equally so."

However this may be, it can hardly be denied that the group representing Hsüan Ti carried on a litter, is the finest and most interesting in the whole series, not only because of the great variations in the assistant figures but also through the remarkably intimate characterization of the emperor. Chou Pi-ta had good reasons for extolling it above the rest of the painting. Yet, it seems hardly possible to draw a line of demarcation in regard to style and technical execution between this group and those of the two following Ch'ên emperors. And the same may be said in regard to the execution of the three last emperors, Wu Ti of the Northern Chou and Wên Ti and Yang Ti of the Sui dynasty, although they are represented in the same stiff ceremonial attitudes as the six first emperors at the beginning of the scroll. We have thus no reason to discard Mr. Tomita's conclusion that the groups 7 to 13 may be by Yen Li-pên.

To what extent he has copied the figures from earlier portraits or composed them by imagination is difficult to tell, but it might be supposed that the four Ch'ên emperors, who are represented in a so much freer fashion and with more life-like and varied assistants than the others, are more imaginative inventions by the artist than the uniformly ceremonial personages in regal attire. The groups of Hsüan Ti and Wên Ti in particular, may be reckoned among the most interesting remnants of early T'ang painting which have survived to our days.

In addition to the pictures by or after Yen Li-pên described above may be mentioned two or three works, which, no doubt, have a very close connection with his art and most likely may be classified as early copies after Yen.

In our discussion of Chang Sêng-yu we had already occasion to point out how this master in particular served as a model for Yen Li-pên, and it was also mentioned that among the works, which Yen painted after (or copied from) Chang Sêng-yu, was not only *The Brushing of the Elephant* but also a picture of *A Drunken Monk*. Chang Sêng-yu's representation of this subject seems to have enjoyed great fame; it is mentioned by Chang Yen-yüan and by Kuo Jo-hsü, who says that it caused merriment among the Taoists, as they considered it, *per fas aut nefas*, a skit on the Buddhist monks. To defend or revenge themselves some of these collected a sum of money and ordered Yen Li-pên to make a picture of *A Drunken Taoist Monk*. Such was the popular tradition, which may be a later invention, particularly in view of the fact that the two artists were divided by more than a hundred years.

Yet, it seems quite evident from the information related below that Yen painted a picture of *A Drunken Taoist Monk* in rather close adherence to Chang's picture of *A Drunken Buddhist Monk*. The two pictures are discussed by the Sung critic Tung Yu (tzu, Yen-yüan) in his book *Kuang-ch'uan Hua Po*.¹ He divides his discussion in two parts, devoting the first to the Buddhist and the second to the Taoist picture. The picture of the Drunken Buddhist Monk was, according to the tradition of the T'ang period, a work by Chang Sêng-yu, but it was also said that Ku K'ai-chih observed such defamatory scenes in the temples and amused himself by painting them (which, however, according to Tung Yu, is not proved by any reliable records). Liu Su (a scholar of the T'ien-pao era, 742-755) said that Yen Li-pên added a Taoist cap and thus changed it into a representation of *A Drunken Taoist Monk*, but this is not correct, according to the author. He then goes on to speak about the monastic rules.

His discussion of the other picture, *The Drunken Taoist Monk*, contains, however, some more information of interest, and may therefore be quoted here: "Fan Shu-kung said: the picture of *The Drunken Buddhist Monk* was altered by Yen Li-pên who added a Taoist cap. Huang Wang-tao said: it was Ku K'ai-chih's picture of *The Drunken Guest*; but somebody who doubted this remarked that Mr. Shu was in possession of the records, while Wang simply repeated popular tradition. If we look up in the *Hua Chi* and other books, we find that Ku K'ai-chih made only the picture of the *Western Garden* (*Hsi Yü t'u*) of which copies still exist, which are quite different from this picture (of *The Drunken Taoist*). Liu Su said: Minister Yen made another picture of *A Drunken Taoist Monk*, and beside this there was a picture of *The Drunken Buddhist Monk*. These utterances are not correct. Yet, the costumes, the erected caps, and the wine vessels are all such as were used from the Chin to the Sui period, and no doubt made by a man of that time. This is a quite definite point. As to the loose manners and excessive drinking, they were like those of the Retired Scholars of the Bamboo Grove, who also were aiming at good manners, but were unable to restrain themselves and ended in self-indulgence and licentiousness. Those who have not reached the world of drunkenness and ecstasy through wine will not understand it (the picture) properly. They talk about how the shapes and the spirit are rendered by terse and old-fashioned brush-work, but that is only like tasting the sediments of the painting without understanding the real significance of it."

Tung Yu does not seem to have been quite certain how the picture of *The Drunken Taoist Monk* was made; the preponderance of evidence was in favour of Yen Li-pên, but the costumes and utensils were of an earlier type than those of the T'ang period. The conclusion seems most natural that the picture in question was based on an earlier original, be it that Yen had simply made certain additions to Chang's picture or copied it more or less faithfully, adding certain features of his own. Unfortunately we get no description of the composition, but I believe that

¹ Reprinted in *Wang Shih Hua Yüan*, vol. ii, l. 42-3.

no modern student of Chinese painting who reads the above remarks can help recalling the well-known picture in M. A. Stoclet's collection representing a drunken man in a tent, assisted and adored by a number of companions. Waley was the first to call the picture *The Clerical Orgy*, and he expressed the opinion that it would be a copy by Li Lung-mien after Chang Sêng-yu's picture of the *Drunken Buddhist Monk*.¹ This opinion seems to us acceptable only in part.

It may be asked whether the big man with the long beard, who sits on the platform in a state of profound unconsciousness, assisted by a man and a woman, is a Buddhist monk. He is at least very unlike Buddhist monks of later times who do not wear beards. The very strange ornamental cap which a third assistant is keeping ready for his head seems also to indicate that the principal person cannot be a Buddhist monk. (Pl. 37.) A similar high and multicoloured cap is worn by the woman behind him; it is very prominent and may be taken to signify that the personages are Taoists. Behind the main group are three figures, two servants bringing more wine in large bowls of classic shapes, and a woman with a tonsured baby in her arms, which may be an indication that the man trespassed also against monastic rules other than that of not drinking wine. The other half of the picture is filled with a no less fascinating group of nine monks, who have evidently enjoyed wine to excess; three of them are lying unconscious on the ground, two are making music (on a drum and a lute), the rest are expressing their interest or fearful reverence in attitudes and mimicry of rare eloquence. (Pl. 38.) The whole thing is steeped in an atmosphere of profound pathos, accentuated rather than disturbed by the grotesque features.

The picture is, as a matter of fact, quite unlike anything else known to us of Chinese painting, and the reason for this may be that it reflects faithfully a work or rather a style of earlier type than we are used to. It is possible that the execution is of the Northern Sung period but its mode of expression, the bold characterization of the figures, the very fine linear drawing, the costumes and utensils, and above all, the singularly powerful conception, are certainly of an earlier period. If the picture, as explained above, represents *The Drunken Taoist Monk* rather than the *Buddhist Monk*, it may well be Yen Li-pên's version of the motive, possibly in a later execution. But the T'ang master painted his picture in close adherence to Chang Sêng-yu's composition of a hundred years earlier, as indicated by Tung Yu. The fundamental characteristics of the Stoclet picture are very early, but somehow they seem to be utilized in a freer way than a pre-T'ang painter would have been able to do. Still, we know as yet so very little about the actual state of Chinese painting at the time of Chang Sêng-yu that it would be futile to try to define how far the style is his or that of Yen Li-pên. But for historical reasons it seemed most natural to include the picture in the discussion of Yen Li-pên's works.

A short scroll in the Boston Museum representing *Scholars of Northern Ch'i Dynasty Collating Classic Texts*, has also been attributed to Yen or described as a picture in

¹ Waley, op. cit., p. 198.

his manner by prominent critics ever since the Sung dynasty.¹ In a colophon on the picture written by Fan Ch'êng-ta (1126-1193) it is stated: "This picture of *Collating Books in the Northern Ch'i* is traditionally said to be done in the manner of Yen Li-pên. It is described fully in Huang T'ing-chien's (1050-1110) *Record of Paintings*. This scroll, however, lacks the seven scholars who are seated on two platforms. It is clear that half (of the whole picture) has been lost." The other four inscriptions by men of the Sung period refer to the motive of the picture and not to the artist, but in the later colophons by connoisseurs of the Ch'ing dynasty the picture is again commended as a work by Yen Li-pên, and it is also described as such by An I-chou in *Mo Yüan Hui Kuan* and by Lu Hsin-yüan in *Jang Li Kuan Kuo Yen Lu*. In the Boston Museum it is now catalogued as a work of the Northern Sung period, probably after a design by Yen Li-pên, which, no doubt, is the most exact definition that can be given to this picture.

It represents a gathering of five scholars assisted by a number of male and female servants, occupied in reading and copying ancient writings and reproduces probably (as stated above) only one-half of the original composition. The scholars who were appointed in 556 by Emperor Wên Hsüan of the Northern Ch'i dynasty to collate the classic texts were twelve in number and, according to Huang T'ing-chien, the original picture or drawing (*fên-pên*) represented the whole company. The very free and animated composition may be seen in our reproduction (Pl. 39, 2); it reaches its culmination in the group on the *daïs*, where one of the worthy scholars is pulling the strap of the trousers of one of his colleagues, who is preparing to go away and who resists with a smile the friendly pull.

This central group is by itself a masterpiece of composition (Pl. 40), and it must have become particularly famous, because we find it reproduced also in another picture, now in the Palace Museum in Peiping, and attributed to Chin Wên-po, a less known painter of the tenth century.² In this picture, which is known to me only in reproduction, the *daïs* with the four scholars and the female servants standing behind and at the side (carrying the *ch'in* and the big cushion?) are placed in a garden landscape. There are rockeries and some high trees in the background, and the whole thing has been changed into a hanging scroll. The figures are distinctly weaker and of a more modern type; whether the picture is a work of the tenth century, is impossible to tell from a reproduction, but it is quite evident that it is a later rendering of the motive than the scroll in Boston. And as the grooms with the horses and the two figures nearest to them also are left out, one may ask, whether this later picture was made after the Boston scroll or rather after some original from which the scroll also may have been copied. There is said to have existed an earlier rendering of this motive, *Collating the Books in the Northern Ch'i*, by Yang Tzû-hua, a sixth century painter, who was particularly admired by Yen

¹ Cf. Mr. K. Tomita's article on this picture containing all the historical informations regarding it in *The Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, Boston, Aug., 1931.

² Cf. The Palace Museum publication, *Ku Kung*, vol. 1.

Li-pên.¹ The probability is that Yen followed this earlier representation, at least in part, but we would venture the supposition that he added on his own account the horses and grooms which stand in a rather loose connection with the rest, and which seem to us particularly characteristic of Yen Li-pên. (Pl. 41.) The bearded groom of Turchic type reminds us of certain figures in the *Hsi Yü t'u* in the National Museum in Peking, and the horses are quite like those of Emperor T'ai Tsung's tomb, which also were made from drawings by Yen Li-pên.

The probability that the Boston scroll faithfully reproduces a work of Yen Li-pên seems to us very great, but it is evident that the execution must be later. It is very delicate and painted in a fashion that was practised in Hui Tsung's Academy in K'ai-fêng. The drawing is made all through with fine ink lines and over these are spread thin pigments with a light hand. The picture has darkened by age, but the sensitiveness of the colouring and the fine quality of the drawing may still be seen. To quote Mr. Tomita: "Although the lines are extremely delicate, the assurance and strength of the hand which drew them are marked. The soft or stiff materials (of the costumes), whether falling loosely or in folds, are clearly differentiated. But most remarkable of all are the faces, especially those of the scholars. (Pl. 42.) Their seriousness, their eagerness to accomplish the task entrusted to them, their jocularly when a moment of idle relaxation is their reward, are admirably expressed. The faces, which are only about one inch and a half in length in the original, when enlarged, reveal a master-hand capable of delineating vivid portraits in thin brush-strokes without any attempt at light or shadow." The merit of this extraordinary quality of draughtsmanship may be largely due to the artist, who must have been one of the great masters of the Northern Sung period, but the types, their character and expressiveness, must have existed in Yen Li-pên's original.

Yen Li-pên also painted Buddhist pictures, though of a more unusual kind, as for instance, Mañjuśrī's visit to Vimalakīrti and the Brushing of the Elephant, which are mentioned by Chang Ch'ou. They may have been free renderings of earlier compositions. After having described the former of these two pictures, he says that it was no exaggeration when Yen was called "the colour magician".

It was, however, the vitality and character of Yen Li-pên's figures which aroused the enthusiasm of the old critics. He is said to have mastered all "the six principles", but his greatness as a genius depended on the *ch'i yün*, "the resonance of the spirit," to use Hsieh Ho's expression. He was original, fantastic, creative even to the degree of neglecting natural verisimilitude and the laws of nature. Very telling in this respect are some of the remarks made by the Sung critic Tung Yu about Yen Li-pên's *Wei Ch'iao t'u* (The Bridge on the Wei River).²

"The picture represented the Court of Han receiving homage from some foreign tribes on the Wei River in the first month of the year. Its length and

¹ Cf. Mr. Tomita's article in the *Bulletin*, xxix, p. 62.

² In *Kuang-ch'uan Hua Po*.

breadth, far and near, could not be measured. Hibiscus, apricots, and plums were all blooming together. Men, horses, houses, and trees were all out of shape. It was not like the pictures of to-day. What was the reason of its excellence? It seems to me that the people who discuss pictures attach too much importance to outward likeness, which is not the real thing in art. If an artist is to reach spiritual significance, he must give an original interpretation and avoid the traditional. It is not enough to copy the shapes and lay on colours. That is like taking off the clothes and sitting cross-legged instead of lying down to rest, which will enable you to move freely afterwards. In such a way people will never reach a proper appreciation of the brush-work of a man like Yen Li-pên."

(3) *Li Ssü-hsün and Li Chao-tao*

Somewhat younger than Yen Li-pên, though still active mainly in the seventh century, was Li Ssü-hsün, whose high social rank and official connections, no doubt, increased his personal influence and authority also in the field of art. His descent from the founder of the T'ang dynasty is never forgotten in any account of his artistic activity, and the name under which he has become best known to posterity is General Li or "the Great General" in distinction to his son Li Chao-tao, who has become known as "the Little General". It was, however, only towards the end of his life, when Ming Huang came to the throne (713), that he was made a general and ennobled as a duke; previously, under Emperor Kao Tsung (650-684), he held some less prominent official post and during the reign of Empress Wu Hou (684-704) he is said to have lived in retirement. The years of his birth and death are not certain, but it seems probable that he was born about 650 and died in 716 or 720. The stories about his competitions with Wu Tao-tzū are quite impossible from a chronological point of view, and may apply to the activity of his son and artistic heir rather than to his own. It may also be noted that Li Ssü-hsün's fame as a landscape painter has been extolled particularly by critics and artists who represented the official academic current in Chinese art—for them he was "the greatest of the dynasty" or "a peerless artist up to this day", to quote the Confucian scholar and statesman Ou-yang Hsiu of the Sung dynasty¹—while other critics, like Mi Fei and Tung Ch'ü-ch'ang, whose point of view is more purely æsthetic or "romantic", consider him as a rather dry and poor master of the brush.

Historically Li Ssü-hsün's position in Chinese art-history is usually defined with the words, "he was the founder of the Northern School of landscape painting," and a great deal of speculation has been bestowed by Western critics on the reason for and significance of the division of Chinese landscape art into a Northern and a Southern school because the appellations "Northern" and "Southern" are practically inexplicable without some knowledge about their historical origin. They have been borrowed from the history of Buddhism, and have no geographical

¹ Cf. Giles, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

significance, as explained in the following paragraph from Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's *Hua Yen*¹:

"The division of Ch'an (the Dhyana or Zen sect) into a Southern and a Northern school took place in the T'ang period; a similar division in painting was started in the same period, but the men (the representatives of the two schools) did not come from the South and the North. Thus Li Ssü-hsün, father and son, represented the Northern school. They applied colour to their landscapes; and this school was continued into the Sung period by Chao Kan,² Chao Po-chü, and Chao Po-hsiao down to Ma Yüan, Hsia Kuei, and others. The Southern school was represented by Wang Mo-ch'i (Wang Wei), who first used thin washes of ink (*hsüan tan*) changing thus the finely grinding (cut and dry) method, and this was perpetuated by Chang Tsao, Ching Hao, Kuan T'ung, Tung Yüan, Chü-jan, Kuo Chung-shu, and Mi, father and son, down to the four great masters of the Yüan period. This was like the division of Ch'an after the sixth patriarch (Hui-nung, d. 713) when the Yün-men and Lin-chi schools flourished, while the Northern school began to grow weak.³ Important in this respect is the statement of Mo-ch'i (Wang Wei) that the forms of the clouds, peaks, and stones were produced by the power of Heaven, and that the ideas expressed with the brush should be in accordance with those of the Creator. When Su Tung-p'o admired Wu Tao-yüan's and Wang Wei's wall paintings he said: as to Wang Wei, he is unfathomable—true words, indeed."⁴

Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's presentation of Li Ssü-hsün is evidently biassed by his own adherence to an opposite stylistic current; yet, it can hardly be denied that Li's art (so far as it can be known to-day) is more interesting from a historical than from an aesthetic point of view. Its peculiar character lies in the decorative stylization of the wide dioramic views of mountains and water, or of palace gardens with pavilions, bridges, and terraces into patterns of bright blue and green shapes, interspersed with white and reddish tones and often outlined with gold. The execution is very minute, refined and sensitive to the utmost, but the bewildering mass of small and exact details does not break the atmosphere or tone of the whole composition. The motives are often grandiose in spite of the small scale of the representations—boundless stretches of water, rugged inaccessible peaks piercing through the circling clouds, deep valleys with thickets of flowering trees, lofty palaces with open galleries at the border of streams, spanned by arched bridges, on

¹ *Hua Hsüeh Hsin Yin*, vol. iii, l. 7.

² A landscape painter of the tenth century active in the South T'ang state. The other painters enumerated in the above quotation are all mentioned in our text in the following chapters.

³ Ch'an Buddhism divided at the end of the seventh century into a Southern and a Northern school, the former headed by Hui-nung, the latter by Shên-hsiu. The Southern school of Ch'an which gradually became the most important, flourished at various places after which it was named, such as Yün-men and Lin-chi (see Elliot, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 309). Tung Ch'i-ch'ang implies that the Southern school of landscape art gained a similar preponderance in painting as the Yün-men and Lin-chi schools in Ch'an Buddhism.

⁴ Refers to Su Tung-p'o's poem about Wang Wei's picture in K'ai-yüan ssü in Fêng-hsiang, quoted in our chapter on the master.

which solitary figures stand in contemplation. They are no views from the common world of mortals; the inspiration for them seems rather to have been drawn from fairy tales, in which heaven and earth meet like the white clouds and the green mountains, and the sun paints a golden lining round every form.

We know these pictures of Li Ssü-hsün only through copies and descriptions, but even these transmit a quite vivid and definite idea of the master's art. Foremost among the copies should be remembered the long scroll in the Freer Gallery which may not be more than two or three hundred years old, but yet seems to reproduce quite faithfully and in a rather sensitive technique an important composition by Li. It is called *A Landscape with "Hsien Jen"* (sages), and it is filled with the elements mentioned above, pleasantly woven together into a frieze-like decorative composition, which stretches over 12 feet. (Pl. 43.)¹

Another important composition by Li existed a few years ago in the Imperial Household Collection in Peking,² but may since have passed into private hands. I have never seen it and can thus express no opinion as to its authenticity, but it is said to have been the same picture which was in the palace collection during the Sung and Ming dynasties, and which is described in some detail in *Ch'ing-ho Shu Hua Fang* (iv, l. 38) under the poetical title *Gay-coloured Lotuses in the Imperial Garden*.

"It was of small size and painted with brilliant colours, gold, green, and deep red, in an old-fashioned and refined manner, surpassing all common things, and was indeed the masterpiece of General Yün-hui (Li Ssü-hsün). Unfortunately the poems written on it by Ni Yüan-chên and Wang Shu-ming (two of the greatest painters of the Yüan period) have not been preserved." The author then quotes the description by Wang Chih-têng of the same picture: "It contained high buildings (palaces), temples, houses, and door-screens, boats and oars, all painted with wonderful skill and refinement. Every detail, down to the grass blades (could be observed). The shining mountains were illuminated by the setting sun, the billowing waters of the lake were stretching beyond limit; red flowers, rushing streams, green trees, covering clouds, and winding moats were here represented. The T'ang painters were not far removed from those of the Chin dynasty; the traditions of Ku K'ai-chih and Lu-T'an-wei still lingered. No later painters have been able to imitate them so closely."

Li Ssü-hsün's position and characteristics as an artist could hardly be better defined; he was not only an exceedingly delicate painter and a master technician, whose manner in a peculiar way corresponded to the ceremonial refinement of court-life, but also an original and highly imaginative creator, who introduced a

¹ It is this picture which induced Dr. Laufer to the exclamation: "He who has not seen the wonderful roll attributed to Li Ssü-hsün in the possession of Mr. Freer does not know what art is—in technique as well as in mental depth perhaps the greatest painting in existence. Greek and Italian art fade into a trifle before this glorious monument of a divine genius, which it would be futile to describe in any words." *Ostasiat. Zeitschr.*, i, p. 55.

² Cf. Ferguson, op. cit., p. 70.

style which became of great consequence for the development of Chinese landscape painting. It is true that the greatest personalities did not follow in his footsteps, but the current he started lived on not only through the T'ang but also through the Sung and Ming dynasties (for instance, in the works of Chao Po-chü and Ch'iu Ying) and was still in later times often reproduced as the most appropriate manner for rendering the decorative splendour of palace gardens and the imaginative beauty of fairy-lands. It was hardly his fault that it gradually became stereotyped, and that so many of the later pictures of this type with their gold-lined blue mountains and green waters are as cold and flat and artificial as a miniature garden on a porcelain tray.

Li's son Li Chao-tao continued faithfully his father's style, though evidently with less strength and creative imagination. Some of the works traditionally ascribed to the father may actually have been by the son. It may have been he who competed with Wu Tao-tzū in painting the landscapes of Szechuan, and later on represented the flight of Emperor Ming Huang in a famous scroll which was copied by Chao Po-chü and Ch'iu Ying. He must also have been responsible for the famous picture on a screen, ordered by the same emperor, which was so natural "that one could hear at night the splashing of the waves". He may indeed have been somewhat less formal and more naturalistic in his landscapes than his great father.

Later pictures ascribed to Li Chao-tao have no gold lines around the mountain silhouettes, like the copies after Li Ssü-hsün, though they are composed in a similar manner with sharply cut rocks which lift their pinnacles through the circling clouds, and tall trees in the deep valleys where diminutive figures travel on horseback. Such a picture on a large scale with vivid colours may be seen in the University Museum in Philadelphia; the composition is characteristic, but the execution can hardly be earlier than of the Ming period.¹

Somewhat similar in style, though superior from an artistic point of view, is a small picture in the National Museum in Peking. (Pl. 45.) It represents travellers resting in the mountain glades or starting on their journey along the steep roads, which lead over the passes, and it is probable that the picture had a continuation, in other words, that it is a section of a scroll illustrating continuous mountain scenery. The deeply split rocks with sharp peaks, the ornamental cloud-beds circling around them, and the map-like spreading out of the view, are elements derived from Li's landscape style, and the rather vivid colouring with green, blue, grey, and reddish tones lead our thoughts in the same direction. The picture is attributed to an anonymous master of the Sung dynasty, but its style is definitely earlier, and closely allied to the manner of the Li school.

A better known picture to which Li Chao-tao's name is attached is the fragment, formerly in the Golubew collection and now in the Museum in Boston, which

¹ According to Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 71, this picture belonged to Hsiang Mo-lin in the Ming period, and then to Emperor Ch'ien Lung.

represents a summer palace of the T'ang emperors, called Chiu-ch'eng and situated at Fêng-hsiang in Shensi. (Pl. 44.) The colouring of the picture, which must have been quite brilliant, is partly worn off or subdued, a condition which adds to its atmosphere of age and refinement. The white marble balustrades of the terraces, the red walls and pillars of the pavilions, and the pale blue ridges of the curving roofs were originally framed by green-blue mountains and white clouds, but only minor spots of the pigments remain.¹ It is, however, difficult to believe that the picture could have been executed before the Sung dynasty; from a stylistic and technical point of view we would rather place it later than the above-mentioned picture in Peking.

The main part of it, the map-like representation of the palatial compound with its successive courts and pavilions, is an excellent example of what the Chinese call *chieh hua*, or pictures executed with a ruler. Such architectural views, which form a special and much-admired class within Chinese painting, became particularly developed during the Five Dynasties and the Sung period, but if we may accept the traditional attribution of the picture, at least in so far as the design is concerned, Li Chao-tao must have been a great innovator also in this direction. The question must be left open as long as we have no other materials either to support or to disprove Li Chao-tao's connection with the *chieh hua*. His rather advanced standpoint as a landscape painter is also suggested by the title of another of his famous pictures; it was called: *Lo Chao*, Declining Light, or Sunset.

¹ Cf. the excellent colour-reproduction in *Ars Asiatica*, vol. i (1914), and the accompanying notes by Chavannes and Petrucci.

V

THE MIDDLE T'ANG PERIOD

(1) *The Golden Age of Art and Poetry*

The cultural background of the middle part of the T'ang period was in many respects different from that of the earlier years of the same dynasty. The time of political conquest and expansion had passed, and the military efforts had more and more to be concentrated on the defence of the great empire against aggressive neighbours and rebels within the frontiers. It was the latter who dealt the first serious blows against the security of the state, and by weakening its power of resistance opened the road for foreign aggressors.

The religious enthusiasm, which had been a most important factor in the political as well as in the artistic life of the T'ang state, lost something of its constructive strength and changed gradually into a kind of romantic mysticism, which was far removed from the hieratic and rather mundane forms of Buddhism, which had played such an important rôle in the reign of Empress Wu (684-704). There were temporary reactions against the Buddhist institutions, as for instance at the beginning of Emperor Hsüan Tsung's reign, when the building of monasteries was forbidden and some 12,000 monks were ordered to return to the world, but these times were followed by periods of restoration and official favours. Buddhism was not suppressed, but it became modified from within, by the introduction of more mystical or devotional schools, and outwardly through the increasing influence of Taoism, and other forms of religion, such as Manichæism, Nestorianism, Muhammedanism, and Zoroastrianism. The spirit of the age grew more and more eclectic; examples could be quoted of men who in spite of their anti-Buddhist activities, ordered that they should be served by the Buddhist clergy after death.¹

The capital of the Chinese empire became an international centre of intellectual and commercial intercourse. People from every corner of Asia flocked there; the most exquisite products of Persia, Arabia, and India were brought to Ch'ang-an for the enjoyment of the highly cultured Chinese society. The ladies dressed in "Western fashion", and the rich noblemen imported their horses from Ferghana and their falconiers from the lands of the Uigurs and the Tocharians. Learned men from India and Central Asia still found a home in some of the numerous temples in the capital, to which also students gathered from eastern countries like Korea and Japan. These institutions served a similar purpose as the universities of Paris and Padua some 600 years later, though the spiritual instruction imparted in them had a deeper and broader human scope than medieval scholasticism.

Still, it was poetry and painting which more than anything else contributed to make of this period a "golden age" of Chinese culture, comparable to the greatest epochs of Greece or Italy. Poets like Tu Fu (712-770) and Li Po (699-762) are still counted among the few universally admired and beloved representatives of

¹ Cf. Sir Charles Eliot, *op. cit.*, iii, p. 262.

their art. Han Yü was a prose-writer of the highest order, and painters like Wu Tao-tzŭ and Wang Wei have, in spite of the fact that their original creations are for ever lost, retained their places in the foremost rank of Chinese art-history. The official centre of this brilliant crowd of writers and poets was Emperor Ming Huang, himself no mean poet. His long reign (713-755) was a period of changing political fortunes, but in the field of art and letters the political disasters caused hardly more than a temporary setback and a change of tone and *milieu*.

At the beginning of his reign Ming Huang was in many respects a model ruler who, with the assistance of very able ministers, did a great deal to improve the lot of the common people. He carried out reforms in the government and applied strict economy; he instituted schools throughout the empire, reformed the prisons, and went even so far as to abolish capital punishment. The higher culture was cared for by the foundation of the Literary College (Han-lin) and the state examinations. A new and finer kind of string-music was cultivated in a sort of imperial academy, which was named after the "Pear Garden", where it was situated; the painters became also eligible to the Han-lin. In 725 he ordered that the "Hall of Assembled Spirits" should be renamed "Hall of the Assembled Worthies", because spirits were mere fables, but as the years went by, he became more and more dependent on the Taoist magicians and consented finally to the dispatch of an expedition in search of the elixir of immortality. The rational reforms of the early years of his reign were clouded by superstitious practices, and the sumptuary laws were forgotten in the growing desire for luxury and every kind of sensuous delectations.

The longer he lived, the less he cared about the political affairs of state (which consequently became more and more disorganized), and the more he devoted himself to artistic enjoyments and to the enchanting beauties of his harem. Among them were of course many wonderful dancers and singers, trained under a famous dancing master, who knew how to perform the posturing dances to perfection. "And the girls sang again and again to make the gauze dresses dance . . . The clear wind blew the songs away into the empty sky: the sound coiled in the air like moving clouds in flight," writes Li Po to a friend in memory of former excursions in Ch'ang-an.¹ He was one of the "Immortals of the Wine Cup" and so was the great Wu Tao-tzŭ; they would create only when they felt freed from the trammels of material existence, transposed into a state of animation which they sought with the help of the wine-cup, when they could not find it by other means. "In this way they could attain the real spirit (*shen*), which enabled them to accomplish what really was in their mind," to use the words of the *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*.

As the years passed, this feverish search for beauty and for a life of enjoyment beyond that of ordinary mortals became more debased with frivolity and extravagance. The emperor became so infatuated with Yang Kuei-fei, the famous beauty who played the rôle of Helen of Troy in China, that he almost lost his empire. The noble youths whose duty it was to defend the throne had no longer

¹ Waley, *The Poet Li Po*. A Paper read before the China Society, 1918, p. 22.

any interest for such pursuits. The generals became corrupted, military defeats followed in quick succession, and the final blow came in 756, when the Tartar commander An Lu-shan revolted and marched on the capital. The court fled in greatest haste to Szechuan, and on the way the emperor had to pay a still greater price for his life—he was forced to leave Yang Kuei-fei to be hanged by the soldiers. “Alas, O traveller, why did you come to so fearful a place,” writes Li Po in memory of these events.

The adventure of An Lu-shan did not last more than a few months, but it was enough to break the spell of the dream and to open the door for a reaction against the life of the Immortals. When the imperial armies re-entered Ch'ang-an, and the son of Ming Huang was placed on the throne of his ancestors, they found a city which had been pillaged and burnt, and from which most of the poets and artists had fled with their kin. “For an eternity my entire household stumbled forward on foot . . . in mud, in mire we dragged, clung to one another,” writes Tu Fu, and then, after a description of the burning of the imperial palaces and the massacre of the people, he adds: “Old men who had seen years pace one hundred cycles, in secret wept with silent tears.”¹

Tu Fu was captured by An Lu-shan's men and taken back into a kind of captivity at the capital; Wang Wei, the famous poet-painter, who held a high official post, was forced to serve the rebel chief; other prominent men committed suicide. What happened to Wu Tao-tzŭ? Did he stay on in the capital, or did he escape to some quieter place, where his gods and dragons were in greater demand? History is silent on this point. We do not know even how long he survived this political disaster, but the chances are that he died in his sixties about 760.

(2) *Wu Tao-tzŭ*

No Chinese painter has to the same extent as Wu Tao-tzŭ kindled the imagination and enthusiasm of later critics and historians, and the reason for this may be that he was a more than ordinary imaginative personality who in his creative moments must have been quite detached from habitual limitations of material life. The anecdotes about Wu's famous paintings and his manner of working are much more abundant than the historical data regarding his career.

From traditions gathered in *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi* and *T'ang Ch'ao Ming Hua Lu*² we learn that Wu Tao-tzŭ, whose official name later on was changed to Wu Tao-hsüan, came from Yang-chai (or ti) in Honan, and that he was a poor orphan boy, who at an early age showed an extraordinary genius for painting. No particular teacher is named, but later on he studied calligraphy with Chang Hsü, the bibulous writer, who became known as the “Divine Grassist”; “as he did not, however, reach very far in calligraphy, he devoted himself entirely to painting.”

¹ Cf. Florence Ayscough, *Tu Fu, The Autobiography of a Chinese Poet* (London, 1929), pp. 209, 213.

² *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*; X.; *T'ang Ch'ao Ming Hua Lu*, also quoted in *Shu Hua P'u*, vol. 43; both accounts are utilized in *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u* and elsewhere.

When Emperor Ming Huang heard about his skill in painting, he was called to the court, and here he was first employed as an instructor and ordered to paint only by Imperial command; but then he became "as an official the friend of Prince Ning" (the emperor's brother), which no doubt, meant promotion. But it is also reported that he served some time as secretary to General Wei Ssü-li and accompanied the general to Shu (Szechuan), where he painted some landscapes. An event of particular importance, which is differently reported by various historians, was Wu's meeting with General P'ei Min in Lo-yang about the middle of the K'ai-yuan era (713-741). The general asked Wu to execute a temple painting and offered him money for it, but Wu refused to take the money, and said that he would paint only if the general would perform the sword-play for which he was famous. "As Tao-tzŭ saw him playing with the sword and observed how the spirit was appearing and disappearing," he became inspired to the most wonderful brush-work. The picture was done with the speed of a whirling wind, and as Chang Hsü wrote a long inscription on one of the walls of the same temple, the people of the city said: "We have in one day witnessed three great wonders!"

In the T'ien-pao era (742-755) the emperor sent Wu to paint the scenery of the Chia-ling River in Szechuan.

Chu Ching-hsüan, the author of *T'ang Ch'ao Ming Hua Lu*, mentions several of Wu's wall paintings in the temples of the two capitals, of which he is said to have executed no fewer than 300, many of them simply in ink, and finally reports the following personal experience: "At the beginning of the Yüan-ho era (806-820) I went up for examination (to the capital) and stayed in the Lung-hsing ssü. There was a man over 80 years old who told me that when Wu painted in the Hsing-shan ssü, over the central gate, the halo of a god, everybody in the city of Ch'ang-an, old and young, learned men and common people, came out to see how he did it with a single sweep of the brush as by a whirlwind. The people said: 'He must be aided by a god!' I also heard from an old monk in Ching-yün ssü that Wu painted in that temple Scenes of Hell, and when the evil doers of the capital saw his pictures, they became afraid to continue in their evil ways; they changed their occupations, and many of them afterwards became good citizens."

The wall paintings by Wu Tao-tzŭ perished probably to a large extent in the Buddhist persecutions at the end of the T'ang period (841-45), because in the Northern Sung period they were extremely rare. Su Tung-p'o, who had the greatest admiration for Wu, mentions only two or three of them, i.e. the pictures in P'u-mên ssü (at Fêng-hsiang), where Wu had painted in a bold and free style, "like the rolling waves of the sea," some scenes from the life of Buddha,¹ and a painting in Lung-hsing ssü in Ju-chou, Honan, which was executed in a more delicate style. They were all lost long ago without a trace remaining. Nor does it seem that any of his scroll paintings have been preserved, although the *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u* contains a list of no fewer than ninety-three "Wu Tao-tzŭs". Most of these

¹ Su Tung-p'o, *Shih Chi*, vol. iv.

must have been, to say the least, doubtful; the great fame of the painter provoked at an early period abundant imitations.

Mi Fei mentions only four pictures by Wu Tao-tzū, all with Buddhist motives, and makes the significant remark that "when people nowadays get hold of a picture representing a Buddha, they always call it Wu Tao-tzū."¹

The most faithful and interesting reproductions of Wu's designs are probably the stone engravings, which have become widely known through squeezes or rubbings in black and white. They are, as a rule, not disfigured by any additions or arbitrary pigments and may thus (in the best instances) give a truer idea of Wu's style than the painted copies, particularly as we are told that the master executed many of his wall paintings simply with bold strokes in monochrome. Most popular among these engravings after Wu's designs are the representations of Kuanyin, the merciful Bodhisattva, which seems to have been a favourite motive of Wu's. There are three or four variations of this motive, all indicated as engraved after Wu Tao-tzū, on slabs in the Pei-lin in Sian-fu, and several others, known through rubbings or painted copies. In most of these the Bodhisattva is represented standing on billowing waters, wearing a long mantle which is blown by the wind, so that the folds take on the same movement as the waves, and crowned by a high diadem. In some of the later renderings she is accompanied by a small boy attendant, the Shan Ts'ai, or by her two acolytes, as may be seen in the curious picture in the Freer Gallery, *Kuanyin with the Fishbasket*, which must be a rather free and latish transposition of Wu's famous design. One of the best versions of this Kuanyin type known to us is the engraving at Lin-lao shan, which is reproduced here from a rubbing acquired in Peking.² (Pl. 46.) It represents the Bodhisattva without any extra additions and with a very characteristic treatment of the wavy mantle-folds.

Quite distinct from this type is the Kuanyin seated on a cliff at the seashore with some worshippers at her feet. The most famous and beautiful version of this design is the large picture in Daitokuji in Kyoto, which is traditionally ascribed to Wu Tao-tzū, though it hardly could have been executed before the end of the Sung dynasty. The figure is represented in life size in the *lilāsana*-posture (with one leg placed crosswise over the knee of the other), and the significance of the design is heightened by the two large circles, one forming a nimbus around the head, the other a halo around the body. At his feet are a number of realistically treated figures clinging to the lotus-leaves on the water. The composition is probably a free transposition of some design by Wu.

Another group of stone engravings said to be after the master's designs represent the portraits of Confucius, of which the most famous is in the memorial temple at Ch'ü-fu. In Pei-lin at Sian-fu there is a minor representation of Confucius and his

¹ Mi Fei, *Hua Shih* (also quoted in *Ch'ing-ho Shu Hua Fang*, iv, l. 11).

² Other stone engravings after Wu Tao-tzū's standing Kuanyin are to be found in Ling-fêng ssū at San-t'ai-hsien in Szechuan (dated 1591) and Ta-shih-ko, likewise in Szechuan. A third one was in the Ts'ung sheng temple at Ta-li-fu, Yünnan. Cf. Laufer in *Ostasiat. Zeitschr.*, i, p. 39.

pupil Yen-tzū walking side by side. (Pl. 48, 1.) The former is a highly impressive rendering of a powerful and venerable Chinese type, though it can hardly be called a characteristic portrait in the ordinary sense of the word.

The British Museum possesses a remarkable rubbing of an engraved stone said to exist at Ch'êng-tu in Szechuan, representing the *Dark Warrior of the North*, i.e. a big tortoise encircled by a snake (her male counterpart, according to Chinese mythology). It bears Wu Tao-tzū's name, and it may well be said that the rather strange motive here is treated with a combination of plastic form and ornamental beauty worthy of a great master. (Pl. 47.)

A very interesting stone engraving, which also reproduces quite faithfully a design by Wu, is the *Flying Devil* at the terrace of the Tung-yüeh miao (or Tao Wang tien) in Ch'ü-yang hsien, Chihli (Hopei). This bouncing devil-like guardian, who leaps through the air with a spear on his shoulder, while the wind is driving his clothes and hair into long fluttering pennants, is dominated by that peculiar whirling movement which, to judge by the old descriptions of his works, must have been most characteristic of Wu's designs. (Pl. 48, 2.) The figure is repeated in two engravings, one on each side of the broad staircase which leads up to the terrace. The older one, on the west side, may be of the seventeenth century; it carries the following inscription: "Wu Tao-tzū's brush. The magistrate Chao Tai from Tung-lu (Shantung) had this stone engraved. Po Hsing, a spirit of the Hêng Mountain, flying down like a white devil with a spear. Swift as the wind he descends from the clouds to kill and to strike, an agent of Heaven, who deals out punishment and clears up the dark secrets, so that the country and the people may be peaceful for ever." An additional inscription of similar content is written by a magistrate of Ch'ü-yang.

The engraving on the opposite side of the staircase was executed in 1847, when the earlier one had begun to show signs of deterioration. It may furthermore be noticed that this same *Flying Devil* appears in a great wall painting in the main hall of the temple which (naturally) also is ascribed to Wu. It represents a Heavenly King with a long retinue descending on clouds, an impressive design, which may be a free rendering of a composition by Wu, though hardly executed before the latter part of the Ming period. The present building does not give the impression of greater age, but it was, no doubt, preceded by an earlier building on the same site. The place was the centre of a small kingdom at the end of the T'ang dynasty.

When we turn to the paintings ascribed to Wu, the connecting links become looser. We do not know any which could be accepted as an absolutely faithful translation of his composition. The most famous ones are probably the three pictures forming a trinity—Shākyamuni, Mañjuśrī, and Samantabhadra—in Tofukuji, Kyoto, large ink-paintings, impressive in design but rather slack in execution. (Pl. 49.) The very broad brush-strokes with a wavy movement retain perhaps some echo of Wu's manner, but they are lacking in strength and significance. They may well be, as generally accepted, works of the Yüan dynasty,

but to what extent they reproduce designs by Wu, is impossible to tell. A later repetition of the central figure, Shākyamuni, is in the Freer Gallery in Washington.

Another painting which has often been quoted under Wu Tao-tzū's name is the scroll known as *T'ien Wang Sung Tzū*, the Birth or Presentation of Buddha, formerly in the collection of Mr. Ching Hsien in Peking, and now belonging to Mr. Yamamoto Tejiro in Tokyo. It is interesting as a novel and fantastic interpretation of a traditional motive. (Pl. 50.) A heavenly king, Tzū Tsai (Śiva?), accompanied by some guardians and court-ladies, is receiving a huge dragon held by two men, who exert themselves to the utmost, while Buddha's mother seems to receive a message from another celestial being (a kind of Fudo), surrounded by flames, in which various figures including the future Buddha appear. The last group shows King Śuddhodana accompanied by his consort, carrying the new-born baby in his arms. According to the colophons on the picture, it would have been known as a work by Wu Tao-tzū since the South T'ang period; but to judge by the photographs, the execution is lacking in strength and decision, though skilful as a calligraphic performance, and must obviously be of later date.

The painted copies after Wu's designs offer, indeed, very little of artistic interest, but the stone engravings may serve to convey some idea of his peculiar style as a draughtsman. The quality of his line, the energy of the brush-stroke must have been tremendous, a fact which is emphasized over and over again by the Chinese critics of the T'ang, Sung, and later times, who describe his art from observation or hearsay. We are told that Wu worked in a kind of frenzy, which he often increased by taking wine before he set to work, and that he wielded the brush with a freedom and sureness that nobody before or after him could reach. As the people saw him draw the nimbus around the head of a divinity with one powerful stroke of the brush, they shouted with joy, and said that his hand was guided by a god.

The earliest critical account of Wu's style is given by Chang Yen-yüan in chapter ii of *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi* under the title *Discussion of the Brush-manner of Ku K'ai-chih, Lu T'an-wei, Chang Sêng-yu, and Wu Tao-hsüan*. It has served as basis for most of the later writings on the same subject and may therefore, in so far as it refers to Wu Tao-tzū, be given here in translation. He writes:—

"Wu Tao-hsüan of the present dynasty, stands alone (above everybody) of ancient and modern times. Of his predecessors not even Ku K'ai-chih and Lu T'an-wei may be called his equals, and among his followers is nobody (of equal importance). He learned his brush-method from Chang Hsü, and from this we may again realize that the use of the brush is the same in writing and painting. As Chang was said to be mad on calligraphy, so Wu may be called the divine painter. When heaven creates a great spirit, he is made brave and divine without limit.

"The common people fix their attention on the finished design and on the outward shapes and likeness, but I pay attention to the splitting and spreading of the dots and strokes, and try to avoid the vulgar and commonplace. In painting curves, lines straight as a lance, standing pillars and connecting beams Wu did not use ruler and foot-measure. He painted the curly beard and the foot-long tufts at the temples (of his figures) so that every hair was waving and fluttering and the muscles protruding with strength. There was, indeed, such an excess (of life) that he must have been in the possession of a great

secret. People could not understand how it was possible for him to start a picture, several feet large, either with an arm or with a foot, and then make it into a magnificent and imposing thing, with the blood circulating in the skin. He surpassed Chang Sêng-yu.

"Someone asked me: 'How is it possible that Wu did not use ruler and foot-measure and yet could draw (perfect) curves and arcs, lines straight as a lance, standing pillars and connecting beams?' To which I answered: 'He concentrated his spirit and harmonized it with the works of Nature (or the Creator) rendering them through the power of his brush. His ideas were, as has been said, fixed before he took up the brush; when the picture was finished, it expressed them all.'

"Everything truly wonderful has been done in this way, not only painting. Thus worked the cook, who knew how to avoid the whetstone,¹ and the stone-mason from Ying,² who knew how to use the adze. To imitate the knitted eyebrows (of Hsi-shih)³ is vain trouble for offering the heart, and he who chops (the meat) instead of (cutting with skill) will wound his hands. If the ideas of a man are confused, he will become the slave of exterior conditions.

"Who could paint a circle with the left hand and a square with the right? He who does it with the help of ruler and foot-measure produces a dead picture, while he who does it through the concentration of his spirit creates a real picture. Dead pictures covering a wall are simply like dirty plaster. In real pictures every brush-stroke reveals life. He who deliberates and moves the brush intent upon making a picture, misses to a still greater extent the art of painting, while he who cogitates and moves the brush without any intention of making a picture, reaches the art of painting. His hands will not get stiff, his heart not grow cold, and without knowing, he accomplishes it. Even for the curves and arcs, the straight lines, the standing pillars and connecting beams in his pictures there is no need of ruler and foot-measure.

"Someone asked me: 'How is it that subtle and deep thoughts may be expressed in pictures which are not finished in a thorough and complete fashion?' To which I answered: 'Ku K'ai-chih's and Lu T'an-wei's spirit cannot be seen in their designs, although their pictures are executed in a complete and thorough fashion. Chang Sêng-yu and Wu Tao-tzŭ did their pictures with one or two strokes of their wonderful brush, or by splitting and spreading the dots and strokes; their pictures looked all broken up, their brush-work was not of the complete kind, yet, their thoughts were completely expressed. It should be remembered, that there are two kinds of painting, the *shu* and the *mi* (the sketchy and the finished manner), then we may discuss painting! . . . My interrogator bowed and went away."

Chang Yen-yüan's characterization of Wu Tao-tzŭ's style is further developed and defined by critics of the Sung period such as Kuo Jo-hsü, Su Tung-p'o, and Tung Yu, and fortunately these critics, who still had an opportunity of seeing some works by the master, sometimes refer to more definite points of style, which serve to give us a clearer idea about Wu Tao-tzŭ's position in Chinese art-history. Particularly interesting in this respect is the following writing by Su Tung-p'o on a picture by Wu:—

"The men who knew invented things, those who were skilful transmitted them, this (referring to art and culture) was not all done by one man. The scholars promoted it

¹ Prince Hui's cook who kept his chopper for nineteen years as though fresh from the whetstone, because he knew how to work in accordance with Tao or the laws of nature. Cf. Giles, *Chuang-tzŭ*, sec. ed., 1926, p. 34.

² A man from Ying, who had his nose covered with a hard scab, no thicker than a fly's wing, sent for a stone-mason who chipped it off without hurting the nose. Cf. Giles, *Chuang-tzŭ*, p. 321.

³ The famous beauty Hsi Shih knitted her brows. An ugly woman tried to imitate her; the result was that everybody fled from her. That woman saw the beauty of the knitted brows, but she did not see wherein the beauty of the knitted brows lay. Cf. Giles, *Chuang-tzŭ*, p. 182.

(i.e. culture) by their study; the various kinds of workmen by their skill. The evolution went on from the Three (ancient) Dynasties through the Han up to the T'ang period. Thus poetry was perfected by Tu Fu, literature by Han Yü, calligraphy by Yen Lu-kung,¹ and painting by Wu Tao-tzū. All the efforts of ancient and modern times were brought to completion by these men.

"Tao-tzū painted his figures like the shadows produced by a lamp. They were moving forward and inward; when seen from the side, they seemed to be leaning out; when criss-cross (i.e. placed behind each other), they formed an even plane, and by relative decrease and increase each one had its natural degree (size). Not the least detail was wrong.

"He formed new rules of calculation in art and followed mysterious principles even in his most impassioned work as expressed in the saying: 'Room for the blade to move and to spare²; the revolvings of the hatchet make the wind.' He was really unique among ancient and modern painters.

"I may not be quite certain about the manners of other painters, but when I see (so called) Wu Tao-tzū pictures, I know by a glance whether they are true or not. But nowadays there are very few true ones like those in the possession of Shih Ch'üan-shu, which I have seen once or twice in my life." (Written in 1085 by Su Tung-p'o.)

Su Tung-p'o's characterization of Wu Tao-tzū's style makes us realize that the great admiration evoked by the master's works did not depend simply on his impassioned way of painting and the strength of his brush-work, but also on the fact that he mastered the technical means of representing space, movement, and plastic (three dimensional) volumes in a hitherto unknown degree. His pictures must have possessed an extraordinary power of illusion. The figures moved in them freely in every direction, and when they stood behind each other, there was no crowding, but they seemed to recede into the background as naturally as if they had been seen spread over a perfectly horizontal plane. The third dimension was evidently rendered in a more complete and convincing way than had been done by the earlier masters, and the figures were distinguished by an extraordinary degree of reality.

The plastic quality of Wu's painted figures is particularly emphasized in some writings by Tung Yu who furthermore gives the most definite characterization of his firm structural drawing and incessantly curving and bending brush-stroke. He writes³:—

"Wu's paintings are like clay sculptures. His figures have projecting chins, large curving noses, prominent eyes and sunk-in faces. It cannot be said that he used the ink thickly, yet, the faces and the eyes looked quite real, not otherwise than in the clay sculptures. In ordinary paintings these parts are put on with thick layers of colour, but the eyes, noses, cheek-bones, and foreheads are not well separated.

"Yang Hui-chih and Wu Tao-tzū both came to the fore in the K'ai-yüan era (713-42), but the former did not succeed in his studies. He changed therefore from painting to clay sculpture. He found it easier to make sculptures in clay, and to decorate them with colour than to execute paintings on silk which, indeed, is more difficult.

¹ Yen Chen-ch'ung (709-785), the great statesman and patriot known for his opposition to An Lu-shan and his tempestuous career, he was also one of the greatest calligraphists of the time.

² Cf. Giles, *Dictionary*, no. 13423. "The expression is used of a person whose works seem a mere child's play to him." It refers to Chuang-tzū's story about Prince Hui's marvellous cook, previously mentioned.

³ *Kuang-ch'uan Hua Po*, iv, l. 95.

"Wu painted his figures like clay sculptures; they can be seen from the side and all around, and are good on all four sides. The strokes of his brush are curving and fine as coiling copper wire. However thick the colours may be, one can always see underneath them the bony structure and the modelling of the flesh. All these parts are properly rendered. Fearing that the beholder cannot find it out for himself, I am also telling this about the colouring. The present picture has quite small figures, but their 'resonance of the spirit' is nevertheless exceedingly bold and free."

The close connection between Wu's paintings and contemporary sculpture is quite evident. He is said to have executed himself figures in clay, and among his associates and pupils were several who turned to sculpture, when they did not succeed as painters. Chang Yen-yüan mentions not only Yang Hui-chih, but also some pupils of Wu, viz. Chang Ai-erh, Yüan Ming, and Ch'êng Chin, who became known for their works in clay and stone.¹ None of their works have been identified, but among still existing Buddhist sculptures may be observed figures which, by their virile types and the manner in which the billowing mantle-folds are arranged, reflect similar ideals of style as we find in the rubbings of the Wu Tao-tzū designs.²

It should also be remembered that there are still stone reliefs in existence made after drawings by Wu Tao-tzū, as for instance, the beautiful representation of Kuanyin with the willow branch, seated at the seashore. The well-balanced figure is composed within a circular field which, however, may be the invention of the actual sculptor. According to the inscription, his name was Wei-min from Po-yang; he made the relief in 1107 after a work by Wu Tao-tzū. (Pl. 51.)

Wu's particular qualities as a figure painter are thus more or less brought out by the old critics and illustrated by rubbings from the engraved designs, but as to his landscape paintings we have no informations, which make it possible to form any idea beyond pure conjectures. Chang Yen-yüan says that he formed a new style of his own in landscape, but he does not tell how or why it was new. Only in his special chapter on landscape painting he praises the strange and weird character of Wu's mountains and his gigantic waves, and says that his pictures were so illusive that one felt like stooping down to drink of the water.³ And then we are told about Wu's and Li Ssü-hsün's journey to Szechuan, where they went on imperial command to paint some famous views. When they came back, Li produced a carefully worked out scroll, but Wu had nothing to show; the inquiries of the emperor he answered by the remark: "I have it all in my heart," and in half a day he produced a landscape of 300 *li*. Whatever truth there may be in the story, it serves to emphasize the highly imaginative quality of Wu's art and his impetuous way of creating.

It is evident that whatever motives were touched by this great genius, they received a new meaning, a deeper significance than in the works of any preceding or contemporary master. He may have been in the first place an interpreter of

¹ *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*, chap. x; at the end of the notes on Wu. Cf. Pelliot, *Notes sur quelques artistes*, etc. *T'oung Pao*, 1923, pp. 72-3.

² Cf. *A History of Early Chinese Art*, iii (Sculpture), Pls. 83, 85, 86, and 87.

³ *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*, chap. i, 5.

Buddhist subjects, but he painted with equal success Taoist Immortals, stellar divinities, dragons and devils, portraits and landscapes. And whatever he represented, he made it live not only through a convincing representation of space, cubic form, and movement in every sense of the word, but also through a suggestion of an inner reality, a spiritual power, which he grasped by harmonizing his spirit with that of the Creator (to use the words of Chang Yen-yüan). Painting was to him a truly creative art, an act of magic, like great music, and the brush a tool by which the fire of the gods could be brought down to earth.

(3) Wang Wei

Wang Wei was exactly contemporary with Wu Tao-tzŭ, but the two painters do not seem to have had many points in common. He is represented by the Chinese historians as the perfect gentleman painter, to whom painting never was of more importance than his other artistic activities: music, poetry, and calligraphy, in all of which he reached a high degree of perfection. It may even be safely assumed that Wang Wei never would have become so famous with posterity, if he had been active only as a painter: pictures are sooner lost and forgotten than poems, particularly in an eminently literary nation. Wang Wei's lyrical poems are still counted among the gems of Chinese literature and have been translated into various languages,¹ whereas his original paintings are irretrievably lost and his artistic style may be studied only in later imitations or copies. It is thus evident that one can hardly do justice to the artistic personality who was Wang Wei in discussing the records and remains of his pictorial activity, yet that is the material to which we in this connection must limit our attention.

Because of his established position in the literary history of China, Wang Wei's *curriculum vitae* has also been well recorded. We know the dates of his birth (699), of his *ch'in shih* degree, of his appointments first to a minor official post in Shantung and then to that of a junior censor at the court. It is furthermore recorded that he lost his wife in 730, and thenceforth spent most of his time in solitude, or with one or two Buddhist friends, at his country home, Wang-ch'uan in Shensi, and that he, at the death of his mother, turned this place into a Buddhist monastery. The deep religious bent of his nature seems to have become more and more manifest towards the end of his life.

The momentous events which took place in 756, when the imperial court was scattered and the palaces in the capital sacked by the soldiers of An Lu-shan, brought also a brusque change in the life of Wang Wei. After a vain attempt to save himself by flight, he was forced by An Lu-shan to accept the position of a censor at the rebel's court, an event which was counted as a black spot on his official record, when the imperial house was re-established a few months later. Wang Wei

¹ Cf. Giles, *Chinese Literature*, Waley, op. cit., pp. 141-2. W. J. B. Fletcher, *More Gems of Chinese Poetry*, Shanghai, 1923. Witter Bynner, *The Jade Mountain*, New York, 1930. Besides these translations into English there are others into French and German.

was again imprisoned, and would have met the same fate as other rebels, had not his brother, who then was in favour at the court, been able to save him.

His unshaken faithfulness to the imperial house was also expressed in a famous poem, *The Frozen Pearl*, which reached the ears of the emperor and helped to save him. He was released and given an official charge in the household of the Crown Prince, but he had then only a couple of years more to live; his death occurred in 759.

Wang Wei's artistic activity was evidently strongly coloured by his religious and poetic interests. The main part of his *œuvre* consisted of Buddhist pictures and of landscapes with a poetic undercurrent. He made several representations of Vimalakirti, the Indian ascetic who is said to have been one of the earliest apostles of Buddhism in China, and who was particularly venerated by the painters for his unsullied purity of life and thought. Wang Wei's "style name", Mo-ch'i, was composed after the name of this Buddhist teacher, Wei Mo-ch'i, which is the Chinese for Vimalakirti. No less than four Vimalakirti-pictures by Wang Wei are mentioned in the catalogue of Emperor Hui Tsung's collection; they indicate his predilection for the motive even if they not all were originals. Mi Fei mentions a picture of a Pratyeka-Buddha by Wang Wei, in which the painter had introduced himself, wearing a yellow mantle and a peach-coloured cap, at the foot of the Buddha.

Another of Wang Wei's paintings which may be recalled in this connection represented Fu Shêng, the famous scholar of the third century B.C., who is said to have preserved certain sections of *Shu Ching* from the burning of the books under Ch'in Shih Huang Ti. This picture, which was in the Hsüan-ho collection and is mentioned by several critics, has been identified with one now in the possession of Mr. Abe at Sumiyoshi in Japan and reproduced in his magnificent catalogue. To judge by this reproduction, the picture is certainly not later than the Northern Sung period, but whether it actually is a T'ang painting, as claimed in the writings on it, is difficult to tell from a reproduction. The figure, an old man in scant clothing seated on a straw mat at a low table, is singularly sensitive, characterized with penetrating force and sympathy, and executed in a most delicate linear style, which still reminds us of the early pre-T'ang masters. It seems thus quite probable that it represents Wang Wei's design, though the question as to its date of execution must be left open.

He executed furthermore a number of wall paintings in Buddhist temples in Ch'ang-an (for instance in Tz'ü-ên ssü, the temple which contained paintings by all the best contemporary masters) and in Fêng-hsiang, the district where his country home was situated. Here was the K'ai-yüan ssü, which Su Tung-p'o visited in 1060, when in search for the old master's works. The poem in which he describes this picture and Wu Tao-tzū's painting in P'u-mên ssü is a gem difficult to render in English, but the context relating to Wang Wei's picture is as follows: "Mo-ch'i was really a great poet who wrote: 'I carried irises in my girdle and my garment

was lined with fragrant orchids.' Now, as I see his wall painting, I find it like his poetry in purity and exquisiteness. The pupils in the garden of Buddha (Vetuvana?) are all thin as cranes; in their hearts the passions are dead as ashes which cannot be rekindled. In front of the gate there are two clumps of bamboo; their snowy joints reach down to the frost-bound roots. They cling to each other, their stalks are confused and their leaves agitated by the cold wind—(a few characters are here missing in our edition). Mo-ch'i reached beyond the outward shapes; he had the wings of an Immortal to soar above the cage. I saw the pictures of these two men, both divine and perfect, but before Wang Wei, I collect myself in silence without a word."¹

Wang Wei's picture in K'ai-yüan ssü must have been a wonderful thing, but it may be doubted whether it ever appeared more wonderful than in the poetic transcription of Su Tung-p'o. It was to a large extent due to him and to Mi Fei and, later on, to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang that Wang Wei was hailed as one of the very greatest masters of Chinese painting. He may have been admired and loved by many of his contemporaries, but his position as the founder of the "Southern School" and the originator of all that was best and purest in Chinese landscape painting was not established until the Sung period. The significance of this classification was already explained in the quotation from Tung Ch'i-ch'ang in reference to Li Ssü-hsün's position as the founder of the "Northern School", which to the Ming-critic represented a far inferior current of style. His enthusiasm for Wang Wei and his tireless efforts to obtain some true work by the master are vividly reflected in several passages in his *Hua Yen*, from which some paragraphs here may be quoted as testimonies of Wang Wei's unique position according to Chinese tradition:—

"Wang Wei was among painters the same as Wang Hsi-chih among calligraphists; such men are seldom seen. Some years ago I saw in the possession of the great scholar Hsiang Yüan-pien in Chia-hsing the *Hsüeh Chiang t'u* (Snow on the River). It had no painted 'wrinkles' but only contours. The imitations made of it in later times, such as Wang Shu-min's *Chien Ko t'u*, are in regard to brush-work and ideas rather like Li Chung-shih's work, and I doubt their faithfulness to Wang Wei's style. Then I acquired in Ch'ang-an Chao Ta-nien's copy of Wang Wei's *Hu Chuang Ching Hsia t'u* (The Village at the Lake on a Bright Summer day), and this too had no 'wrinkles' and was somewhat similar to the *Hsüeh Chiang* scroll belonging to the Hsiang family. Yet, I thought the copy cannot be altogether of the same effect as Wang Wei's picture, because Chao Ta-nien's finest works are remarkable for their 'wrinkles'² . . . At last I also

¹ Su Tung-p'o, *Chih Chi*, iv. The poem has been rendered in a somewhat freer beautiful translation by Waley, op. cit., p. 148.

² The "wrinkles", or *ts'un*, form one of the essential characteristics of Chinese landscape painting. They are strokes or dots, sometimes only the finishing portion or the hook at the end of a line, and they serve to render the surface aspect of the mountains and also of stones, trees, and other elements in the landscapes. They have been classified under sixteen (or eighteen) different names, which more or less describe their appearance, and some of these *ts'un* were considered as specially characteristic of certain masters. The difference between the Northern and the Southern school was largely a question of different *ts'un fa*, or modes of drawing the "wrinkles", crevices, and contours of the mountains. The sixteen kinds of "wrinkles" are named as follows: (1) *P'i-ma ts'un* (hemp-fibre "wrinkles"); (2) *Luan-ma ts'un* (tangled hemp-fibres); (3) *Ho-yeh ts'un* (veins of lotus

acquired Kuo Chung-shu's coloured (?) copy of the Wang-ch'uan scroll which showed fine 'wrinkles'. According to tradition, the real picture was in Wu-lin and since it was considered a copy, it could not be very far removed from the original; yet, the picture I saw was a rather common thing which could not be taken as a standard for judging Wang Wei's style.

"But General Yang Kuo-yu in the capital has a small snow scene by Chao Mêng-fu, painted with gold powder, remarkable for its tranquil distance and limpid light; quite different from common paintings. When I saw this, I at once realized that he had learnt from Wang Wei. Someone said: How can you know that he learned from Wang Wei? To which I answered: 'All the painters from T'ang to Sung made their 'wrinkles' differently, according to various schools. It was like the division of Ch'an into five schools; if one hears part of a phrase, it may be enough to tell from which of the schools the speaker comes. Now, in this picture of Chao Mêng-fu the brush-work is not like Chang Sêng-yu's, nor like Li Ssü-hsün's, Ching Hao's or Kuang T'ung's, and I also realize that he did not follow Tung Yüan, Chü-jan, Li Ch'êng, or Fan K'uan; from whom could he then have learnt if not from Wang Wei?'"

"In the autumn of this year I heard that Wang Wei's *Chiang Shan Chi Hsüeh chüan* (Clearing after Snowfall on the Hills by the River) was in the possession of Fêng Kung-shu (in Nanking). I asked a friend who went to Wu-lin (Nanking) to examine it. (In another version of the same story the author says that he dispatched a messenger to borrow the picture.) Kung-shu considered the picture as precious as his head, his eyes or his brain, but as he learned about my passion for Wang Wei's pictures, he made an exception to meet my desire (and sent the picture to the author). I fasted for three days; then I unrolled it and saw at once that it really was in the same style as the little Chao Mêng-fu. It made me very glad. (In the other version of the story he says: I got from it something I never had experienced before.)¹

"Wang Wei himself said: He who is a poor writer must in a former life have been a painter. I had never seen a real work by him but only thought of it in my heart; now I found that the picture of my thoughts corresponded to reality. Is it possible that I, in a former life, entered Wang Wei's studio and saw him seated at his work, and that I had not forgotten what I then learned and observed?"²

Tung Ch'i-ch'ang then tells how the picture was found, together with two other scrolls, in the pillar of an old gate in the capital (other authors say, that it was found in a bamboo tube in a gate-house), and that he, on the request of Mr. Fêng, wrote a colophon of several hundred characters on the picture. In this he expressed the opinion that there were many great painters before Wang Wei, skilled in every

leaves); (4) *Chieh-so ts'un* (twists of a rope); (5) *Yün-t'ou ts'un* (thunder head); (6) *Chih-ma ts'un* (wrinkles like sesamum seeds); (7) *Niu-mao ts'un* (bullock's hair); (8) *T'an-wo ts'un* (eddying water); (9) *Yü-tien ts'un* (rain-drops); (10) *Luan-ch'ai ts'un* (heaped firewood); (11) *Fan-t'ou ts'un* (alum crystals); (12) *Kuei-p'i ts'un* ("wrinkles" on the face of a demon); (13) *Ta fu-p'i ts'un* (cuts of a large axe); (14) *Hsiao fu-p'i ts'un* (cuts of a small axe); (15) *Ma-ya ts'un* (horse's teeth); (16) *Chê-tai ts'un* (folds of a belt). Number (5) is sometimes also called *Chüan-yün ts'un* (convoluted clouds) and number (10) *P'o-wang ts'un* (broken net). For a further discussion of this classification, which probably was not introduced until the Sung dynasty, see S. Taki, *The Southern and Northern Schools of Landscape Painting*, in *Three Essays on Oriental Painting*, London, 1910.

¹ In another connection Tung Ch'i-ch'ang says, that he borrowed the picture from Mr. Fêng and studied it for a year, "but now I have left it and cannot find it again, like the fisherman who went out of the peach-garden." The reference is to Tao Yuan-ming's (365-427) well-known story about the Peach Blossom Garden, a kind of paradise lost, which a fisherman once was permitted to visit, but which nobody could find again.

² *Hua Hsüeh Hsin Yin*, iii.

branch of the art, "but they could not express a spiritual quality in their landscapes. From Wang Wei onwards the painters started to use wrinkles (*ts'un fa*) and the flowing ink method (*hsüan jan fa*—soak and dye manner). He changed the methods of painting as Wang Hsi-chih changed the style of Chung-yu.¹ It was marvellous and admirable as the soaring of the fêng and the huang" (the male and the female phoenix).

It would be tempting to go on quoting more of the appreciations of Wang Wei's paintings offered by Su Tung-p'o, Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, and other connoisseurs of the Sung and Ming dynasties, because they are in some respects more interesting and evocative than the pictorial remains that may be connected with the master, but it would require too much space. The pictures which perpetuate some of his most famous compositions or reflect his style, are lacking in that element of spontaneous brush-work and individual touch, which might serve to give us an impression of the great artist's hand and mind. They leave us also in doubt as to the technical methods of the painter. According to tradition, the monochrome ink painting, either with contours (*mo-hua*) or with flowing ink (*p'o-mo*) would have been his favourite medium of expression, but some of the copies are coloured, as was also the small picture after Wang Wei by Chao Mêng-fu which Tung Ch'i-ch'ang mentions. It may be that Wang Wei tried different manners or modes of painting (as did many of the other painters), though he became in later periods particularly appreciated as a monochrome painter.

Most famous among his great landscape compositions is the *Wang-ch'uan* scroll, in which Wang Wei is supposed to have given an illustration of his country home and the landscape surrounding it. The composition exists in a number of copies, among which should be mentioned in the first place those engraved on stone slabs, as they probably render the original with less alterations of the design than the painted copies, though stripped of all pictorial atmosphere. Of such engravings after the *Wang-ch'uan* scroll there existed at least five different versions, made in the late Ming and early Ch'ing periods at Lan-t'ien, not very far from Fêng-hsiang fu, in which district Wang Wei's country home was situated. Executed at this particular place, the stone engravings served as a kind of historical record or memorial to the great artist, through whose activity the locality had gained its fame and become a place of pilgrimage for poets and art-lovers. This was further emphasized in a special chronicle, the *Wang-ch'uan chih*, containing biographical notes about Wang Wei and a list of other artists and poets who had been active there.²

Dr. Laufer has given a detailed account of the various engravings, which were executed on eight, five, four, or one slab, and apparently all from a drawing by the Sung painter Kuo Chung-shu. The original, which is said to have been left by the painter to the temple at Wang ch'uan, may have been lost at a comparatively early

¹ A great calligraphist (d. A.D. 230) who represented the earlier more formal *li* style of writing.

² Cf. B. Laufer, A Landscape of Wang Wei, *Ostasiat. Zeitschrift*, i, pp. 28-55.

period, but its fame spread far and wide, "it was loved for a long time all over the empire," and made the subject of many enthusiastic and poetical commentaries (which, however, to a large extent must have been based on copies). The Kuo Chung-shu copy is said to have been the smaller of two different renderings, which still existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. (Pl. 52.) Dr. Ferguson claims to have seen it—though he does not tell in which collection—and he quotes several comments on the picture as for instance the following by Chao Chung-mu: "There are two Wang Ch'uan pictures. This is a copy of the narrower one and shows greater freedom of conception."¹

The composition of the scroll is rendered rather differently in the stone engravings and the painted copies, though the principal features and localities (marked by names) are the same. It gives, in the words of Dr. Laufer, "a graphic account of a great variety of scenery, not wild nature, however, but an historical landscape as transformed and cultivated by the hand of man. The mountain range in the background merely forms the frame by which the gardens and buildings composing the villa of the poet-painter are set off."

In spite of the names written over the successive sections, the scenes impress us rather as illustrations to Wang Wei's dreams and poetical fancies about an ideal country estate than as representations of actual landscapes. This impression is strengthened by the poems, which Wang Wei, assisted by his friend P'ei Ti, composed about these localities; they contain general reflections about the beauty of nature but no local clues, except the poetical names. It may be that some features of the *Wang-ch'uan t'u* were suggested by the country place, where Wang Wei spent much time in company with his Buddhist friends, but they are freely combined with imaginative elements; the mountains have grown into fantastic shapes, and the buildings have become very elaborate. Wang Wei was, as a matter of fact, never very closely bound by objective reality: "when he felt like painting, he would even disregard the four seasons; with regard to flowers he introduced peach, apricot, hibiscus, and waterlily into the same scene. He painted a picture with a banana in the snow. The inspiration of his heart was carried out instantly by his hand . . . He was a born genius who worked according to his own principles. But this is difficult to discuss with the common crowd."²

There is, however, very little of this spontaneity and poetical inspiration to be discovered in the painted copies of the *Wang-ch'uan t'u*, one of which is in the British Museum, another in General Munthe's collection in Peking. They are both rather superficial renderings, executed in a dry and minute style with green and blue colours. The scroll in British Museum is provided with an inscription, according to which it would have been painted by Chao Mêng-fu in the year 1309, "in the manner of Wang Wei." It is possible that Chao Mêng-fu did such a

¹ Cf. J. C. Ferguson, *Wang Ch'uan, Ostasiat. Zeitschr.*, iii, p. 58.

² Cf. *Ch'ing-ho Shu Hua Fang*, iii, l. 78.

picture, but the one now conserved in the British Museum is evidently a later rendering.

Another of Wang Wei's famous compositions, which has called forth a great deal of comment in prose and poetry, is the *Chiang Shan Hsüeh Chi t'u*, Clearing after Snowfall on the Hills by the River, evidently also a long scroll of mountain ranges, and watercourses, framed by terraced rocks and clusters of leafless trees. It was a monochrome ink painting, possibly with some addition of white, and it had attached to it colophons by Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, Ch'eng-chi and others. The famous collector of the late Ming period, Fêng-kung shu, is reported to have said about this picture, then in his collection: "Whenever I opened the *Chiang Shan Hsüeh Chi t'u*, I felt the spirit of the mountains, the freshness of the stream, the mist over the spring garden. It was like silkworms producing silk, or insects eating away wood, so fine was every detail, even the minutest things, and they all conveyed some thoughts. It was Mo-ch'i's bright spirit together with his skill in handling the ink that accomplished this precious picture."¹

We have already told something about Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's enthusiasm for the same picture; his efforts to see it, and the almost religious devotion with which he handled it, when it was sent to him for inspection. To him it seems to have been the supreme example of Wang Wei's art.

Does it still exist? I hardly believe so, in spite of some claims to the contrary; but there are several interesting copies of the picture, some of which go back to the Sung period. The most suggestive copy, known to me, used to be in the possession of Mr. Lo Chên-yü in Tientsin, where I saw it in 1922. The soft tone and flowing execution of this picture may even be observed in our reproductions; it carries a very definite atmosphere, though it is difficult to decide to what extent this is due to Wang Wei's original or to the artist who copied it. (Pls. 53-55.) The great progress noticeable here over landscapes of the Li-type lies less in the formal rendering of any particular part than in the interpretation of a certain mood of nature. The snowy mountains and bare trees have become the carriers of an individual expression, a subtle poetic significance, which communicates itself through the tone as much as through the design. The unity of the whole thing is better preserved than in the earlier landscape scrolls and the suggestion of space, by the aerial perspective, is much more effective. Tung Ch'i-ch'ang was evidently right in praising the tranquil distance and the moist atmosphere in this picture. It seems almost as if these qualities had been particularly accentuated in the present copy.

Another copy of the same composition belongs to Professor M. Ogawa in Kyoto. It is executed in a somewhat drier fashion with more insistence on details such as the network of the tree branches and the "wrinkles" of the mountains. (Pl. 56.) The execution makes in some respects a more old-fashioned impression, even though it may not be of any greater age. The "wrinkles" of the mountains are here made according to the "lotus fibre" method, which was considered a

¹ Cf. *Ch'ing-ho Shu Hua Fang*, iii, l. 54, after *Ku Hua P'ing*.

characteristic of Wang Wei as also appears from the mountains "in the style of Wang Wei" which are reproduced in the *Chieh-tzŭ Yüan* (1676).

A third copy of relatively recent date was in the Struhlneck collection which later on passed into the possession of Mr. Fähræus. It is a weaker reproduction of the scroll owned by Mr. Lo Chên-yü.

The afore-mentioned engraved designs and paintings receive their main interest from the fact that they reproduce more or less faithfully famous compositions by Wang Wei; but there are others which have somewhat stronger claims of being considered as originals. They are known to me only through photographs, but as far as one may judge by these, the pictures may be of an early period. One is a high scroll (4 ft. 2 in. by 2 ft. 1 in.) in the Palace Museum in Peking representing some lofty peaks rising above a calm river. (Pl. 57.) A light covering of snow borders the mountains and the branches of the bare trees and makes them stand out in contrast against the dark sky. They are said to be slightly coloured in greenish tones; the trees and the small pavilions at the foot of the mountains are drawn in ink, while the figures are almost covered by the white snow. The execution is remarkable for its refinement and clear definition of every detail. The deep poetic effect depends rather on the tone or colouring than on the design. The picture is provided with an inscription by the Emperor Ch'ien Lung (dated 1791) who says that "one may really accept this as a work of the T'ang period and follow the indications in the *Shih Ch'ü Pao Chi* (supplement), where it is attributed to Wang Wei."¹

The other picture which is the size of a large album-leaf must also have formed part of Emperor Ch'ien Lung's collection, as testified by his inscription on it (dated 1747), and it was until recently in the personal collection of the Chinese ex-emperor. It is known as *Hsüeh Hsi t'u*, Snow by the Stream, and may be the same painting which was sometimes called: Snow by the Ford. The title on the picture is written by the Emperor Hui Tsung, and it has furthermore an inscription by Tung Ch'ü-ch'ang (dated 1621) who informs us that it was examined by a number of experts in his studio, all praising it as a work by Wang Wei.

The composition is of a more intimate kind than in the large landscape in the Palace Museum. There is a group of low buildings and bare trees on the hills in the foreground; a house-boat is poled slowly across the stream, and on the further shore are some low cottage roofs. (Pl. 58.) The moist atmosphere after abundant snow-fall, which has heightened all the forms with white, envelopes the whole scene in a tone of greyish mist. Here again the artistic significance of the rendering depends largely on the tonality, though the single forms and details are drawn with great precision. Wang Wei's manner had evidently still something of the old-fashioned exactness of detail, but this was combined with a sense of tonal values (rendered in more or less monochrome mediums), by which his landscapes received their poetic significance, and he revealed it most completely in the ever-recurring snow sceneries.

¹ Cf. the Palace Museum publication *Ku Kung*, vol. i.

He must have loved snow above everything else in nature. The harmonious quiet and peace that an abundant snowfall spreads over the landscape must have made a particular appeal to his sensitive soul. Beside the pictures described above, several snow landscapes by him are mentioned by old and modern critics, as for instance: *Angling in Snow* (mentioned by Tung Ch'ih-ch'ang), *Snow Piled up on a Thousand Peaks* (mentioned by Kao Shih-chi, a critic of the seventeenth century),¹ *The P'a Bridge in a Snow Storm* (in the Liang Chang-chü collection), *Falling Snow by the River* (formerly Tuan Fang, now R. Lehman collection, New York),² *The Banana in Snow* (mentioned by several critics, known in a late copy),³ and others. In fact, it became tradition to ascribe all snow sceneries of an old-fashioned type to Wang Wei. Mi Fei had, no doubt, excellent reason for his remarks: "Paintings of snow scenes by Chiang-nan artists in a style resembling that of Wang Wei are usually hailed as the master's works." And other critics point out that the signatures were often forged in order to give the pictures a higher value on the market.⁴

Yet, the *Wang-ch'uan* scroll, the picture of his country home, showed scenes of blossoming spring, and there were other pictures of his representing autumn mists or spring rains. The range of his motives was, however, not very wide. Like the great poets of the same period he returned over and over again to certain favourite motives, expressing them with a depth of feeling and a realization of their spiritual significance that was his own personal secret. It matters little what we call this secret, this vision or lyrical interpretation—music or poetry—it was something of his heart as well as of his brush, and it made him beloved as only a great poet can be. When Su Tung-p'o had studied Wang Wei's picture *Mist-Rain at Lan-tien*, which also was provided with a short poem, he wrote: "In reading Mo-ch'i's poem I find in it a picture, in looking at Mo-ch'i's picture I feel a poem." The poem on the picture was as follows:—

"The air is cold, the red leaves scarce.
On mountain paths no rain as yet.
The air is moist and wets the clothes."

"This is Mo-ch'i's poetry; though someone objected and said that it may have been added by an amateur on Mo-ch'i's picture."⁵

It is rather surprising that the pictures after Wang Wei, or in his manner, which have been preserved, are all executed with defining lines and quite thin washes of ink, sometimes with the addition of colour; none of them shows the *hsüan jan fa* or the *p'o mo*, the broad technique with soaking or splashing ink, which is associated with his name. Wang Wei seems to have used both methods, and of the painters who followed him, some worked with fine lines and colour, and some with

¹ Cf. Waley, p. 149.

² Cf. Ferguson, p. 74.

³ Cf. Hirth, *Scraps*, etc. (1905), pp. 84-6.

⁴ Cf. *Ch'ing-ho Shu Hua Fang*, iii, l. 78.

⁵ Su Tung-p'o's Colophons; also quoted in *Ch'ing-ho Shu Hua Fang*, iii, l. 80.

splashing ink. The only picture executed according to the latter method, sometimes ascribed to Wang Wei, is the wonderful *Waterfall*, belonging to Chishaku-in in Kyoto, a rather expressionistic work of great freedom and beauty. (Pl. 59.) It would be interesting to know, if there is any historical reason for the traditional attribution; the picture looks rather like the creation of a full-fledged romantic landscape painter of the Southern Sung or Yüan period. However this may be, it should be remembered as a typical example of the "Southern School" of which Wang Wei gradually became the accepted head and originator.

The importance of pure ink painting is also particularly emphasized in the essay on landscape painting which often has been included among the writings of Wang Wei. The traditional attribution of the authorship is certainly not correct, but the statements that this essay contains about technique, composition, and similar matters may, to some extent, be based on a study of Wang Wei's paintings. The text is reproduced with considerable variations in different reprints showing that there must have been some uncertainty as to its proper form. Some of the reprints, as for instance in *Shu Hua Hui Kao*, contain only the latter part of it, under the title, *Shan Shui Lun* (Discussion of Landscape), in other collections such as *Hua Hsüeh Hsin Yin*, the essay is divided into *Shan Shui Chüeh* (The Secret of Landscape painting) and *Shan Shui Lun*, whereas the whole text is published under the title: *Hua Hsüeh Mi Chüeh* (The Secret of Learning Painting) in the collected works of Wang Wei, edited by Chao Tien-ch'êng (c. 1737) and in various *ts'ung shu*.¹ In the preface to this edition the editor tells us that some part of the text was engraved on stone tablets at Kuan-chung (Shensi?). He expresses the opinion that the whole thing was the composition of a later man, who "borrowed the name of Yu-ch'êng" (Wang Wei), and adds: "It should not be included, but as it, from old to present times, often has been quoted as Yu-ch'êng's (writing), and as it has served as a guide (or rule) for painters, it would be a pity to leave it out, consequently we add it here, at the end, for the benefit of students." These remarks seem to us as well founded to-day as they were 200 years ago; we can do no better than follow the same course.

Hua Hsüeh Mi Chüeh

"In the art of painting ink is the foremost; by it the characteristics of nature may be perfected and the Creator's works completed. In a picture of a few inches may thus be represented a scenery of thousand *li*. East, West, South, and North appear before the eye; spring, summer, autumn, and winter are born under the brush.

¹ The translations into foreign languages show also considerable differences, and most of them are incomplete perhaps with the exception of Professor Alexéeff's translation into Russian, published in *Wostok* (1922), which is not known to me. This served as a basis for a free rendering into French by Professor S. Eliseeff in *Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, 1927, which, however, contains considerable deviations from the text known to me. Another translation into French of the main sections of the essay was published in Mrs. E. Grantham's pamphlet, *Wang Wei Paysagiste* (Peking, 1922). Some parts were translated into German by A. von Herder in his article, Wang Wei, Der Maler des Tang Zeit, in *Sinica*, 1930, H. 4., and the second half of the essay by Jonny Hefter, in *Ostasiat. Zeitschr.*, 1931, H. 3-4. Minor sections have been rendered in English by Giles, op. cit., p. 56, and Waley, op. cit., p. 161.

"One should start with the outlines of the water and avoid making the mountains floating about; then one should lay out the branching roads and not make them into one continuous big road. The main peak must be made very high and lofty, the smaller mountains should stretch forward and embrace the spot where a hermit's hut is situated. On the banks of the water some human dwellings should be placed. Around the village there should be numerous trees to form a grove, and their branches should embrace their trunks. The mountains should be made steep, and the water rushing right down; it should not be made running about in confusion from the springs. The ferry-port should be quiet. The walking men should be few. The rowing boats and the bridges on beams should be high and lofty, but the boats in which the fishermen are angling, should be low, so that they meet no obstructions. Between the overhanging dangerous cliffs some strange trees may be placed, and there should be no passages where the mountain-sides are steep and the peaks precipitous. The far summits should reach the clouds and fuse with the hazy tone of the distant sky. The place where the water comes out in abundance should be enclosed by clear mountains. Palisaded roads should be made at places where the passage is dangerous. On the low ground may be high terraced building and near-by large willows shading the dwellings of men. The Buddhist and Taoist temples on the famous mountains should be indicated by strange pine-trees and ornamental towers.

"Distant scenes are enveloped in mist, high peaks surrounded by clouds. The sign of a wine shop hangs high over the road. The traveller on the water hoists down his sails.¹ Distant mountains should form a low row; the near-by trees should stand scattered about.

"When the hand becomes acquainted with the brush and the ink-stone, it sometimes happens that it moves about as in play without any attachment, trying to explore the hidden secrets, while the years and the months become long as eternity. The finest realization does not consist in many words; the best method of study is to return to the guiding rules."

The following sentences seem to be added by a different writer:—

"The top of a pagoda should reach up to heaven, but the temple should not be visible; it should seem as if there were nothing above and nothing below but hillocks of grass or mud. Of the eaves of the granaries only the half should be shown, and of the grass-huts and thatched pavilions only some poles and beams should appear. The mountain has eight sides, the stone three parts (visible). Avoid giving the clouds the appearance of fungus plants. The figures should not exceed one inch, the pines and cypresses should approach 2 feet."

The above text is the so-called *Shan Shui Chiieh*, but these "secrets" of landscape painting are hardly anything more than a formulation of the most common elements in Chinese landscape composition as they were defined by the great landscape painters of the tenth century. The continuation, known as *Shan Shui Lun* confirms this impression; it is certainly no more characteristic of Wang Wei as a painter and a poet than the first part, nor does it contain anything of particular importance from an æsthetic point of view; it is communicated here for the sake of completeness:—

"In painting landscapes, the ideas should exist before the brush is taken up. The mountains should be 10 feet, the trees 1 foot, the horses 1 inch, the men $\frac{1}{10}$ inch (the relative proportions). Far away men have no eyes, far away trees no branches, far away mountains no stones; they should be thin and fine as eyebrows. Far away water has no waves and reaches up to the clouds. These are the secrets.

¹ The two last sentences may be titles of pictures.

"The waist (middle part) of the mountains should be covered by clouds, the stones by dripping water, the high buildings on terraces by trees, the roads with people.

"Of the stones three sides should be seen, of the roads both ends, of the trees only the tops. Water should be seen according to the wind. These are the three methods.

"In painting landscapes it is common to make a dominating high peak and to connect the precipitous cliffs into a chain, (to make) caves in the gorges, (and to give) the steep mountain-walls overhanging stones, (to make) hills of rounded shape and streams in the passage-ways. The path between two mountains is called a *ho* (gully); the water running between two mountains is called a *chien* (torrent). A mountain range of certain height is called a *ling* (mound), a stretch of open ground is called a *fan* (slope).

"He who follows this understands roughly something about landscape. He who is contemplating (a landscape) should first look at the appearance of the atmosphere, whether it is clear or covered. Then he should decide the places and proportions of the host and the guests and arrange the numerous peaks in a dignified way. Too many produce confusion, too few appear careless; not too many and not too few (is right).

"One must divide the far from the near (objects). The far-away mountains should not be connected with the near-by ones, not the far-off water with the near-by. About the middle of the mountain, where it is covered up, should be placed temples and small huts. At the broken cliffs of the sloping riverbank should be placed a small bridge. When there is a road there should be trees; at the broken embankment should be an old ferry. Where the water is cut off, should be trees in mist, where the water is wide, travelling sails; in the dense groves human dwellings.

"At the precipices should be old trees with broken roots and creepers winding around them. The stones and cliffs, which hang over the streams, should be strange and furrowed by water.

"When painting forests, the far-away trees should be made few and level, the near ones high and numerous. Branches with leaves should be soft and waving, but those without leaves hard and strong. The bark of the pine should be like fish-scales, the bark of the cypress winding around its trunk. Trees which grow up from the level ground have long roots and straight trunks, those which grow among stones are twisted and lonely. On the old trees many of the joints are almost dead. In the cold forest there is scanty protection and an air of desolation.

"When it is raining, there should be no division between heaven and earth; it is then impossible to distinguish East and West. When there is wind and no rain, only the branches of the trees are seen. When there is rain and no wind, the tops of the trees are bent down; the wanderers are carrying umbrellas and straw hats, the fishermen their grass clothes.

"When the rain is ceasing and the clouds disappearing, the sky is becoming blue and transparent, the driving mists quite scarce and the moist green of the mountains is increased. The sun draws nearer and its beams are slanting.

"In the morning view one sees a thousand mountains at the point of day-break; the mist and the clouds are scarce, the waning moon is growing dim, the colour of the atmosphere is quite indistinct. In the evening view the mountains seem to absorb the red sun; the sails are hoisted down at the river isles; the people on the roads are hurrying, and the cottage doors are half closed.

"The spring view is vaporous as enclosed in a cage of haze; the mist is driving in long white strips; the water is indigo blue; the colour of the mountains is growing green. In the summer view the sky is concealed by trees; the blue water has no waves; the water-fall passes through the clouds, and there are quiet pavilions by the near water.

"In the autumn view the sky has the colour of water; the forests are dark and mysterious; the wild geese and swans are on the water, the reed-birds on the sand-banks. In the winter view the ground is all covered by snow; the wood-cutters are carrying fuel; the fishing-boats are moored at the bank; the water is shallow, and the sand-beach flat.

"Landscape paintings should be done according to the seasons, as for instance: Covered by haze in a cage of mist, or The Peaks of Ch'u with accumulating clouds, or Autumn sky at day-break after rain, or Old tombs and broken tablets, or Spring colours over the Tung-t'ing lake, or Desolate roads with wanderers astray; such subjects may be represented in painting.

"The tops of the mountains should not all be alike; the tops of the trees not all the same. The mountains avail themselves of the trees as clothing, and they are like bones to the trees. The trees should not be too many, so that the beauty of the mountains may stand out. The mountains should not be confused; they must allow the spirit (character) of the trees to appear. One who can do something in this way may be considered a master of landscape painting."

This text is followed by a repetition of the first portion of the same (with minor variations) which is said to have been engraved on a stone tablet.

Wang Wei's importance as a precursor of the *p'o mo* technique is emphasized by the historical traditions about some of his pupils, who became famous in this mode of painting. Some of them revelled in ink and applied it not only with the brushes but also with the fingers and with the hair. It is told, for instance, of Chang Tsao (end of eighth century) that he rubbed the ink on the silk with his hand, when he did not use a stump brush. When asked by Pi Hung (who once had been his teacher) where he had learnt this, he answered: "Outwardly I have learnt from nature (the Creator); inwardly from my own heart"—at which answer Pi Hung laid down his brush.¹ "His particular force was the painting of pine-trees. He was so skilful that he could hold one brush in each hand painting with the one a live branch and with the other a dead branch. . . . He painted the stumps and bumps of the trees and the "wrinkles" of their crust with horizontal and vertical strokes, freely as the hand moved. The live branches were moist with the freshness of spring, the dead ones gloomy with the blast of autumn. His cliffs were sharply projecting as if falling down and one could hear the roaring of his rushing waters. When seen near-by, his pictures over-awed the beholder, but seen at a distance, they opened to the very limit of the sky."²

Pictures representing gnarled pine branches and the like are sometimes attributed to Chang Tsao, but those I have seen are more likely works of the famous "finger-painter" of the eighteenth century, Kao Ch'i-p'ei, who imitated him quite successfully.³

A still more erratic way of handling ink was practised by Wang Hsia, also known as Wang Mo, "Ink Wang," who used to dip his hair into the ink and splash it down on the silk. Chang Yen-yüan who knew his brother (who served as supervising censor of a provincial circuit) tells us that Wang was a crazy fellow and quite mad on wine.⁴ "He painted pine-trees, stones, and landscapes, and even though he failed to reach the high and wonderful (in art) and belonged to the

¹ *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*, chap. x.

² *T'ang Ch'ao Ming Hua Lu*, l. 7.

³ For instance, in Strechneck's *Pictorial Art*, p. 70.

⁴ *Li Tai Ming Hua Chi*, chap. x.

vulgar, he was a good painter. When drunk, he took up the ink with the tresses of his hair and rubbed it on the silk, to paint. In his youth he learned how to use the brush from Chêng Kuang (Wên-ch'ien) at T'ai-chou.¹ He died and was buried in the year 804 at Jun-chou.² His contemporaries were as nothing to him; they looked upon him as a magician, and there were many amusing stories about him. When Ku (Chu-tso)³ was a recording officer (in the navy) at Hsin-t'ing, Wang Mo became a patrol officer, and as somebody asked the reason for it, he answered: 'In order to paint the landscapes (*shan-shui*) in the sea.' He resigned, however, after half a year, and painted then in the most extraordinary and amusing fashion." The author adds that he heard more stories about Wang Mo than he cared to repeat, but what has been transmitted to posterity seems enough to secure him the honour of having been one of the strangest and most ink-crazy painters in Chinese history.

(4) *Animal Painters*

The attitude of the early Chinese painters towards motives of the animal kingdom was essentially the same as their attitude towards other aspects of life in nature such as trees, stones, and water. They were, on the whole, less interested in the representation of individual features or momentary impressions than in the general ideas or types of the various species; their characterization was synthetic, but at the same time alive with movement and energy. The Chinese animals may be conventionalized, but they are always artistically significant.

The paintings of animals were in the Chinese catalogues placed in a special class, called quadrupeds (*tsou shou*), which usually is ranked above pictures of ladies (*shih nü*), and the importance of this kind of painting was evidently considered no less than that of figure paintings or of landscapes. Many of the greatest masters have cultivated it, carrying it to a degree of perfection that it hardly reached in any other country. This does not mean, however, that the Chinese horses and oxen would be better characterized than corresponding animals in European art, simply that they are alive with a different spirit: They are less motives of study or illustration than symbolic expressions of the painters' ideas and reactions to an all pervading force or life.

Horses in particular formed a favourite subject of the Chinese painters, and they were, as a rule, represented free, pasturing or frolicking, or as saddled steeds, but very seldom harnessed to a vehicle, as so often was the case in Western art. It is true that mules and oxen were more common in China as draught animals, yet horses were also used for the same purpose in certain parts of the country, but it seems that the Chinese idea of a horse was that of a free and proud animal that carries the rider with ease and elegance, or plays with its mates as intelligently as any

¹ A city in Chekiang.

² A port-city in Kiangsu, later called Chen-chiang.

³ Ku K'uang, a poet and painter, known for his humorous and erratic ways; he wrote also about painting but retired finally into the mountains and was known as Hua-yang Shan-jen.

human beings. Some of the horse paintings are, as a matter of fact, explained by the Chinese critics in a symbolic sense: The steeds are proud and elegant in their manners as noble dukes and courtiers, or happy and carefree on the pasture as officials who take a rest from their daily routine.

Many of the paintings of horses in the T'ang period were also made as a kind of record of the wonderful tributes, which were sent from various countries of Central and Western Asia to the Chinese emperor. These precious horses were all riding animals, and they were counted among the most cherished possessions of the great emperors. They were tokens of might and wealth and luxury just as much as all the foreign servants or the ladies of the harem. This interest in horses developed into a veritable craze in the reign of Emperor Ming Huang, who is said to have had over 40,000 costly horses in his stables, and of these a certain number were trained for regular circus performances. They, as well as the ladies of the Imperial harem, were taught to dance to the tunes of the Imperial orchestra: "Horses performed posturing dances; were skilled at climbing steps," writes Tu Fu.¹

Several artists are mentioned in the records of the T'ang period who specialized in horse painting, but only two among them reached the highest class: Ts'ao Pa and Han Kan. The former is, however, nowadays hardly more than a great name, immortalized by Tu Fu and mentioned by the old critics in connection with portraits and horse paintings; none of his works seem to have survived in copies or the like. But with Han Kan, who sometimes is considered as Ts'ao Pa's pupil or immediate follower, the case is different; we may still reach some idea about his art from the descriptions of the old writers and from existing paintings, even though it would be misleading to consider all pictures inscribed with Han Kan's name as faithful renderings of his designs. His name has become an almost generic appellation for horse paintings, among which only a few may be traced back to his own works.

According to an early tradition, he worked as a boy in the shop of a wine merchant, "where Wang Wei and his brothers often bought wine on credit for their picnics. When the boy came to collect the money at Wang Wei's house, he sometimes amused himself in drawing figures and horses in the sand. Wang Wei was startled by the talent and interest (of the boy) and gave him a yearly support of 20,000 cash (5 Mex.) and directed his studies in painting for over ten years."²

This record of Han Kan's beginnings as a painter is supplemented by the account in *T'ang Ch'ao Ming Hua Lu*. Here it is said that Han Kan was called to the court about the middle of the T'ien-pao era (742-56), and ordered to study horse painting under Ch'ên Hung. But as the Emperor found that he was painting in an entirely different fashion from this official court-painter, he asked how that was possible, to which Han Kan replied: "I have my own teachers; they are all the

¹ Cf. Florence Ayscough, *Tu Fu, the Autobiography of a Chinese Poet*, p. 154.

² Cf. *Shu Hua P'u*, vol. 47, quoted from *Yu Yang Tsa Tsu*.

horses in Your Majesty's stables!"—one of the most famous replies in Chinese art-history. In the same account it is, however, said that Han Kan painted, beside the numerous horses, religious motives, such as a Bodhisattva and a Paradise, in Pao-ying ssü and the Twenty-four Sages in Tzū-shêng ssü.¹

Among Han Kan's most famous pictures of Emperor Ming Huang's horses are particularly mentioned "The Jade Flower Horse" and "The Shining Light of the Night" (see below) and furthermore, "The Emperor examining a Horse" and "Prince Ning playing Polo", etc.

Su Tung-p'o describes in detail two pictures by Han Kan, one of Fourteen Horses, the other of Four Horses. The latter was composed as follows: "One horse stood on land with raised head and the mane in disorder, as if it was looking for something, stamping with the hoofs and neighing. Another was on the point of stepping into the water, the hip up and the head down, but it was bending round and hesitating before taking out the step. Two more horses were already standing in the water, one of them looking back as if speaking through his muzzle, but the one behind did not answer, because it was drinking and remained quite immobile. They were like stable horses, though without the restraint of bridles or whip, but at the same time like wild horses with sharply cut eyes and ears pointed with excitement, strong chests, and fine tails; their behaviour was as fine as that of worthy officials and noble dukes when they meet and salute each other ceremoniously."²

Fifty-two pictures by Han Kan representing horses and hunting-scenes are mentioned in the *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*. One of these may have been the picture now in the Freer Gallery, which bears a writing in style of Emperor Ming Huang. It is a short roll representing several men of Turco-Mongolian type leading three richly caparisoned horses, evidently tributes from Central Asia. (Pl. 60.) The picture is executed with great skill in deep and rich colours, heightened with gold. The decorative effect is excellent, and the characterization of both the horses and the men is done by a master of high rank. The design is very likely Han Kan's, but the style of execution seems more characteristic of some later artist familiar with Li Lung-mien's horse paintings.

More difficult to date and to appreciate is the small ink-painting on paper (29.5 × 35 cm.) belonging to the brother of the former Prince Kung in Peking, which represents one of Emperor Ming Huang's famous horses "The Shining Light of the Night" (*Chao Yeh Po*), because it is evidently an old picture which in part has been retouched. (Pl. 61.) The horse is a short riding steed of the Mongolian pony type without a saddle. It is bound with a rope from the halter at a pole, but makes a violent effort to get away; the hoofs are stamping, the mane is flaming,

¹ In other accounts it is stated that he painted the Forty-two Sages in two galleries at the Kuanyin garden in Tzū-shêng ssü.

² Su Tung-p'o's colophons in his collected works, also quoted in *Ch'ing-ho Shu Hua Fang*, v, 1. 78.

the head lifted with a sharp neigh. The whole animal seems to quiver with restlessness and excessive energy. But it is only in the fore-part, the head and the neck, that the character stands out convincingly; the back and the legs are weaker, probably because of some wear and retouching. The drawing is here lacking in structure, and the tail is missing. It is only by concentrating on the best portion of the picture that we receive the impression of something worthy of a great master. Here too the wear is noticeable, but the structural quality of the broadly synthesized form has not been obliterated, and the sensitive life of the muzzle and the eye may still be enjoyed. The head reminds us of the finest horse heads in clay of the end of the Han period; it has the quality of great archaic art. (Pl. 62.)

The earliest inscription on the picture is by Emperor Li Hou-chu (937-978) of the Southern T'ang state, but the picture also carries the seals of Chang Yen-yüan (the well-known critic of the middle of the ninth century) and of Mi Fei. Other inscriptions are by Hsiang Tzū-yen (dated 1138) and Wu Shuo (Wu Fu-pêng), likewise of the Southern Sung period. At the side of the painting are several colophons by *litterati* of the Yüan period, and Emperor Ch'ien Lung has provided it with an autograph, in which he says that the picture was formerly in the Hsüan-ho collection, and that he acquired it in the year 1741. In the meantime it belonged, according to Chang Ch'ou, to the academician Han Ts'un-liang and to the Wên family. The picture has furthermore been celebrated in an allegorical poem by Wang Yün (1227-1304).

In consequence of all these literary records, inscriptions, and seals, which have been scrutinized by some of China's best connoisseurs of ancient paintings (and also by Japanese amateurs), the picture has acquired great fame and is generally accepted as an authentic work by Han Kan. To Occidental students, for whom inscriptions and literary records have less weight, it must remain more of a problem. But this may be due, as stated above, to the fact that it is no longer in a pristine state of preservation. It conveys at least a strong reflection of the style of Han Kan, which evidently was characterized by more boldness and energy than any of the later horse painters possessed.¹

Among the painters of horses and other animals who were active during the eighth and early part of the ninth century may still be mentioned Wei Yen, Han Huang, and Tai Sung, who all are extensively recorded by the Chinese historians. Wei Yen, says Chang Yen-yüan, is commonly known only as a horse painter, but he also painted landscapes with pines, stones, etc., which, in spite of their small size, contained large views. In *T'ang Ch'ao Ming Hua Lu* we are told that he had great ideas and an easy manner. "He painted, in a dotted manner, saddled horses and figures and landscapes with mist and cloud effects; the animals were represented with endless variety, prancing or lying down, eating or drinking, frightened or

¹ Another small painting which possibly may be an original by Han Kan is in the Palace Museum in Peking. It represents a man leading a horse to the watering place, and is also executed with a fine brush in ink on paper. Size: c. 23 x 34 cm. Reproduced in *Ku Kung*, vol. xiv.

quite still, walking or rising, standing on their hind legs or craning their necks; when they were quite small the head was made with a dot, the tail in one stroke; the mountains he painted with a turning stroke, the water with a rub of the brush, but everything was wonderfully true and natural." Wei Yen's name is also immortalized by Tu Fu who wrote a poem about his picture of Two Pine-trees. His fame seems to have been almost equal to Han Kan's, but we have no longer any opportunity of reaching a visual idea about his works.

Han Huang (723-787) was a kinsman of Han Kan, who made a great career as an official; he became governor of Chekiang and was ennobled Duke of Ch'in. He painted horses, donkeys, and oxen, and scenes of country life. A rather pretty picture in the Freer Gallery representing "A Man in a red cloak riding on a donkey over snow-covered ground", bears his name and may possibly be based on some composition of his, but as the picture evidently is executed in the Yüan or early Ming period, it is difficult to tell to what extent it reflects an earlier original. The very decorative colour effect is, no doubt, of later origin.¹

The most frequently represented animals beside the horses were the water-buffaloes. They formed a favourite motive of several painters during the late T'ang and early Sung period; their bulky shapes and energetic movements seem to have attracted the artists, and it may well be admitted that there are no animals more intimately connected with the undulating river landscapes of the lower Yang-tzū valley than these monumental beasts.

The buffalo paintings by Han Huang are no longer known, either in copies or original, but of those painted by his pupil Tai Sung, who is said to have surpassed his master as a buffalo painter,² two or three examples are preserved. Most important is a long scroll representing Grazing Buffaloes (executed in ink on paper) in the possession of Mr. A. W. Bahr of New York. The motive is here represented with great variety; the connecting element being a river landscape, where the animals are enjoying themselves in the water as well as on land. A smaller picture in the National Museum in Peking represents Two Fighting Bulls. (Pl. 63.) The furious movement of the charging bull is splendidly rendered; it gains an extraordinary impetus through the long elastic body, and finds its outlet, so to say, in the sharp points of the curving horns. The other bull, which is wounded in the hind-leg, is an equally excellent example of bovine energy and swiftness.

A little fan-shaped picture, now in the Museum in Berlin, shows a hilly landscape with some large trees shaken by the wind, and two buffaloes, which are striding homewards against the wind, followed by a small herd-boy. It is a landscape painting of excellent design, though more akin to later pictures of the Five Dynasties or Northern Sung period than to the afore-mentioned pictures by Tai Sung. The painter's name on this picture is probably a later attribution.³

¹ See *Chinese Paintings in American Collections*, pl. 123.

² Cf. *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*, where also thirty-eight pictures by Tai Sung are listed.

³ This picture was exhibited at the Berlin Exhibition of Chinese Art, 1929, and then catalogued (no. 472) as of the Sung period; likewise in Amsterdam, 1925.

According to a popular tradition, Tai Sung would have excelled in representing certain optical effects, such as the reflection of a herd-boy in the eyes of a cow and vice versa, but Tung Yu, who also reports this tradition, makes the following sensible remarks about it: "I have seen many paintings by Tai Sung, but none with such reflections. It is furthermore evident that the respective sizes of an ox and a boy would make it impossible, particularly when the eyeballs are put in with dots no larger than the grain of a seed. Sung's paintings of oxen are wonderful simply in regard to the shapes, and there is nothing strange about them. The muzzles of the oxen he made moist and shiny, a special feature which I cannot explain. The swiftness of their movements cannot be imitated, but this is no sufficient reason to call Sung's art unsurpassed. Tai Sung was not a workman; he was originally a scholar who held an official post in western Chekiang. He learned his manner from Han Huang."¹

A picture of uncommon beauty and refinement to which no name is attached, but which for stylistic reasons may be ascribed to the end of the T'ang or the Five Dynasties period is the *Tan Fêng Yü Lu t'u* (Deer among Red-leaved Maples) in the Palace Museum in Peking. The composition may be observed in our reproduction, but the exceptional beauty of colour can be realized only before the original. (Pl. 64.) The large-leaved maples form a richly coloured pattern of grey, red-brown, and pink as of a finely woven tapestry. A troupe of young deer led by a stag is halting in the thicket; their slender forms and soft chestnut-coloured fur harmonize singularly well with the shapes and tones of the trees. The decorative transposition of the motive is carried out with a colour sense and a creative imagination that endow the picture with a feeling of poetry. One cannot help recalling memories of autumn days in Nara Park, when the Kasuga deer gather among the red-leaved trees at the musical call of their guardian.

A great deal could be added about other animal-painters as well as about painters of birds and flowers who were active at the end of the T'ang period, but it is not necessary. Best known is the name of Pien Luan, which is not unfrequently attached to pictures representing peacocks, or preying birds and quadrupeds, and also to other bird paintings. The designs of these pictures are, as a rule, of a broader decorative type than those of later flower and bird paintings; they may be observed even though the pictures attributed to the painter are copies of a later date.²

(5) *Portrait and Genre Painters*

None of the great artists who were mentioned in the previous chapters can be classified as painters of profane genre. Their figure paintings usually had a

¹ Cf. *Kuang-ch'uan Hua Po*, v, 4, and also Giles, op. cit., p. 73.

² Ferguson, op. cit., p. 78, mentions a picture of *Two Peacocks* in the collection of Mrs. J. J. Emery in New York which he considers a prominent example of Pien Luan's art. It is said to have belonged to Emperor Hui Tsung and was in modern times owned by Tuan Fang. Another picture attributed to Pien Luan, representing *Singing Birds on the Branch of a Flowering Tree*, was shown in the Exhibition in Tokyo, 1928. See Catalogue, pl. 17.

religious, moral, or historical significance, and even their portraits were often of a more typical or descriptive kind than renderings of individual characters. They represented many strange and extraordinary types, as for instance, foreign envoys or burly peasants, but they did not make a speciality of the more intimate scenes of the life that surrounded them. Only in the field of landscape painting do we find something of that same sensitiveness and lyrical beauty which characterizes contemporary poetry.

A kind of complement to this is formed by the illustrations to the lives of noble ladies. Very few of them have been preserved, but if we may judge by their titles, there must have been pictures closely related in spirit to Li Po's immortal poems about spring and full moon and beautiful girls. Chang Hsüan (c. 713-742) excelled in this kind of painting. Among his most famous pictures were: "A Night Frolic," "A Swing," "The Full Moon," and others of the same kind. We are told that he painted the girls with great delicacy and introduced the novelty of touching the ears with dots of red.¹ He must have enjoyed the same kind of company as Li Po, who writes in memory of former excursions: "When it was our mood, we took girls with us and gave ourselves to the moments that passed, forgetting that it soon would be over, like willow-flowers or snow. Rouged faces, flushed with drink, looked well in the sun-set. Clear water, a hundred feet deep, reflected the faces of the singers—singing girls, delicate and graceful in the light of the young moon."²

Some idea about the refinement of his style and manner of composition may be obtained from a picture in the Boston Museum representing Women Preparing Silk, which, according to an inscription from the beginning of the thirteenth century, is a copy by Emperor Hui Tsung after an original by Chang Hsüan. (Pls. 65, 66.) There can be no doubt that the picture reproduces a T'ang design, and that the ladies, both in their types and their costumes, represent the T'ang mode. But the soft gracefulness of these figures, which are absorbed in some of the most significant and beautiful occupations for women in China, may have been emphasized in the translation. The picture has almost the charm of a court performance; the ladies are akin to the most exquisite dancers and musicians that we know from the plastic representations of the same period.

Similar subjects of feminine grace and beauty were also treated by Chou Fang (tzu, Chung-lang, active c. 780-810), who reached a still greater fame. No fewer than seventy-two pictures are mentioned under his name in the *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*, many of them representing Buddhist and Taoist subjects, but others romantic scenes, court ladies and the like, and it is particularly through the last that he has become known. His highly refined style and peculiar full types may still be recognized in a number of copies of relatively late date.

In Wên-hua tien in Peking there is a picture ascribed to Chou Fang representing the Fairy Ma Ku, who, on her return from P'eng-lai, offers some precious things to

¹ Cf. *Shu Hua P'u*, vol. 46.

² Cf. *The Poet Li Po*, by Arthur Waley. (A Paper read before the China Society, 1918), p. 22.

Wang Fang-p'ing and Ts'ai-ching, two famous Taoists. (Pl. 67.) The picture, which is provided with an inscription by the Emperor Ch'ien Lung, is evidently not of great age, but the style of the figures is that of the T'ang period, and the simple but well-balanced composition is remarkable for its reposeful refinement.

Another composition by Chou Fang, known through two or three copies (published in a pamphlet by Lo Chên-yü), represents three ladies in a garden, one of them playing the *ch'in*, and the two others listening, while two younger women servants stand at the sides, carrying refreshments. (Pl. 68.) This, too, is exceedingly simple; the garden is reduced to a cliff and two small trees; there is no indication of different planes, no attempt at a definite spatial composition, but the figures are perfectly balanced against the neutral silk ground. The wide distance between them does not isolate but serves rather to bring out the spiritual import of the composition—the silence of the listeners, the quiet strains of music. If we compare the composition with some of the finest Dutch seventeenth century pictures representing similar subjects, for instance Terborgh's ladies playing the lute or the spinet, we may realize how the Chinese by detaching the motive from unessential objective restraints succeeded in expressing more of its inner meaning than the most skilful European painters could give with their accomplished representation of material appearances.

Chou Fang must, indeed, have been one of the greatest masters in suggesting the tone or mood of such romantic assemblies. He painted the "Secret Pleasures of a Spring Night", "Ladies with Fans" (of which a copy exists in the Metropolitan Museum), "The Flying of the Kite," etc., and it is said that his graceful ladies were remarkable for their high eyebrows and their full cheeks, which were signs of ideal beauty in the T'ang period. We are furthermore told, by Mi Fei, that he took great pains in preparing the silk so as to give his pictures the most elegant appearance. He used the method of adding a kind of chalk powder to the water in which the silk was boiled and then of beating it into a "silver block". On this exquisitely smooth and fine surface the finest lines could be perfectly drawn and the figures stood out transparently beautiful.

The original works of Chou Fang have met with destruction, but there have in late years come to light some pictures of the T'ang period which evidently reflect the same feminine modes and ideals as his art, though in a somewhat coarser technique. We are referring to the fragments of a silk painting recovered by Sir Aurel Stein from a tomb at the cemetery of Astana in the vicinity of Karakhodja, the ancient capital of the Turfan district, which may be dated to the first quarter of the eighth century, i.e. the early part of Ming Huang's reign, when so many of the greatest masters worked at the Imperial court. The pictures are evidently not of the highest class, but they are genuine and characteristic and marvellously fresh in colour thanks to their preservation in the dry desert sand. (Pl. 69.) When exhibited in the British Museum a few years ago, they constituted something of a revelation to students of Chinese art, and those who did not see the

originals, which are now in Delhi, may still obtain some idea of their beauty from the excellent colour reproductions published in the *Burlington Magazine* (June, 1925), and in *Innermost Asia* (vol. ii, p. 655, pls. cv and cvi).

In his descriptive text Mr. Laurence Binyon tried to reconstruct the picture of which these fragments formed parts, and he arrived at the conclusion that it was a scroll of frieze-like composition divided into a number of short sections, representing ladies standing or seated under trees, playing on musical instruments or enjoying the performances of dancers and singers. He calls the whole picture "A Musical Festival in Honour of Spring", which gives the most poetic interpretation of the subject. The close connection with a picture such as Chou Fang's above-mentioned "Listening to Music" is obvious, and it may also be observed that we have here examples of the same type of feminine beauty with full cheeks, high eyebrows, and red spotted faces as the one praised by the old critics in the works of the famous T'ang painter.

There is also an obvious stylistic relation between these ladies from the cemetery of Astana and the female beauties standing or seated under trees, which are represented on a six-fold screen in Shōsō-in. (Pl. 70.) This famous screen, which probably was placed in the temple treasury shortly after the middle of the eighth century, may well have been imported from China. The figures are, however, not paintings in the proper sense of the word, but ink-drawings filled out and modelled with feathers of various colours, which nowadays are almost entirely lost. They are lacking the element of colour that lends such a wonderful freshness and charm to the paintings from Astana, but they are very expressive in design.¹

To the same group belong also two smaller pictures, representing figures standing under trees, accompanied by pages, brought from Karakhodja by the Japanese explorer Count Ōtani, one of which is pasted on a paper with the date 716. They are inferior in artistic quality but important in so far as they serve to fix the date.

These small decorative paintings or drawings of the first half of the eighth century offer important material for the study of the profane genre painting of the T'ang period. The grace of the figures is tempered by great dignity; the compositions are very simple, consisting in each case of one or two figures combined with a tree and a piece of rockery, but there is something more: a quiet atmosphere of music, of dream and odorous spring, suggested by the pictorial translations of the poetic motives.

Many of the great painters mentioned in the preceding pages also occasionally executed portraits but none of these have been preserved. The only portrait paintings of the T'ang period which still exist are by a minor artist, but nevertheless of a remarkably high quality. They belong to the Shingon temple Tōji in Kyoto, and have from time to time been exhibited in the museum of the city. They

¹ Cf. *Toyo Bijutsu*, Novembre, 1929. Numéro spécial sur le Shoso-in.

represent five of the patriarchs of this mystic school of Buddhism, and were painted by Li Chên, a comparatively little known master, who was active in the reign of Emperor Tê Tsung (780-804). Their history is known practically from the day they were painted, because they were brought to Japan in 804 by Kôbô Daishi, the famous founder of the Shingon sect in Japan, who also has provided them with explanatory inscriptions, and they have ever since been preserved in the temple treasury. Besides these five portraits by Li Chên there are two more of the same set, but these are distinctly inferior in quality and more likely the work of an imitator than of Kôbô Daishi himself, as claimed by tradition.¹

The pictures are imposingly large, representing the figures in about half life size. They are executed on very fine silk, not pieced together but woven in the full width of the paintings. At the bottom of each picture is added a strip with writing by Kôbô Daishi. But their present condition is far from good; with the exception of one, they are so badly worn that the figures can be seen only in part; one is practically effaced. They represent single figures, Indian or Chinese monks, seated in meditation or in ritual postures on low platforms. The compositions show very little variation; only one of them is completed by a servant, standing in reverent attitude at the side of his master. The names of the men are written in large, highly decorative characters.

The best preserved of these portraits represents the Indian monk Amoghavajra (Pu-k'ung Chin-kang) in a black (now greenish grey) mantle seated on a platform with reddish supports, which still show traces of flowery ornaments. The drawing of the figure is done with very fine lines, almost like an engraving, but the broad and rather angular mantle folds are shaded by darker tones. The head is modelled almost without any perceptible shadows, yet it stands out with sculptural form against the background of the brownish yellow silk. With remarkable simplicity and economy of means the artist has contrived to make a picture, which is convincing as a portrait and monumental as design. (Pl. 71.)

The same refined and decisive style may also be observed in the figure of a servant in a white garment, who is standing reverently, with folded hands, at the side of Hui-kuo, Kôbô Daishi's teacher, in another of these pictures. The main figure is here simply a shadow, almost worn away, but under the platform may still be seen his slippers, a characteristic detail which returns in all these pictures, adding a note of intimacy to the severely monastic portraits. (Pl. 72.)

The importance of these pictures can hardly be over-estimated. They are among the finest remnants of T'ang painting still existing, and the only portraits on a large scale known to us before the Sung period. In spite of their ruined condition, they reveal a power of definition and synthesis that rarely, if ever, was surpassed by

¹ Cf. *Kokka*, no. 198. The following passage is quoted from Kobo Daishi's *Shorai-roku*: "The reverend Divine (the Chinese from whom he had received instruction) informed me that the secrets of the doctrines of the Shingon sect could not be conveyed without the aid of pictorial representations. Thereupon I brought home with me sixteen artists, including Li Chên, and had them draw different sacred figures."

later painters. The Chinese critics are unanimous in describing the T'ang period as the golden age of figure painting in China, and we have no reason to doubt this estimate, even though the existing material is too scarce to substantiate it. T'ang painting is known to us only in fragments and copies, but as far as these go, they support the literary and historical traditions, according to which not only religious but also profane figure painting reached its classical stage before the end of this period.

VI

THE LATE T'ANG AND FIVE DYNASTIES PERIOD

(1) *Political and Religious Dissolution. The Rise of Ch'an Buddhism*¹

The brilliant artistic culture of the middle T'ang period, brought about by some of China's greatest poets and painters, was never fully revived, even though the dynasty was re-established in 756 after the rebellion of An Lu-shan, and continued its reign for another 150 years, i.e. until 906. The power of the Imperial House was gradually weakened through a series of revolts by local governors, who had established themselves almost as independent rulers in outlying provinces, and also through disastrous wars with border tribes, particularly the Uigurs and the Tibetans. In 763 the Tibetans sacked Ch'ang-an, and although driven out again, the state of warfare lasted for another twenty years until a peace treaty was signed, in which the Chinese emperor was styled "uncle" and the Tibetan ruler "nephew".

During the following century the greatest dangers were not caused by outer enemies but by ambitious eunuchs at the court and revolting governors. The rebellion which broke out in 881 under the leadership of Wang Chih-hsien and his successor, Huang Ch'ao, spread gradually over the whole country and became the signal for the downfall of the T'ang dynasty. The third leader of this rebellion accepted, to begin with, the authority of the Imperial house, but as soon as an opportunity offered itself, he had the last scion of T'ang put to death (906). He founded a dynasty at Lo-yang under the name of Liang, but this did not last for more than sixteen years, and its rule was limited to the central part of the empire.

This so-called Posterior Liang dynasty was followed by the Posterior T'ang, which lasted for twelve years to 935, then came the Posterior Chin until 946, and the Posterior Han until 950, and finally the Posterior Chou until 960, the year which marked the end of the Five Dynasties period and the foundation of the Sung empire. But while these five dynasties followed each other in rapid succession at Lo-yang and Pien-liang (K'ai-fêng) independent governments of a more stable kind were established in other parts of the country: the Liao kingdom in the North with its capital at Yen-ching (Peking), the Shu kingdom in the West with its capital at Ch'êng-tu (in Szechuan), and the Southern T'ang kingdom in the South-East with its capital at Nanking. These independent states, which have no place in the official dynastic histories of China, are well worth remembering, because their capitals offered safer refuges for the artists than the Imperial court; Ch'êng-tu and Nanking in particular became during this troubled period important centres of artistic activity where great painters worked under the patronage of the local rulers.

The political revolutions had, no doubt, a considerable influence on the state of the fine arts, but still more important in this respect were the changes in the field

¹ The word Ch'an is also pronounced Shan; in accepting the former pronunciation for the name of the Buddhist school we are following Giles, *Dictionary*, no. 348.

of religion and philosophy. The lyrical poets, who had spread a never fading lustre over the epoch of Ming Huang (and still for some time after, though in a sadder tone), were followed by prose writers of a more philosophic and moralizing type. Men like Han Yü (768–824) and Liu Tsung-yüan (773–819) were no longer inclined to transpose reality into poetic metaphor. Han Yü was the classical representative of the Confucian state-philosophy. His memorial to the emperor on the subject of Buddha's bones (published in 819) opened the way for the reaction against this all-powerful religion and led, at least indirectly, to the serious blow of 845, when by Imperial decree nearly 7,000 Buddhist monasteries were destroyed, besides 40,000 local temples, while 260,000 monks and nuns were restored to secular life.¹ Such are the official figures, and even if these were never fully put into effect, it is evident that a tremendous mass of religious buildings and works of art were destroyed. It was a death-blow to the hieratic type of religious painting which had flourished during the earlier part of the T'ang period under the protection of the Amitābha and the T'ien-t'ai schools.

The immediate inspiration for this momentous persecution did not, however, come from the Confucian camp but from the Taoists, who had succeeded in obtaining a decisive influence over several of the later T'ang emperors, including Wu Tsung, who "suppressed Buddhism on the ground that it was a superstition but encouraged Taoism which was no better". Like some of his predecessors he partook freely of the mysterious decoction, administered by the Taoist sages, which was called the "elixir of life", with the result that he suffered a premature death. His uncle who followed him on the throne, under the name of Hsüan Tsung, revoked the anti-Buddhist edict, but he too fell under the influence of the Taoist doctors. He issued a decree (852), according to which all Buddhist monks and nuns should obtain special permission before taking orders, and succumbed also from too much use of the "elixir of life". Some of the later T'ang emperors may have been more consistent supporters of Buddhism, but as the political troubles of the tottering empire increased, they were hardly able to offer much of a protection to the religious institutions. In spite of this rapidly waning official support and the sharp reaction from the Confucianists and the Taoists, the Buddhist religion did by no means lose its influence over the souls and minds of the people. The opposing forces had succeeded in breaking the backbone of its ecclesiastical organization, but as they had nothing of corresponding religious or philosophical value to put in its stead; Buddhist ideas and piety came back with renewed strength through other channels. Some of the new esoteric sects, such as Chên-yen (in Japanese, Shingon), obtained an extraordinary influence over religious minded people, while others gained new force by a process of nationalization. This is true particularly of the meditative school, known in China as Ch'an, in Japan as Zen, which from now onwards became one of the guiding influences in the evolution of the fine arts in the Far East.

¹ Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, vol. iii, pp. 267–8.

The Ch'an, or Dhyāna, school of Buddhism had existed in China at least since the arrival of the Indian patriarch Bodhidharma, who is said to have come by way of Canton to Nanking in 520 or 526, but it had been of a rather exclusive kind practised mainly within a narrow circle of monastic followers. Bodhidharma's message was extremely simple, but at the same time by no means easy to grasp or explain. It could not be expressed by intellectual treatises, nor could it be realized through prayers or asceticism. All that man had to do was to turn his gaze inward and find the Buddha, the illuminating Light, in his own heart.¹ He might be prepared through certain teachings and practices leading to self-discipline and to the development of his intuition, but the final illumination comes in a moment, as naturally as "swallowing or dreaming", and when it once has been experienced, it is a conviction which transforms the whole life. It gives a new significance to every experience.

The great influence of this school of Buddhism in China was much facilitated by its resemblance to certain old currents of Chinese thought. It was in perfect harmony with the Taoist tenets, according to which spiritual illumination, or the knowledge of Tao, could be obtained only by bringing the mind into perfect harmony with the eternal laws and workings of the universe, and not by intellectual studies or outward actions. The junction of this native tributary with the river of inflowing Buddhism increased enormously the influence of the contemplative school. When Taoism flourished, Ch'an religion was also thriving; and it lost its influence when it "adopted usages of other schools".² It may be added that its highly individualistic character was particularly well suited to the Chinese mind at periods when more hieratic forms of Buddhism had fallen into decay.

The popularization of the Ch'an school seems to have started with the sixth Chinese patriarch, Hui-nung, at the beginning of the eighth century, who is said to have explained the founder's teachings in "discussions", but according to other authorities this change took place only at the end of the T'ang period, when Ch'an had divided into a number of local schools or centres of teaching. "At this time, it seems, that Ch'an books were written in the colloquial manner and contained many vulgarisms. Thus the conceptions of Ch'an, formerly known only to the upper classes, were spread among the common people",³ which indeed may have been a result of the general dissolution of the old forms of culture, which took place at this time. The dominating position of the Buddhist clergy as well as the authority of the central government had been severely shaken, new leaders rose among the common people; independent governments were gradually formed at ten or more places; culture, religion, and art were no longer exclusive matters of hieratic organizations or of court circles, but reached broader layers of the population. In

¹ Cf. Eliot, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-9.

² Eliot, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

³ Cf. Konan Naito, *Bukkyo Bijutsu*, no. 14, November, 1929.

contrast to the refinement of culture in the T'ang age, the new fashion held simplicity in esteem, and in consequence of this certain modifications also became manifest in the fine arts.

(2) *Centres of Art in the Five Dynasties Period*

Most remarkable in this respect was the development of monochrome ink-painting, which from now onwards became the favourite medium of the Chinese painters. There had certainly been ink-paintings before, but they were not so free and had never gained the upper hand over the carefully drawn and coloured paintings, which better corresponded to the æsthetic ideals of the upper classes in the T'ang period. The new development was an expression for the same spiritual currents which brought about the propagation of Ch'an Buddhism. Painting became more popular and at the same time more individualistic, less dependent on the æsthetic conventions of the ruling classes. This kind of painting allowed the most immediate realization of the intuitive vision, the sudden spiritual experience, which was the aim of the Ch'an philosophers. It also demanded the highest degree of concentration and the greatest dexterity in the handling of the brush. The last consequences of this expressionistic mode of ink-painting were not drawn until the end of the Sung period, and we will thus have occasion to return to it in a later chapter, but it was successfully practised by several masters of the Five Dynasties period.

There was, on the whole, no lessening of artistic activity. China was then, even more than nowadays, a world of its own, divided into a number of separate areas, some of which remained practically undisturbed by the revolutions. Such was the case with the kingdom of Shu, beyond the mountain ridges in far-off Szechuan. This had been a place of refuge for the T'ang emperors, when they were forced to leave their capital before the intruding hordes of revolutionary leaders. Artists and writers followed in their wake, and gradually there grew up in Ch'êng-tu, the capital of Shu, an important school of painting. And as this has been well recorded in a special chronicle, the *I-chou Ming Hua Lu* (published 1004-1008), we are comparatively well informed about the painters of Shu.

Another important centre of artistic activity was Nanking, the capital of the Southern T'ang kingdom, which lasted until 975, when it was conquered by the Sung emperor. Religious painting had always had a stronghold in this part of the country but, as we will find, landscape and flower painting also reached an important development in Chiang-nan towards the end of the tenth century. The last ruler of the Southern T'ang state, Li Hou-chu (Li Yü), was one of the most accomplished art-lovers that ever occupied a throne. When he lost his kingdom, he became a wandering poet for three years.

In Central China conditions were less favourable for the development of arts and letters. Here, at the imperial capital, changes of the ruling houses, revolts,

and outrages followed in rapid succession. None of the five dynasties, which, as mentioned above, claimed imperial prerogatives, was able to maintain its power for more than fifteen years, the shortest one existed only four years, but they all established their court at Pien-liang and tried, when conditions permitted, to keep up an air of artistic culture. Several prominent painters, particularly among the landscapists, worked in the capital preparing the way for the great school of landscape painting, which flourished here during the first century of the Sung dynasty.

The great importance of the period of the Five Dynasties was closely connected with the fact that the formal traditions of T'ang and earlier times were now definitely abandoned and new modes of composition and technique were introduced, which became the foundation for the future development. The classical and old-fashioned was changed into something freer and more individualistic. It is practically impossible to draw a line of demarcation between the arts of the short period named after the Five Dynasties and those of the early Sung time, particularly as some of the great painters worked during both of these political periods. We will therefore include in the present chapter certain painters who usually are counted among the Northern Sung artists; they started before the beginning of Sung, and carried on the stylistic traditions of the Five Dynasties.

The original paintings preserved from this epoch are not quite as rare as the pictures of T'ang; yet, they stand in no proportion to the great number of painters and pictures recorded in the historical chronicles. The above-mentioned *I-chou Ming-Hua Lu* contains the biographies of over fifty painters in Shu, and this was only one of the centres of art. At this distant place painting seems to have remained comparatively conservative. Several of the T'ang painters had found their way here from Ch'ang-an, when the political conditions in the capital became too uncertain, and they formed schools which became of determining influence. There were thus since T'ang times three families of painters, who worked particularly for the temples, to wit, the Chaos (Chao Kung-yu, Chao Wen-ch'i, Chao Tê-ch'i), the Ch'angs (Ch'ang Ts'an and his son Ch'ang Chung-yin), and the Kaos (Kao Tao-hsing, Kao Ts'ung-yü, Kao Wen-chin, and his sons, Huai-chieh and Huai-pao, who worked in the Sung period). Their works were to a large extent wall-paintings, and no traces of them remain. Still other painters of religious subjects are mentioned in the *I-chou Ming Hua Lu*, but as their works are completely lost, it may not be necessary to lengthen the list of names.

(3) *Buddhist Painters*

The foremost painter of Buddhist subjects in the period of the Five Dynasties was evidently Kuan-hsiu, who became famous particularly through his representations of the Sixteen Arhats. He was prominent also as a poet and a master of Ch'an,

and a certain number of data regarding his life and work have been preserved.¹ He was born in 832 at Chin-hua in Chekiang and placed by his parents in a Ch'an monastery for education as a monk. He made rapid progress in the study of the scriptures, but showed also at an early age his talents as a poet and a painter. From his native country he went to Yü-chang (Nan-chang), the capital of Kiangsi, and painted here, in the Yün-t'ang ssü, a series of Arhats (mentioned by Kuo Fu-hsü); then he resided in Pei-ching-tê ssü in Fu-chou, where he also painted some Arhats. At the age of 63 he went with an official mission to the ruler of Wu-yüeh at Hang-chou, and in this city (in the Shang-yin ssü) there were also shown, in later times, a series of eighteen Arhats by Kuan-hsiu. In the year 896 the famous monk came to the court of a local ruler in the province of Hupei, and though received here too with great honours, he had the misfortune of being involved in political troubles and was obliged to leave the country. He escaped (901-903) to Ch'êng-tu, the capital of the Shu kingdom, and was now hailed as a great poet and teacher. The ruler bestowed upon him a purple mantle and the title Ch'an-yüeh Ta shih (The Great Master of the Ch'an Moon), the name under which he usually is mentioned. He died in 912, 81 years old.

Beside the four series of Arhats by Kuan-hsiu mentioned above, five more are recorded in various temples in Canton, Shao-hsing fu (Chekiang), Ch'êng-tu, and Peking.² They may not all have been originals by the master, but they increase the evidence of his fame as a painter of Arhats. In this respect Kuan-hsiu stood in a class of his own; he created a definite type of Arhats, strange and weird old men, more expressive of dramatic force than peaceful holiness. And the type held its own in Chinese art at least into the Yüan period, in spite of the fact that Li Lung-mien created another more harmonious, purely Chinese type, which in the Sung period reached great popularity. The almost violent expressiveness and highly imaginative character of Kuan-hsiu's Arhats seem to have appealed particularly to the adherents of Ch'an Buddhism.

The extraordinary appearance of Kuan-hsiu's Arhats is quite vividly described by Huang Hsiu-fu in *I-chou Ming Hua Lu* (written before 1005) who also gives some hints about his artistic derivation in the following paragraph: "The people of his time considered him as another Huai-su.³ As a painter he followed Yen Li-pên. His Sixteen Lohans had bushy eyebrows, large eyes, hanging cheeks, and high noses. They were seated in landscapes, leaning against pine-trees and stones. They looked and behaved like Hindus or Indians. When someone asked, where he had seen such men, he answered: 'In my dream.' He painted also Shakyamuni's ten disciples in a similar fashion. The people found his pictures very strange, but his pupils treasured them highly. He was often asked to write poetry, and such

¹ The biographical data *re* Kuan-hsiu are related in *Sung Kao Seng Chuan*, translated by E. Chavannes in his article *Les Seize Arhat, Protecteurs de la Loi*, in *Journal Asiatique*, sept.-oct., 1926. Some additional information in *I-chou Ming Hua Lu*, iii, ll. 3-4.

² Cf. Chavannes' above-mentioned article, pp. 280-3.

³ Huai-su, a Buddhist priest of the seventh century, who was a famous writer of grass characters.

writings of his may still be seen, but they cannot be obtained. At the beginning of the T'ai-p'ing Hsing-kuo era (976) when Emperor T'ai Tsung searched everywhere for old pictures, Ch'êng Yü, who then ruled over Shu, made a present of Kuang-hsiu's Sixteen Lohans to the emperor."

Kuan-hsiu's name is traditionally attached to several series of Lohan pictures, now in Japanese collections, but it is doubtful whether any of them are his original works. Those which correspond most closely to the above description are the pictures belonging to Kōdaiji in Kyoto. (*Toyo*, viii, pls. xii-xiii.) The figures are in these pictures placed at the foot of trees, seated on rocks, and they contain elements of landscapes. The old grim-looking men are of a very strange type that may be called Hindu or Indian. But the execution is lacking in strength, and can evidently not be as early as the compositions. According to the temple records, these pictures were brought from China by the priest Shunjo in 1211,¹ and were at the time considered as Kuan-hsiu's works, but the chances are that Kuan-hsiu's famous compositions already at that time existed in faithful copies executed by skilful painters. The Kōdaiji pictures have thus a great documentary value, even though not executed before the twelfth century.

More important from an artistic point of view, and more difficult to date, are the Arhats which formerly belonged to Baron Takahashi but which now are in the Imperial Household Museum in Tokyo. They are evidently more archaic not only in design but also in execution. (*Toyo*, viii, pls. x-xi.) Unfortunately they have been subject to restorations through which the original quality of the workmanship has been spoilt; some of them have taken on a rather crude appearance, and as they also have been cut down in size, the figures are more or less cramped, if not mutilated. The compositions are quite different from those of the Kōdaiji pictures; the Arhats are placed on rocky ledges but, with two exceptions, they have no backgrounds of trees and cliffs. (Pl. 73.) The artist has concentrated his interest on the characterization, which is brought out not only in the enormous heads but also in the postures, and he seems to have felt a need of making the Arhats violently ugly in order to emphasize their superhuman qualities. (Pl. 74.) Their bodies are dried up, and the skin is clinging like parchment to the disproportionate frames, as if they had been seated immovable for ages. But the heads have grown into extraordinary sizes and developed strange bumps during their endless meditations. Some of them are almost terrifying, as if possessed by an overpowering spirit; others are quietly introspective, others again teaching or directing their attention to some listener with compelling force. The differences are, as a matter of fact, so great that one cannot help questioning whether all these figures are created by the same man. It seems difficult to believe that such differences have been caused simply by unequal restorations. The lines are in some instances quite dead and mechanical, the shading harsh and meaningless, at other places they are finer, and there may be observed an element of great power

¹ Cf. *Kokka*, 253, where the temple records are quoted.

and expression, which shines through the somewhat crude shapes and makes these pictures uncommonly interesting and problematic works of art.¹

An entirely different rendering of similar motives may be seen in two pictures which also are ascribed to a painter who worked in Ch'êng-tu at the beginning of the tenth century. They belong to the Shōhōji (temple) in Kyoto, and are traditionally known as "Two Patriarchs with Minds in Harmony" (*Toyo*, viii, pls. xvii-xviii). The pictures are accompanied by a lengthy inscription over the name of Yü Chi, a critic of the Yüan period, in which they are ascribed to the painter Shih K'ò. The writing has been declared a later forgery, but the pictures are nevertheless generally considered as Shih K'ò's works.² If the attribution is correct, it becomes evident that the special type of Ch'an painting in a sketchy ink style (*p'o mo*), which reached its height in the South Sung period, had already been far developed in the tenth century. The lack of comparative material makes it practically impossible to reach a safe conclusion as to the date of these pictures, but as long as the traditional attribution cannot be disproved, they may be described at this place.

The paintings represent two rugged old men seated in profound meditation, the one leaning on a tiger, the other half naked, supporting his bearded chin on his hand. (Pl. 75.) The figures are dashed off with some patches of light and shade rather than drawn or modelled; but so suggestive is the brush-work that the volumes stand out with full plasticity, and living as a fleeting vision. The pictorial rendering corresponds perfectly to the motives: Ch'an monks in meditation, seeking that sudden flash-like illumination by which the spiritual secrets are revealed. They are utterly detached from the material world; their forms exist only as symbols of their minds.

Shih K'ò himself must have been a rather strange and erratic person. Liu Tao-ch'un, the historian of the painters of the Five Dynasties period, describes him as follows³: "Shih K'ò, whose *tzū* was Tzū-chuan, came from Pi near Ch'êng-tu. He was a rude and foolish youth who loved to shock and insult people; he ridiculed many people by composing funny rhymes about them like comedy-actors; some of these skits are still repeated. To begin with, he learned painting from Chang Nan-pên, but after a few years surpassed his teacher. He painted mostly old and rustic types of an offensive appearance in order to shock the proud and honorable citizens.

¹ Omura writes about them as follows: "They not only bear Kuan-hsiu's legend, but the brush-work and colour-scheme make it most clear that they were really by Ch'an-yüeh himself. They are truly among the rarest treasures in the world, and there are no others by which we can more satisfactorily judge of the artist's style": *Toyo Bijutsu Taikwan*, viii, p. 9.

Among other paintings in Japan, which have been attributed to Kuan-hsiu, may be mentioned a series of Sixteen Arhats in the Shōmyōji (Kanazawa), three Arhats in Baron Fujita's collection (*Kokka*, 456) and one in Marquis Asano's collection. (*Kokka*, 400.) The last ones are executed in monochrome ink, possibly in the Yüan period. Furthermore there is a series of thirty-two Kuanyins, representing different aspects of the Bodhisattva, in Bukkokuji in Fushimi, also ascribed to Kuan-hsiu. (Cf. Waley, *op. cit.*, p. 166.)

² Cf. Konan Naito, *Bukkyō Bijutsu*, Nov., 1929.

³ *Sheng Ch'ao Ming Hua P'ing*, v, l. 17.

The people of Hsi-chou were really much annoyed by him. . . . His spirit was vigorous and unyielding; he became very famous at the time. Many of his works still exist in Shu (Szechuan) and Ch'in (Shensi)."

Other historians inform us that Shih K'o made a visit to the capital (about 965) and was offered there a position at the Imperial Picture Bureau, but after a short while he found it too boring and asked permission to return to his home in Shu.¹ Here, in the temples of Ch'êng-tu, he executed a great number of wall paintings, some with Buddhist motives, others representing dragons, tigers, and all sorts of gambolling genii or spirits of Heaven and Earth. But beside the religious and mythological subjects he painted scenes from the life of the peasants and portraits, all of the most unconventional kind, sometimes shockingly uncouth, but always alive and characteristic and executed with a masterly handling of the *p'o-mo* (splash-ink) method.

(4) *Painters of Birds and Flowers*

A special branch of painting much favoured in the Ch'êng-tu school was the representation of flowers, birds, insects, and the like, i.e. the most delicate manifestations of the life of Nature, hitherto seldom represented as independent motives. In this field, as in so many other directions, the painters of the Five Dynasties period were not only the precursors but the competitors of the Sung artists, and it was principally from Ch'êng-tu that this kind of painting was transplanted to the Sung court.

The foremost of the flower-and-bird-painters in Shu and probably one of the greatest masters that ever worked in this field in China, was Huang Ch'üan. He was active about the middle of the tenth century in Ch'êng-tu under Wang Yen (919-25) and Mêng Ch'ang (934-965), two rulers of the later Shu kingdom, who honoured him with high titles and official charges. We are told that when Wang Yen asked him to improve an eye in Wu Tao-tzŭ's painting of Chung K'uei he refused to do it, pointing out that the whole meaning of the picture would be destroyed, and made instead a copy to meet the wishes of the ruler.²

His paintings were executed with the greatest care: "He selected the best points of various schools and combined them: Flower- and bamboo-painting he learned from T'êng Ch'ang-yu, bird-painting from Tiao Kuang-yin, landscape from Li Shêng, cranes from Hsüeh Chi, dragons from Sun Yü (Sun Wei). Though he studied in this way (the various masters), his brush-work was strong and daring; he threw off all the traditional rules and surpassed greatly his various teachers. It is generally said that in Tu Fu's poems and in Han Yü's essays every character has a definite source; in the same sense it may be said, that Ch'üan brought together the most wonderful parts of various styles. There was no man of old, nor anyone of later times, equal to him. He painted all the mountain flowers (of

¹ Cf. *T'u Hua Chien Wen Chih* a.o.; also Giles, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

² Cf. *Hsüan-ho Shu Hua P'u*.

Szechuan), the wild herbs, the rare birds, the strange animals, the river-banks and the rocky islands, angling boats and old rafts on the waters, and did it all with utmost refinement." The pheasants which he painted in the year 953 in the Pa-kua hall of the king's palace were so natural that when some foreign envoys came with an eagle to the king, this bird tried several times to attack the pheasants by the neck.¹ One of his contemporaries, Duke Fan Chên in Shu, who was a specialist in raising eagles and hawks (for hunting), said that Ch'üan grasped the very life of the birds and did not simply imitate earlier bird painters. No fewer than 349 of his pictures are listed in the Hsüan-ho catalogue in succession to the above remarks; the great majority of these pictures represent birds in landscapes, but there are also a few Buddhist and Taoist motives among them.

Stories from other sources could be quoted to illustrate the extraordinary life-likeness of his birds, but it seems hardly necessary. Huang Ch'üan was evidently right when he said that he drew things as they are.² He used an exceedingly fine brush, the lines were hardly visible, and the effect of his pictures may, on the whole, have depended more on the colouring than on the drawing.³ Yet, it is evident that in his paintings of bamboos and trees, for instance, the brush-stroke was essential, but the principal technical novelty that he introduced was a kind of "boneless painting", i.e. the use of colour without any visible outlines.

These remarks about Huang Ch'üan's art are well borne out by a painting called *Liu T'ang Chü Ch'in t'u* (The Willows at the Pool with Gathering Birds), which has been published in a series of large photographs in Japan without any text or indication of its owner. To judge by its seals, it must have formed part of the Imperial Manchu collection and also been in the Hsüan-ho collection. The original is unknown to me, but the photographs convey an impression of a fine original painting executed with abundant use of pigments. The composition may be called a panorama of bird-life among blossoming trees and shrubs. It opens with a large prunus (?), in which some magpies and smaller singing birds have gathered; after this follows a group of large birds, i.e. two families of cocks and hens with their young among rose-mallows. (Pl. 76.) The third section contains a number of pheasants on rockeries, and furthermore a prunus in bloom and a willow with many small birds. The remaining part is covered by the tranquil waters of a pool, on which some swans and ducks are enjoying themselves; a motive of great unity and harmony. (Pl. 77.)

¹ This story is told in *I-chou Ming Hua Lu*, where also a similar tradition is reported about the *Cranes* which he painted in another hall of the king's palace.

² Su Tung-p'o held a somewhat different opinion about this; he writes: "Huang Ch'üan painted the flying birds with their necks and feet extended; but somebody remarked that when the birds stretch their feet, they draw in the neck; and when they stretch the neck, they draw in the feet; they never extend neck and feet at the same time. This may be found quite true on observation, and it is thus evident, that he who looks at things does not always discriminate; though he was a great painter, he did not understand this point." Tung-p'o, *Chuan Chi*, vol. 70.

³ Cf. Giles, *op. cit.*, p. 92, quotation from Shên Kua.

The whole picture is thus, strictly speaking, more like a succession of decorative panels or screens than a unified design. The groups of trees and birds and rockeries have little connection from a decorative point of view, but taken separately, they are admirable renderings of very intimate aspects of life in nature. Huang Ch'üan seems to have been a relatively old-fashioned painter, who won his great fame by a hitherto unattained degree of accuracy in depicting birds and flowers and by his beautiful colouring.

Huang Ch'üan's particular style and technical methods have often been characterized in contrast to the manner of his great rival Hsü Hsi, who probably is the most famous of all Chinese painters of flowers, fruits, and birds. He was the descendant of a well-known Chiang-nan family and seems to have passed most of his life in Nanking, where his paintings were highly appreciated by King Li Hou-chu, though he never actually worked at the court. Liu Tao-ch'un offers the following interesting information about Hsü Hsi's style and manner of working¹: "He used to walk about in the vegetable garden looking for subjects. Although his pictures only contained tufts of vegetables, young shoots and the like, his style (*hsieh-i*) surpassed the old masters', and his creations were wonderful. He specialized also in coloured work which he made absolutely life-like. . . .

"In discussing paintings of flowers and fruits, scholars and officials usually express the opinion that Huang Ch'üan's and Chao Ch'ang's pictures should be considered as the finest models, because they are drawn and coloured directly from nature and surpass the works of other men. But compared with Hsü Hsi's, they are very inferior. Ch'üan's works were divine (*shên*), but not mysteriously wonderful (*miao*); Ch'ang's works were wonderful, but not divine; Hsü Hsi alone went beyond both the divine and the wonderful. Good painters give as a rule nothing more than coloured representations of shapes, and do not know how to convey the spirit and the structure. But Hsü Hsi started by drawing in ink the branches, leaves, pistils, and petals of the flowers, and then he put on the colours. In this way he brought out the spirit and the structure before the final stage of the work; and his flowers became perfectly luxuriant, almost like the works of the Creator. He was, indeed, the foremost in the world and a master of the divine class."

Hsü Hsi's paintings were, as said above, eagerly collected by the ruler in Nanking, and when he lost his throne, they came into the possession of Sung T'ai Tsung, who is said to have exclaimed after looking at Hsü Hsi's picture of a pomegranate tree with hundred fruits: "Among paintings of flowers and fruits I care only for Hsü Hsi's work; the rest are not worth looking at!" But it took many years before the learned men of the emperor's Painting Bureau were willing to admit Hsü Hsi's pictures as classical models of equal importance with Huang Ch'üan's works.²

¹ *Shêng Ch'ao Ming Hua P'ing*.

² Kuo Jo-hsi offers also some comparative observations about the art of Huang Ch'üan and Hsü Hsi, in *T'u Hua Chien Wen Chih*, i, but they contain nothing beyond the informations of the earlier writers, except the names of a number of pupils.

The only important flower-paintings known to us which, to some extent, may reflect the spirit and manner of Hsü Hsi (to whom they are traditionally attributed) are the two large pictures in the Chion-in temple in Kyoto, representing respectively "Lotus and Ducks" and "Lotus and Herons". (*Toyo*, viii, pls. xiv, xv.) The materials as well as the execution make it probable that they were painted not later than the Sung period, and if we attach importance to their wonderful lightness and suggestion of quivering life, it might be imagined that they were done by some follower of Hsü Hsi. The rosy flowers and big green leaves are bending under a gust of wind; petals are falling, leaves are torn at the edges; a breath of life sweeps through every fibre of these magnificent plants. (Pl. 78, 79.) The technical execution is, however, less remarkable for fluency or broadness than for its refinement and exactitude. If I remember right, some red may be discerned in the contours of these pictures as well as in others of a similar type, though inferior in quality, which are ascribed to the Hsü Hsi school.

Another flower-painting of a similar type as the pictures in Chion-in was in the great collection of the late Marquis Inouye in Tokyo, which I had an opportunity of studying some ten years ago. It is ascribed to Ku Tê-ch'ien, an attribution which, as far as I know, is accepted by the best Japanese authorities (colour reproduction in *Kokka*, 297). The composition consists here also of lotus flowers and a pair of mandarin ducks, but it is richer and more varied than in the above-mentioned pictures. Ku Tê-ch'ien was a favourite painter of king Li Hou-chu, who is said to have expressed his admiration in the following words: "Of old there was Ku K'ai-chih, and now we have Ku Tê-ch'ien."

A somewhat younger flower painter of Shu, often mentioned together with Huang Ch'üan and Hsü Hsi, was Chao Ch'ang (*tzü*, Chang-chih), though his activity really belonged to the early part of the Sung period. He was a Ch'êng-tu man, and learned his art from T'êng Ch'ang-yu. In his youth he travelled in the districts of Pa and Tzû, in Szechuan, and we are told that the officials were very eager to obtain pictures of his, but he did not like to part with his works. He then went to Pien-liang and met honours and recognition, but in his old age he returned to Szechuan and tried to buy up as many as possible of his early works.¹

The motives of his pictures he seems, however, to have chosen from the gardens rather than from the wild flora of the Shu mountains. According to a tradition, reported by Chiang Shao-yü,

"Chao Ch'ang used every morning before the dew was gone, to make a tour of the garden, examining and enjoying in his hand combinations of variously coloured flowers which he then painted. He called himself 'Draw from Life', and the people said that Ch'ang's paintings were dyed and not made with colours laid on. If one, in examining his pictures, touched them with the hand, one did not feel the colours, so delicate were they."²

¹ Cf. *Shêng Ch'ao Ming Hua P'ing*.

² Quoted in *P'ei Wen Chai Shu Hua P'u*, vol. 50, l. 28.

There are several paintings in Japanese collections traditionally attributed to Chao Ch'ang, all quite small and mostly representing broken branches or flowers seen full face (and not in side-view as in most later paintings of the same type).

As examples may be mentioned the fan-shaped picture representing "A Branch of White Jessamine", formerly in Marquis Inouye's collection: a remarkably fresh and sensitive rendering of these odorous summer flowers in a soft harmony of white and greyish green. (Pl. 80.) It may evoke certain flower studies by Leonardo or Dürer, but it has a transparent lightness that no Western painter attained. A somewhat larger picture is the "Bamboo Stalks with Winged Insects", belonging to Mr. Hakateyama (formerly Akaboshi, *Kokka*, 243), in which the drawing of the quivering leaves of the bamboo and the fluttering wings of the dragonflies is most suggestive. Quite small again, hardly more than a letter-card, is the picture in Baron Dan's collection representing "A Lotus Bud with a Leaf and a Split Calyx", but the beauty and joy of its colours may be said to stand in inverse proportions to its size.

According to the *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*, Ch'ang painted not only flowers and fruits, but also birds, cats, and rabbits, and several compositions with such motives are mentioned in the list of his 154 pictures in the imperial collection. It may be remembered that the beautiful picture in the British Museum representing "Two White Geese" carries an inscription with Chao Ch'ang's name, though the attribution has been doubted.¹ If it has any foundation, Chao Ch'ang would seem to have been also one of the foremost bird painters of the epoch, in spite of the fact, emphasized in *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*, that his finest artistic qualities were not to be found in his pictures of birds and cats. This wonderfully balanced and expressive picture of the two geese may, however, be the work of some other bird painter of the Northern Sung period.

(5) *Figure Painters*

The most important figure painters of the Southern T'ang state were Wang Ch'i-han and Chou Wên-chü, both active at the court of king Li Hou-chu. Their delicate manner seems to reflect the extraordinary refinement of the Nanking court; where, it is said, women first started to bind their feet, because it imparted to "their gait a swaying motion which was found attractive by the æsthetes of the day". (Waley, p. 165.) Chou Wên-chü specialized in the representation of these elegant court ladies, while Wang Ch'i-han painted Buddhist pictures besides contemporary *genre* motives. Chou decorated a hall in the king's villa with such subjects, and though he followed in a general way the traditions of Chou Fang, it is said that he did not paint fat beauties, like the T'ang master, but slender willowy ladies. The fashion had changed since the opulent days of the great T'ang emperors, and the pictures should, of course, reflect the latest ideals of feminine

¹ Cf. Waley, *op. cit.*, p. 180. I cannot find that the picture is as much repaired as Waley writes. The silk seems to me original all through.

grace. And at the same time children came to play a rôle, which they never before had held in Chinese art. Artists took an interest in the gentler side of life; women and children, flowers and butterflies, became motives just as important as statesmen and philosophers, or dragons and tigers. The motives were perhaps of a minor range, but they demanded a very close observation of nature and penetration in a hitherto almost neglected side of life.

This new trend in figure painting is well illustrated by two small pictures in the Boston Museum, one ascribed in Chou Wên-chü, the other to Wang Ch'i-han, which represent very attractively the stylistic tendencies of these masters. The main subject of both is children at play. In Chou Wên-chü's picture the child, who is lounging on a garden bench, is amusing himself with a dog and a cat in the midst of luxuriant rose-mallows (Pl. 81), while in the picture attributed to Wang Ch'i-han there is a company of six small children playing on a garden terrace at the side of a pavilion where a woman is tending an almost naked baby who is lying on his stomach. (Pl. 82.) The intimate feeling of these illustrations and their refinement of design may be observed in our illustrations, but their delicate colouring—light blue, mossy green, rose, and white—is something that can be communicated only by the originals. The pictorial treatment corresponds here perfectly to the gracefulness of the motives.

More famous is the picture by Wang Ch'i-han, known as *K'an Shu t'u*. It once formed part of the Tuan Fang collection, and is now in the possession of Dr. John C. Ferguson in Peking. As indicated by the title, it represents "Reading", though the old man, who is seated among his books in front of a large painted screen, pauses for the moment in his reading and is cleaning his ear with the finger nail, while a servant is approaching from the side. If we may believe the old and modern authorities who have written about this picture, it should be an original by Wang Ch'i-han. In fact, its present owner says, that "considering the details as to historical ownership, annotations by two of the most famous calligraphists, Su Shih and Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, and its present state of preservation, this scroll is probably the most complete and perfect specimen of early Chinese painting now in any collection."¹

A somewhat larger picture, in the form of a short scroll, traditionally ascribed to Chou Wên-chü, is in the British Museum. It represents four women and several children gathered on a balustraded terrace, beyond which may be faintly distinguished a pond with lotus-flowers. At both ends of the terrace are some trees. (Pl. 83.) The figures appear as on a raised stage, all in the foreground, and they are arranged in four groups in a rather symmetrical fashion; the two groups in the middle are higher and formed by standing figures, while the two outer groups consist of a woman kneeling at a water-basin and a child. The decorative design is so carefully balanced that it would almost appear stiff, were it not for the

¹ Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 84. A poor reproduction of the painting is included in *Chung-kuo Ming Hua Chi*.

variations in the slight movements of the graceful ladies, but this restraint serves to enhance rather than to diminish the beauty of the composition.

The execution is delicate, though with little strength in the brushwork; the colours are subdued and probably retouched at some brighter spots (for instance, the cinnabar red). It may be an early copy, but it cannot be very far removed from the original and may, indeed, by its combination of a peculiarly quiet and harmonious design with grace and charm, serve to give us an idea about the stylistic ideals of some of the best figure painters of this transition period.¹

A figure painter of entirely different origin, scope, and character, but probably also active during the Five Dynasties, was Hu Kuei. He was not born Chinese, but came from the so-called Hou Kitan tribe. He is classified in *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u* as the most important painter of barbaric people and horses, and very highly praised by Liu Tao-ch'un and later critics.² No less than sixty-five of his pictures were preserved in the Imperial collection, mostly representing horsemen, hunters, barbarian camps, and the life on the great plains beyond the northern border of the Middle Kingdom. The descriptive notice about his art in the *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u* contains some interesting remarks worth quoting :

"Hu Kuei from Fan-yang painted barbaric horses. His compositions were ingenious and intimate; they seemed sometimes over-crowded or scattered, but the brush-work was clear and strong. His camp scenes with all the paraphernalia, his pictures of shooting and hunting tribesmen were delicate and minute, representing with perfect clearness every detail. His camels and horses were more broadly painted with a brush made of wolf's hair, so as to give them more life. He interpreted all these things very skilfully, as may be seen from such pictures of his as *The Seven Riders coming down from the Yin Mountain*, *Eagle Hunters*, *Horse Catchers*, and others. His style of painting was continued by his son Hu Ch'ien."

Mei Yao-ch'ên³ wrote a colophon on Hu Kuei's picture of *Barbarians Dismounting from their Horses* which said in substance 'Among the woollen tents surrounded by screen walls the cauldrons are boiling, the drums and horns are silent and do not scare the wild geese of the vast plains' . . . From Mei Yao-ch'ên's words may be realized that Hu Kuei certainly was no vulgar man."

We have no information as to where this artist learned to paint, but it seems rather evident that he had been in contact with Chinese art, though he may have spent most of his life outside the borders of the empire. He would hardly have become so highly appreciated by Chinese scholars and critics, if he had been entirely unknown among them personally and the specimen of his art that still survives (whether it be an original or an early copy) indicates also a close adherence to the purely Chinese traditions of style.

¹ Three pictures are reproduced in the *Chung-kuo Ming Hua Chi* under the name of Chou Wên-chü; one is called *A Happy Retreat in a Floating Villa*, and represents some ladies in a pavilion at a lotus pond. The other is a short scroll representing some *Men Assembled in the Liu-li Hall*, the third (and apparently most doubtful) a *Kuan-yin Seated at the Sea-shore*. The reproductions are too poor to allow any conclusion as to the importance of these paintings.

² Cf. *Wu Tai Ming Hua Pu I* and *Shu Hua P'u*, v. 49.

³ Mei Yao-ch'ên (1002-1060) was a distinguished scholar and poet of the Sung dynasty, a close friend of Ou-yang Hsiu. Cf. Giles, *Biogr. Dict.*, 1511. His colophons on Hu Kuei's paintings may indicate that the painter lived into the Sung period.

The picture in question is one of the great treasures of the Boston Museum. It is a small fan-shaped painting on silk, and represents a mongol horseman with a hawk and quarry; the old label on the picture reads: "Hu Kuei's Barbarian Horseman." (Pl. 84.) It may, however, be noted that Okakura considered this picture to be the work of an early Sung master, a distinction which perhaps does not exclude Hu Kuei's authorship, if he lived to the beginning of the Sung period. However this may have been, it is evident that the picture corresponds to the descriptions of Hu Kuei's paintings of barbarian hunters, and the same is true of its execution in a very fine and exact manner: every detail, for instance of the horse trappings, is carefully rendered and yet, the design as a whole is strong and large. The man is standing at the side of his horse occupied in tying his quarry (an eagle?) to the back of the saddle. The hunting falcon is proudly seated on the front of the saddle, and the short-legged Mongolian pony is sniffing at the grass that covers the ground. The group is not placed in the centre of the picture, but as close to the right edge as possible, while all the rest of it is simply an open grass-covered plain reaching up to a high horizon—a very suggestive arrangement, which conveys an impression of the wide expanse of the hunting grounds where the prey was caught.

Four other small pictures in the same museum may be mentioned in this connection, as they are related, at least by their motives, to the art of Hu Kuei, though their execution seems to be later. They are illustrations to the story about Princess Wên-chi's captivity in Mongolia and her return to China, and no less than three of the scenes are staged on the Mongolian plains, while the fourth illustrates her arrival at the paternal house in a Chinese city. The scenes from the wind-blown sandy plains of Mongolia, where the nomads have pitched their camps of large woollen tents, screened by walls of felt or hide, where horses and camels are rested or grazed at some river-bank, during the breaks in the journey, while soldiers with pennants stand on guard (and where the Chinese people look as strangers), are evidently painted by somebody who possessed an intimate knowledge of the country and the barbaric camps. (Pls. 85, 86.) Everything down to the minutest details of the men's outfit, the horse trappings, the construction of the tents and the preparation of the food in the large tripods, is represented with convincing exactness. The painter who did it must have seen and lived among such things, and he has insisted more on the faithfulness in the description of the men and horses with their characteristic outfit than on any strictly compositional features. It is true, that the scenes are transposed in accordance with a definite sense of style, but this is more naïve than in the works of the average Chinese masters, producing a curious resemblance with certain Italian works of painters of the fifteenth century. (Pl. 87.) It is exceptional to find Chinese pictures of an early date which, to the same extent as these, remind us of parallel artistic endeavours in western countries, a fact that rather tends to support our surmise that the artist did not come from any of the traditional centres of Chinese art.

Yet, he has also been well acquainted with the life in the Chinese cities, as proved by the fourth picture in the series representing the return of Wên-chi to her paternal house. This scene takes place in the busy street of a Chinese city at the entrance to the family compound. (Pl. 88.) The princess is received by various members of the family under the roof of the inner gate-pavilion, while porters are hurrying with her luggage over the court-yard, and the horses and guards are resting before the outer gate in the street. The event has attracted crowds of people, as such things do in China, where crowds emerge with surprising facility when something unexpected takes place. The whole thing is so naturally depicted, that one seems to recognize it from actual observations. The walls, gateways, and pavilions are quite similar to those which still may be seen at the residential compounds in the old cities in northern China. But here too, one cannot help noticing a certain lack of stricter compositional arrangement; it is the illustrative scope of the picture rather than the decorative design which is emphasized. Nothing could be more entertaining than the painter's representation of the crowd in the street, the food-vendors, the soothsayers, the greeting friends, the priest with his page, the coolies, and so on, they all are characterized with a vivacity that easily makes one overlook the somewhat map-like scatteredness of the composition.

The traditional title and attribution of these pictures: "Auspicious Omens of Kao Tsung's reign by Hsiao Chao" must, indeed, as explained in an article by Mr. Tomita, be the result of some old error and cannot be considered seriously.¹ The motives have nothing to do with Emperor Kao Tsung's accession to the throne, and the artist does not seem to have much in common with the impetuous landscape painter Hsiao Chao. The pictures are, no doubt, of the Sung period, but not necessarily from its later part. If compared with the larger picture, representing Wên Chi's return to China by the Southern Sung painter Ch'ên Chü-chung, now in the Palace Museum in Peking, they seem rather more primitive, in spite of certain superficial resemblances.² The Mongolian element is, on the whole, more dominating in the small pictures than in Ch'ên Chü-chung's large composition. They may thus be said to form a continuation, by their motives, and to some extent also by their style, of Hu Kuei's art. We can make no assertion as to their master, but it may be noted that Hu Kuei had a son, Hu Ch'ien, who is said to have possessed "the spirit of his father", and to have followed the older Hu so closely that the creations of the two men could hardly be distinguished.³

¹ Cf. *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, Boston, June, 1928.

² Reproduced in *Ku Kung Ming Hua Chi*, vol. vi. Size: 4 ft. 6 in. by 3 ft. 3 in.; on silk in colours. Mentioned in *Shih Ch'ü Pao Chi*.

³ According to *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*, Hu Ch'ien painted similar scenes as his father, with equal refinement and success and was represented with forty-four paintings in the imperial collection.

VII

LANDSCAPE PAINTERS OF THE FIVE DYNASTIES AND THE EARLY SUNG PERIOD

(1) *General Characteristics of Monochrome Landscape Painting*

The greatest achievements of this period were, however, accomplished in the field of landscape painting. A whole galaxy of able artists took up the impulses left by Wang Wei and developed them in various directions. They were all masters of monochrome ink-painting, though they used it in different ways; some working with defining lines and contours, others with dots and splashes, but all striving to render those undefinable elements of space and atmosphere, by which the forms of the objective world become parts of a greater whole. Wang Wei had, no doubt, realized something of this, but he was still more or less adhering to the earlier manner of definition and drawing in detail; the poetic beauty of his pictures depended less on the representation of space than on the soft atmospheric tone and the refinement of the execution. The poetry of his paintings as well as of his lyric compositions is more descriptive than visionary or emotional.

This artistic position is gradually modified in the works of the great landscape painters of the tenth century. Their pictures are no longer poetic renderings of definite scenery, filled with objective details, but visions or ideas projected from the consciousness of the artists and interpreted in values of rhythmic brush-strokes. Their relation to objective nature was a new one; they studied it and learned from it the essential elements of which their pictures are composed, but they did not aim at descriptive representation. Their ideal was rather to create like nature herself, to visualize their ideas in shapes of mountains, waters, and trees, to make the pictures unfold or grow, as do things in nature, according to a certain plan or vision. They carried the whole thing over into the world of creative thought where the limits of material representation no longer hold good. Space became to them something more than the distance between two points, or the absence of forms; it became the element in which their creations unfolded, a reflex or symbol of the limitless world of thought. They made no efforts to define or to limit it, because it was the very substance out of which their pictures were made.

Their pictures have no perspective (in our sense of the word), no fixed viewpoint, no measurable distances; the artist's eye moves over the paper or silk, as he moves in his thoughts which he expresses in symbols of pictorial forms. And as the thoughts are co-ordinated in relation to his consciousness, so are the forms balanced in relation to space; their significance becomes dependent on this relationship, on their power to reveal or to suggest the underlying consciousness which, in terms of painting, is equivalent to space. It becomes the most eloquent medium for expressing a reality beyond material forms.

The painters have all insisted on this, consciously or unconsciously, and they

have devised various means of developing it. Some do it mainly by their designs, by the way in which the forms are distributed on the empty sheet; others do it more by tone, by painting an atmosphere of mist or haze in which the forms are enveloped and gradually lost. It is evident that the handling of the ink and the touch of the brush are of great importance in this respect: the succession of tones is, as a rule, far more eloquent than the gradual diminishing of the material forms or the like. Because it is less the optical effect that is sought than the suggestion which will attune or open the consciousness of the beholder to that of the painter.

The motives and compositional elements of the landscapes show little variation. In most of them we find the towering mountains with rushing streams, trees on the slopes and in the crevices, sometimes small buildings and distant temples on the terraces, or in pictures of another type, promontories with trees and huts in the foreground, stretches of calm water and mountain silhouettes in the background. There are also winding roads, high bridges and boats, but the human beings are as yet of very little importance; they have not reached the prominence that they acquired in the landscapes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is a primordial rugged nature that they represent, too grand to be dominated by human individuals.

Some of the painters of this period seem also to have left behind fragmentary records or notes about their art, which in later times were enlarged into discussions of the methods and aims of landscape painting. Neither Ching Hao nor Li Ch'êng is responsible for the formulation of the treatises, which pass under their names, but the traditions about their ideals and manners survive in these records, which probably were composed during the following generation, when the memory of their achievements was alive, and they were looked upon as the great forerunners in their art. This has, no doubt, contributed to give to these writings a somewhat scholastic tone and to emphasize the intellectual systematization in the study and definition of landscape painting to a degree that sometimes seems to forfeit the artistic significance.

Most of the landscape painters of this period were by later Chinese critics classified as belonging to the "Southern School". They were considered as followers of Wang Wei and precursors of Mi Fei, the most characteristic representative of this school in the Sung period. And as the principles and methods of the "Southern School" became more and more popularized and expounded by able writers, the importance of these early exponents of the school grew in proportion. It was mainly in their works that the great landscape painters of the Yüan period sought their inspiration, and they became thus also indirectly the starting point for the *Wen-jên hua* (Literary Men's painting) of the Ming period.

(2) *The Leading Masters*

The oldest, and in some respects most important, of these great masters of monochrome landscape painting was Ching Hao, or Hung-ku-tzū, as he called

himself. His activity belongs to the first half of the tenth century. Ching Hao was a native of Ho-nei in Honan, but passed many years of his life on the Shên-chêng mountain of the T'ai-hang range, where he, according to his own words, supported himself by tilling the soil. He loved solitude and the life in grand and wild nature, where he could have his heart's desire of old gnarled pine-trees, mossy cliffs, and mysterious caves and hollow-ways. He speaks of them as of living beings full of character and spiritual expression, and he painted them "in innumerable scrolls". The only authentic work by Ching Hao known to me is a large picture in the Palace Museum in Peking representing, according to inscription, a view of the K'uang-lu mountain near Chinkiang.¹ The design is imposing; the mountains are massed together and rise to an immense height, but they are split up in innumerable details, folds and "wrinkles," all defined with minute exactness. The forms are relatively flat, and there is still a lack of depth, which makes the mountains look pressed against the background, but the conception as a whole has a note of majestic grandeur that makes the picture more interesting than many later landscapes which are naturalistically further developed.

The Freer Gallery possesses a large picture, traditionally ascribed to the master and probably inspired by some work of his, though executed by a later man. (Pl. 89.) It represents a grand mountain scenery; the precipitous cliffs and peaks are towered up to the very limit of the picture; the trees are of many kinds, and some small figures are gathered on a terrace in the foreground, though now almost obliterated as a result of the wear of the picture. The mountains are painted with strongly emphasized vertical and horizontal brush-strokes which confer a peculiar rhythm to the whole design. The somewhat worn condition of the painting makes it difficult to reach a proper idea of its original beauty, but it is evident that it is the work of an important master who may have transposed a composition of Ching Hao according to his own brush-manner.

The discussion of landscape painting, based on contemporary records about Ching Hao's life and art, is known as *Pi Fa Chi* (Records or Notes about the Brush-Manner), or *Hua Shan Shui Lu* (Essay on Landscape Painting) and opens with some descriptions of the Shên-chêng mountain and the painter's occupations in the wilderness. One day he met here an old man who asked him: "Do you know what brush-manner (style) means?" To which he answered:—

"You old man look like a rustic country fellow, who does not know anything about brush-work." But the old man said: "How can you know what I carry in my bosom?" Then I listened and felt ashamed and astonished, as he spoke to me as follows: "The young people like to study in order to accomplish something; they should know that there are six essentials in painting. The first is called spirit, the second is called harmony (or, resonance), the third is called thoughts (plans), the fourth is called motive (scenery), the fifth is the brush, and the sixth is the ink." I remarked: "Painting is to make beautiful things, and the important point is to obtain their true likeness; is

¹ Reproduced in *Ku Kung Shu Hua Chi*; vol. iv; size: 5 ft. 9 in. by 3 ft. 3 in. With several inscriptions of the Yüan period and later. Mentioned in *Shih Ch'ü Pao Chi*.

not that right?" He answered: "It is not so. Painting is to paint, to estimate the shapes of things and really obtain them, to estimate the beauty of things and reach it, to estimate the reality (significance) of things and grasp it. One should not take outward beauty for reality; he who does not understand this mystery, will not obtain the truth even though his pictures may contain likeness." I asked: "What is likeness and what is truth?" The old man said: "Likeness can be obtained by shapes without spirit; but when truth is reached, spirit and substance are both fully expressed. He who tries to express spirit through ornamental beauty will make dead things." I thanked him and said: "From this I realize that the study of calligraphy and painting is an occupation for virtuous men; I am only a farmer and have not understood it; I have been playing with the brush but not accomplished anything; I feel quite ashamed to receive your kind explanations of the essentials in art which were unknown to me."

The old man said: "Lusts and passions are the thieves of life. Virtuous men occupy themselves with music, calligraphy, and painting and do not indulge in inordinate lusts. Since you have virtue, I hope that you will continue your studies, without hesitation; I will explain to you the essentials in painting."

Spirit makes the heart follow the movements of the brush and seize without doubt the shape of things. Harmony consists in establishing correct and perfect shapes without showing the contours. Thought makes you deduct and detach the essential and concentrate on the shapes of things. Scenery is (established by) observing the laws of the seasons, by looking for the wonderful (or, mysterious) and finding out the true. Brush-work means following the rules, but to be at the same time free and flexible in the movements, so that everything seems to be flying or moving. The ink-tones (should be) high and low, thick and diluted, according to the depth and shallowness of various kinds of things; the colouring (by these) so natural that it does not seem to be laid on with the brush."

He said furthermore: "There are divine (*shén*), wonderful (or, mysterious; *miao*), clever (*ch'í*), and skilful (*ch'iao*) painters. The divine does not force his intentions, but operates spontaneously, thus accomplishing the forms. The wonderful experiences in his thoughts the dispositions and emotions of everything in heaven and earth and then, in accordance with reason and the kind of subject, the things flow out of his brush. The clever painter draws vast outlines which are not in accordance with the truth of the motive; the things he makes are strange and queer and quite out of reason. This is the result of brush-work without thought. The skilful painter carves out and pieces together scraps of beauty seemingly in accordance with the great principles; he forces the drawing and exaggerates arbitrarily both spirit and form. It may be said that the inner reality is not enough to him, as he makes such a display of the florid ornamental."

The brush-work has four aspects, called muscles, flesh, bones, and spirit. The short and cut off strokes are called muscles; the strokes which are rising and falling and make up the reality are called flesh; the firm and straight strokes are called bones, while the lines which are undefeatable (never break down) are called spirit. You should also know that ink is a great matter; when its tone is too slight, the spirit is defeated, the muscles are dead and there is no flesh. When the lines are broken off, there are no muscles, only a careless semblance and no bones.

The faults in painting are of two kinds, i.e. those depending on the shapes and those independent of the shapes. Flowers and trees which are out of season, figures which are larger than the buildings, trees which are higher than the mountains, bridges which do not rest on their banks, are measurable faults of the shapes; they do not alter a picture. Faults which are independent of the shapes are caused by the absence of spirit and harmony which makes the forms altogether queer; in spite of all efforts with the brush and the ink, everything in the picture is dead. Such clumsy paintings cannot be corrected."

The following rather detailed section about the representation of trees and landscapes is communicated here only in substance:—

The growth of the trees should reveal their inner nature. The pine-trees may be curving and tortuous, but they must grow high and imposing. Their branches should stretch far out and hang down, but not drop to the earth. Pictures in which the trees look like flying dragons or coiling reptiles do not possess the spirit-harmony of the pines. . . . Every kind of tree, such as catalpas, ailanthus, varnish-trees, oaks, elms, willows, mulberry trees, and *sophora japonica* (*huai shu*) have their special shape and nature, like widely diverse thoughts which are to be brought into harmony. The spirit and strength (virility) of the shapes in landscapes grow together; therefore the pointed ones are called peaks, the levelled ones rounded tops, the connected ones make ranges, etc. . . . There should be tunnels through the mountains, valleys without an outlet, deep gorges, streams and brooks rushing down between the mountains. High above them rise the peaks of varying size; lower down are the slopes and passes, sometimes visible and sometimes hidden. . . . The clouds, mists, and vapours should be light or heavy, according to the season; in the wind no forms should be steady. One must avoid the multitudinous details and pick out the essentials.

I then asked him: "Who were the most perfect painters of the past?" To which the old man answered: "Hsieh Ho classified Lu T'an-wei as the foremost; but nowadays it is difficult to find original works of his. The pictures left by Chang Sêng-yu are weak in regard to rational principles. (Hsieh Ho said): Apply colour according to species. In the past there have been men who could do it with water and luminous ink. In the T'ang period Chang Tsao painted trees and stones with an abundance of spirit-resonance; his brush and ink amassed all details; his thoughts were lofty and he attached no importance to the five colours. Nobody among ancient and modern men has surpassed him. Ch'ü T'ing, the monk of the White Clouds,¹ possessed the secret of spirit and form; he grasped the very origin of things and painted with perfect ease; the depth of his work was immeasurable. Wang Yu-ch'êng's (Wang Wei) brush and ink were subtle and refined; his spirit-resonance was high and pure; he drew forms with great skill and was inspired by true thoughts. General Li's principles were deep, his thoughts far-reaching, his brush-strokes very fine; his works exhibit great skill and ornamental beauty, but are deficient in ink-tones. The hermit Hsiang Jung² painted trees and stones quite blunt and coarse with edges and corners; he used only black Taoist ink, and his brush-manner had no bones (structure); though he painted in this free and easy way, he did not lose the original spirit and form of things, but gave a beautiful semblance of them. Wu Tao-tzü's brush-work excelled in form, structure, and spirit like high trees too lofty for pictures, but it is a pity that he had no ink. Ch'ên Jo-yü³ and the monk Tao-fen and their like rose hardly above the common style; their manner of handling the brush and the ink had nothing extraordinary, though they were quite able in drawing shapes and contours."

Ching Hao then tells how he expressed his gratitude by offering his picture of *A Strange Pine Tree* to the old man, but this was sharply criticized. The whole story winds up with the old man writing a poem about an old pine tree.

Even if this essay is written after the death of Ching Hao, it is an interesting contribution to the discussion of the aims and methods of Chinese landscape painting. It opens up the romantic background of this art, its sources of spiritual inspiration, and offers at the same time more definite ideas about the brush-work and the significance of design and characterization than any other of the treatises on this subject.

¹ Ch'ü T'ing, who became the Taoist monk Li Tsung-shih, was particularly known for his paintings of pine trees; active in the reign of Emperor Hsüan Tsung.

² He was known as the Hermit of the T'ien-t'ai Mountain and excelled in the "p'o mo" style of Wang Mo.

³ A Taoist painter from Shu, active towards the end of the T'ang period.

Closely related to Ching Hao by the general aim and character of his art was Kuan T'ung, who was born at Ch'ang-an (probably at the very beginning of the tenth century). He is said to have learnt his art from Pi Hung, and his great ambition was to surpass Ching Hao. He worked with such intensity that he forgot both sleep and food, and gradually he evolved a style of his own. He became a leading master of landscape painting, who could represent the lofty mountain peaks and the endless valleys "with a stroke of the brush", but he was a poor figure painter, and therefore used to ask a colleague of his, Hu I from An-ting, to fill in the figures in his landscapes.¹

Kuan T'ung's works were most eagerly sought for by collectors at the time. People from everywhere came to ask him for some "ink-remains" or "brush-traces"; there were ninety-four pictures by Kuan T'ung in the Hsüan-ho collection, but nowadays works of his are seldom seen. A very beautiful specimen is preserved in the Palace Museum in Peking. It is called *The Ford of the Mountain Stream*, because at the foot of the high mountains, which form the main motive of the picture, is a broad stream, and a man with his mule is coming down to the ford. (Pl. 89A.)² The mountains are big and towering, but no longer crowded or compressed; they are developed into strong cubic forms, which gradually recede into the background. One can see beyond them into the far distance; the atmosphere is suggested by fine gradations of tone, and the realization of space is far better than in Ching Hao's landscapes. The execution may still be somewhat old-fashioned by the minute definition of details, but the whole thing is a remarkably strong and mature rendering of the traditional motive, comparable to Li Ch'êng's works, and not very far behind those of Kuo Hsi. A smaller mountain landscape by Kuan T'ung I saw in 1930 in the possession of Mr. Yang Yin-pei in Peking.

The old critics emphasize in particular Kuan T'ung's fondness for stones and rocks. In the description of his *Hsien Yu t'u* it is said that: "in whatever direction one looked there were stones, some round, some angular, some long and some short, every kind of them; seated stones and resting stones, some seen from above, some from below, with shapes square, circular, broad, narrow, thin, and thick." But the picture contained also lofty temples and cave palaces, phoenixes and cranes, flowers and bamboos and Immortals, who walked about "with feathers and hairs fluttering in the wind". It was done in a sketchy fashion; yet, "it could move men's hearts and make them wonder about the meaning of it all."³

A vivid characterization of Kuan T'ung's art is also included in the *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*:

"He loved in particular to paint the mountains of autumn, bare trees, small hamlets, dangerous fords, hermits, retired scholars, fish-traders and mountain couriers. Those who looked at his pictures felt suddenly as transported to the Pa Bridge in storm

¹ Cf. *Wu Tai Ming Hua Pu I*.

² Reproduced in *Ku Kung Shu Hua Chi*, vol. vi; size: 4 ft. 6 in. by 3 ft.; mentioned in *Shih Ch'ü Pao Chi*.

³ *Ch'ing-ho Shu Hua Fang*, v, l. 30 (after Tê Yü-chai, *Hua Pin*).

and snow, or to the Three Gorges where the apes are heard crying; and then they wished no more to go back to the dust and the crowds of the markets and the courts. T'ung's pictures were done in a sketchy fashion with a rough brush; but the coarser the brushwork the stronger grew the spirit, the simpler the scenery the deeper seemed the thoughts. His pictures had a profound meaning, and were old-fashioned and pure like Tao Yüan-ming's poetry and Ho Jo's music. No commonplace painters can do such things."

Ching Hao and Kuan T'ung were particularly esteemed in the Yüan period by painters like Ni Tsan, and they are often mentioned by Tung Ch'i-ch'ang and the other critics of the Ming period as those who transmitted and perfected the classic traditions of the "Southern School".

While these men were active in Honan and Shensi, a third prominent landscape painter worked in Shu. His name was Li Shêng, his *tzü* Chin-nu, he was born at Ch'êng-tu, and became famous in later times particularly through the high estimation of Mi Fei. He studied in his early years the works of Chang Tsao, but came to the conclusion that they were no good, and that he would rather follow his own mind. And this he did with such success that he used to be compared with the greatest masters of the T'ang period: Some honoured him with the appellation "The Little General Li" (which probably was caused by his name rather than by his art), while others declared that his pictures were comparable to Wang Wei's works.¹ They were executed with a very fine brush, so that the outlines could hardly be distinguished, but had at the same time a very strong resonance of the spirit (*ch'i yün*). Though his technical methods seem to have been of a more old-fashioned type than Ching Hao's and Kuan T'ung's, his motives must have been rather alike to theirs. He painted the famous sceneries of Szechuan: *Mount Omi*, *The Three Gorges*, *The Wu-liang River*, etc., beside other classic motives such as *Rain on the Hsiao and Hsiang Rivers*. They became the "silent teachers" of later generations, but none of them seems to be preserved even in a copy.

The following landscape painters were active in the latter half of the tenth century, and are thus counted among the painters of the Sung period, but stylistically they are so closely connected with their immediate predecessors that it seems to us most convenient to mention them at this place.

Li Ch'êng, whose *tzü* was Hsien-hsi, was the descendant of a famous Ch'ang-an family of Confucian scholars which, however, moved over to Ying-ch'iu (Ching-chou) in Shantung probably at the time when the local dynasty in Ch'ang-an was defeated by the Sung emperor (c. 969). Li Ch'êng must then already have been a mature painter. According to tradition, he was a precocious youth who loved wine, music, and chess, but he must also have acquired knowledge of the Classics, because later on he obtained the *chin shih* degree. His official career came, however, to nothing, and his time seems to have been divided mainly between painting and drinking. His somewhat overbearing manners towards the official world is illustrated in anecdotes related by Liu Tao-ch'un, but they have no bearing on his

¹ Cf. *Ch'ing-ho Shu Hua Fang*, v, ll. 19-20, and also *Shu Hua P'u*.

art, except that they show that he was a proud nature who cared little about honours and did not like to part with his pictures for money. The only thing that could make him paint was wine.

"His paintings were as fine as the creations of Nature; when the brush-work was done, it gave a perfect picture of the meaning of the motive. With the sweep of his brush he could represent within less than a foot's space enormous distances, and he could draw with his hand the effects of exhaustless motives. He painted the peaks and the mountain ridges, the one behind the other, and among them temples and cottages, beautifully displayed. The forests were dense and thin, the flowing water deep and shallow as in real nature. His ideas were pure and old-fashioned; and none of the old masters were equal to him. In the Ching-yu era (1034-37) a grandson of Li Ch'êng, who then was governor of K'ai-fêng, sent a messenger to buy up all the pictures of Li that could be found; consequently they afterwards became very rare."¹

Mi Fei tells us, as a matter of fact, that he had seen some 300 imitations, but only two authentic pictures by Li Ch'êng²: "Of Li Ch'êng's works I have seen only two pieces, the one representing pines and stones, the other a landscape divided into four scrolls. The former came from Shêng Wên-su and is now in my studio; the landscape, which was a most unusual picture, belonged to the priest Pao-yüeh in Su-chou. The pine-tree is straight and strong; its branches and needles form a shady thicket. The shrubs around it are not painted in a confused manner like dragons, snakes, or goblins. But the pictures (supposed to be by Li) which the officials and noblemen of to-day collect, look like sign-boards of drug shops; they are of a very common type. In them the forests are spread out quite carelessly; the pine-trees are rotten and poor and full of joints, and the minor trees look like firewood, all dead and meaningless. . . . They are all commonplace things under false names. I have the intention of discussing the non-existence of Li Ch'êng." After such a denouncement by Mi Fei, it is rather surprising to find no less than 159 pictures listed under Li Ch'êng's name in the *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*; many of them must have been of the "signboard" class.

Best known to us among the pictures which nowadays are considered as originals by Li Ch'êng is the very fine landscape in the Boston Museum: *Travellers on the Snowy Hills*. (Pl. 90.) The picture is only three feet high, but it makes the effect of a very large and imposing thing. It is grand in design, highly imaginative, and yet, very exact and close to nature in every detail. The rocks and boulders, the bare trees with their gnarled trunks, the small travellers on the mountain paths are drawn with an astonishing power of conviction. The artist has felt the significance of every form and line and brought them together in a design that in spite of the minute execution is great and well unified. And by the proper grading of the ink and the atmospheric tone (which evidently has darkened by the wear of time) he has suggested the great space beyond the majestic shapes.

Closely connected with this in design is a somewhat larger picture in the Palace Museum in Peking which, according to inscription, is Hsü Tao-ning's copy of Li

¹ *Shêng Ch'ao Ming Hua P'ing*. Other informations are brought together in *Shu Hua P'u*.

² Mi Shih, *Hua Shih*.

Ch'êng's picture: *A Mountain Pass in Snow*. (Pl. 91.) The execution may not be quite as strong and firm as in the Boston picture, but the character of the rocks and the trees is similar, and here too the artistic effect depends largely on the wide space beyond the snow-covered mountains. Hsü Tao-ning, whose art will be examined in the following, was a direct pupil of Li Ch'êng, and he has here repeated, with great care and faithfulness, an important composition by the master.

A more famous composition by Li Ch'êng was the *Tu Pei t'u* representing a man on a mule in front of a large stone tablet which he is reading. The picture seems to have existed in more than one version; a very fine one is now in the collection of Mr. Abe Fusajiro in Kobe and known to me through the splendid reproduction in his catalogue.¹ (Pl. 91A.) The figures, the man and his servant, are said to be executed by Wang Hsiao, but they form a relatively unimportant part in this very effective composition. The principal motive is here the rocks and dry trees, which are drawn with incisive strength and extraordinary realization of their gnarled shapes. The motive has been developed to the utmost of its fantastic beauty; the tortuous trunks and twisting branches which end in claw-sharp twigs are wreathing like fighting dragons. They seem to concentrate all their energy in a hopeless struggle against the unseen powers which have sapped their freshness and bent them down over the cliffs. The picture is a great expression for Li Ch'êng's creative imagination and stands stylistically almost on a level with Kuo Hsi's works.²

The treatise on landscape painting, attributed to Li Ch'êng, is probably composed by a later man called Li Ch'êng-so. It is a poor thing at the side of Ching Hao's and Kuo Hsi's essays, but it has passed under the painter's name at least since the Ming period. Some extracts may suffice to give an idea about its inferior character.³

"In painting landscapes you should start by deciding the places of host and guest (the principal and the secondary elements); then divide the far from the near; after that draw in the scenery and mark out the figures; arrange the high and the low.

The ink should not be too thick; if it is thick, it looks dirty and not clear; but neither should it be too thin (or slight), because then it looks dry and not rich. If it dries or soaks in too much, it does not produce continuity. When too many details are inserted, the spirit is lost.

Make the branches of the trees long towards the left and short towards the right; make the stones look heavier on the upper side and lighter on the lower side (towards the ground). Make the clouds and the mist graceful and not too abundant. The woods to the right and the left at the foot of the mountain should be spread out and not be too

¹ Cf. *Sorai-kwan Kinsho*. Pl. VIII. Size: 4 ft. 1 in. by 3 ft. 4 in. This picture is supposed to be the same which is described by An Lu-ts'un in *Mo Yüan Hui Kuan*, but the signature mentioned by the author is not visible in the reproduction.

² Other pictures attributed to Li Ch'êng are reproduced in the following publications: Laufer, *T'ang, Sung and Yuan Paintings* (Paris, 1924), pl. xi; *Chung-kuo Ming Hua Chi* (Trees in Winter); *Catalogue of the Tokyo Exhibition of Chinese Paintings*, 1928, pl. 31. (Pine-trees on Rocks, belonging to Mr. T. Yamamoto).

³ Cf. *Shu Hua Shu Lu Chieh T'i*; Li Ch'êng-so's treatise on landscape painting, *Shan Shui Chieh*, was written in the Chia-ting era (1208-1225); in the concluding paragraphs some pictures by the earlier Li Ch'êng are mentioned. The two names may have been confused, because of the similarity of their pronunciation, though they are written with different characters. Our translation is after the text in *Hua Hsüeh Hsin Yin*.

dense. The roads should be curving, and there should be both high and low mountains. If there is snow, the sky needs no clouds or mist; if there is rain, the distance cannot be seen.

Place mountain cottages at the narrow defiles and fishermen on the sandy banks. The waist (middle portion) of the high mountains should be surrounded by mist, and the foot of the long ranges shaded by clouds.

The prominent trees should rise straight and high, yet one or two should be curving and bending. The stones should be piled up confusedly, but two or three of them should stand out by their strange shapes. The leaves on the trees which grow close together should be scarce. The heavy stones may be distinguished from the light ones by their "wrinkles" and furrows.

The figures which are moving about and looking around should be of many kinds. High buildings should be introduced only at wide distances. The roots of the trees should pierce (the soil) as the claws of a crawling dragon, grasping the scattered stones which are partly hidden in the mud.

The winding water should not have more than three turns; the rushing cascades only two sections. A mountain should never have only one tree, a stone never be alone. The rustic bridges at far off lonely places should serve to connect human dwellings surrounded by bamboo groves. There should be stubs of roughly cut old trees making glades in the pine forest around the pagoda, which may be partly visible and partly hidden, so as to make it look both light and strong. If one neglects either the lightness or the strength, it will become a leaning or decaying structure.

A thousand precipitous cliffs and ten thousand ravines, high and low and of every variety, should be brought together in the picture. Innumerable tops and peaks should be rising and falling, eminent and lofty and all different. If you can understand the meaning of all this, you may realize from it the finest points (in painting)."

Hsü Tao-ning may have been a genius by nature, but it was only later in life that he reached fame as a painter. According to certain records, he came from Ho-chien in Chili (Ho-pei), though he is usually classified as a man from Ch'ang-an, where he probably spent a large part of his life. It is told of him (as about the Tartar painter Kao I) that he started as a pharmacist, and used to hand over small pictures of trees or stones to the clients together with the medicine that he sold them. Thus he became known as a painter, and as his fame increased, he was employed by many noblemen and officials, such as Chang Shih-hsün, a minister under Emperor Chên Tsung (998-1022), who ordered Hsü Tao-ning to execute some paintings on the walls and screens in his house. These pictures pleased the minister so much that he composed a poem in praise of the artist in which he said: Li Ch'êng has passed away, Fan K'uan is dead, now there is only Hsü Tao-ning from Ch'ang-an (who may be considered their equal).¹

He was, to begin with, a close follower of Li Ch'êng, painting in a rather detailed and fine manner, but when he grew older, his brush-work became simpler and bolder, expressing his strong temperament. He painted high peaks, steep mountain ranges, strong and inflexible trees, and formed a style of his own.

¹ The main points of Hsü Tao-ning's career are told in *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*, which also contains the titles of 138 pictures by him. Additional information is given in *Hua Shih Hui Chuan* and in *Shu Hua P'u*, vol. 50. He is said to have served as a second imperial secretary and to have been prominent also as a poet. None of the records quoted in these books offer any support to Giles' presentation of Hsü Tao-ning as a painter "who sunk to pot-house caricature". Cf. Giles, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

The pictures preserved under his name reflect these modifications of style. We have already said a word about his excellent copy after Li Ch'êng's *Mountain Pass in Snow*. The beautiful landscape scroll which was formerly in the Tuan Fang collection, and now belongs to Mr. Fuji in Kyoto, is also a work which reveals the connection with Li Ch'êng, but the composition is quite original and the trees particularly fine.¹

Akin to this, though executed with a somewhat stiffer brush, is the tall mountain landscape belonging to Mr. Wang Hêng-yung in Peking. (Pl. 92.) The mountain ridges are here winding and crawling almost as if they were in a state of plastic formation, and the water rushes down with impetuous speed in the deep crevices between them, forming in the foreground a broad stream which is spanned, as usual, by a high wooden bridge where some travellers are proceeding on horseback. The finest parts of the picture are, however, the tall pines: truly strong and inflexible trees, as said of the pines in Hsü Tao-ning's later paintings. The very dark tone of the picture, caused by age and wear, detracts something from the original decorative effect of the grand design.

Quite different in style and technical execution is the small fan-shaped picture in the Boston Museum with the apparently authentic signature: Tao-ning (which can hardly signify anybody else than Hsü Tao-ning); otherwise it might be dated a century later. The title of the picture is: *A Man in a Pavilion watching the Tide on the Yang-tzû*, and it is largely occupied by an open plain of water ending in a long surf, which rolls in from the background. (Pl. 93.) The foreground is marked by the pavilion on a rocky ledge and a tall pine, firmly drawn in a somewhat jerky style, as in the pictures of the Ma-school. If this picture is by Hsü Tao-ning, he must have developed quite far in his old age, though we have no reason to believe that he lived past the middle of the eleventh century. It may be asked whether there was some other painter with the same name, who possibly could have been responsible for this very freely and strongly executed fan-painting. It is a thing of superior quality and should consequently be remembered even in a short review of Chinese landscape painting.²

Another precocious genius and strange character was Kuo Chung-shu (tzu, Shu-hsien) whose eventful life left material for entertaining stories, but whose painted work is completely lost. He came from Lo-yang and was a candidate in the Imperial College at the age of seven. He made a rapid career and was promoted to the position of a Great National Teacher by Emperor T'ai Tsu of the Posterior Chou dynasty (951-53), but he showed more inclination for wine than for work, and

¹ A reproduction of this may be seen in the catalogue of the Exhibition of Chinese Paintings in Tokyo, 1928, pl. 33.

² In the Freer Gallery there are at least two interesting pictures with old attributions to Hsü Tao-ning; one is called *Travellers in a Mountain Gorge*, the other (a horizontal scroll) *Lakes and Cloud-capped Mountains*. The execution of these pictures is hardly earlier than Ming, but they may reproduce compositions by the master. Cf. *Chinese Pict. in Amer. Coll.*, 176, 177, 189.

came to blows with other officials. He was sent away to a distant place and saved himself in the Hua Mountains, where he lived as a "hsien jên" for several years. This may not, however, have cured him from his drinking habits, because later on, when he was called to court by the Emperor T'ai Tsung of Sung (978-97) and for the second time promoted to a high position, he had again fits of drinking and quarrelling, and as he also slandered the government, he was banished to Têng-chou (in Shantung), but died on the road before reaching his destination. His body was wrapped in a straw mat and taken back to his native place. But when it was to be buried, the people found in the mat only his clothes and his comb—he had dissolved as an Immortal.¹

He painted all kinds of building, towers, temples, and terraces better than anyboy else, because he did them in accordance with the rules of the carpenters and stone-masons, that is to say, with ruler and plumb-string, drawn in proper proportion, so that they looked like real buildings. This kind of architectural prospects (as we now would call them) became later on famous in China under the name of *chieh hua* (boundary painting), and Kuo Chung-shu's pictures, which in his life time had been appreciated only by one or two connoisseurs, became very much admired. His importance as the real founder of the *chieh hua*-manner is extolled particularly by T'ang Hou in the fourteenth century, who writes: "Every other kind of painting had its representatives even in the T'ang period, but it was with Kuo Chung-shu, at the end of the Five Dynasties period, that the history of this kind of painting started."² It should also be remembered that it was Kuo Chung-shu who (as said before) made the copy after Wang Wei's Wang-ch'uan scroll from which the stone engravings were executed, which may be taken as an additional proof of his skill and refinement as a painter.³

The painters mentioned above were principally active in the northern and western part of the country, in Honan, Shensi, and Szechuan, but there were no less prominent landscape painters in the South, in Chiang-nan. Some of them were attached to the court of Li Hou-chu, the last ruler of the Later T'ang dynasty, who, when he in 975 submitted to the Sung emperor, entrusted to the conqueror not only his art collections but also some of the painters. Thus Chü-jan, the monk, who had lived in a monastery in Nanking, was invited to the capital and continued his work in the K'ai-pao monastery in K'ai-fêng. Tung Yüan who probably was a little older, seems to have stayed on and died in his native province.

Tung Yüan, whose *tzü* was Shu-ta, but who was more often called by his *hao*, Tung Pei-yüan, was the greatest master of the Chiang-nan school. "He painted the real mountains of Chiang-nan and did not strive to make any marvellous cliffs . . . His brush-work was very coarse. When one looked at his pictures close by, one

¹ Cf. Liu Tao-ch'un, *Shêng Ch'ao Ming Hua P'ing*. Other traditions about him are related in *T'u Hua Chien Wen Chih* and *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*.

² T'ang Hou, *Lun Hua*. Cf. Waley, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

³ A large picture, representing *Emperor Ming Huang's Summer Palace*, attributed to Kuo Chung-shu, is in the collection of Mr. Abe Fusajiro. Cf. *Soraiwan Kinsho*, pl. ix.

could not make out the shapes of the objects, and they did not seem to be real things, but when looked at from a distance, the scenery and every detail stood out clearly. Those who thought that his pictures were not fine, did not see them in the proper way." This impressionistic manner of Tung Yüan, sometimes defined as "ts'un pi fa", was carried out with a comparatively dry and short brush and imparted great strength to the forms. The small trees were done simply with dots, which only at a distance suggested their actual shapes. And it was said in later times, when the mannerism of the landscape painters were classified according to the "wrinkles" of their mountains, that Tung Yüan and Chü-jan used the "hemp fibre wrinkles" (p'i ma ts'un).¹

In the *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u* the same thing is also emphasized: "Generally Tung Yüan's landscapes were executed with a bold and strong brush; their craggy forms were high and sharp, and the mountains rose in doubled ranges conveying an impression of strength just as his dragon paintings . . . but the painters praised him particularly for his coloured landscapes, which were rich and luxurious and executed in a refined manner like the works of Li Ssü-hsün." He became particularly famous for the latter kind of work, because there were few painters at the time who were able to paint landscapes in colour.

Yet, the same author continues, it was his own conceptions (executed in monochrome ink?) of rivers and lakes, of wind and rain, of streams and valleys, of peaks, partly visible and partly hidden, of forests and snow, mist and clouds, of thousand mountains and gulleys, rivers winding between high banks, and innumerable other sceneries that made the beholder see the real things. They were enough to inspire the poets, and their beauty was beyond any words of description.

Chang Ch'ou saw at the beginning of the seventeenth century Tung Yüan's painting *The Pavilion on the Mountain of the Immortals*, "a scroll on silk of light purple colour. The brush-work was flowing and easy; the trees and cliffs were old-fashioned and refined, and the figures seemed alive. In the centre of it was a wonderful example of *chieh hua* (i.e. the pavilion), not inferior to such works of Wei Hsien and Kuo Chung-shu. I unrolled it many times and enjoyed it immensely. It seemed to me like walking along the cool side of a mountain . . ."

An important example of Tung Yüan's art may still be seen in the Boston Museum. It is a fragment of a scroll (about five feet long) now known as *A Clear Day in the Valley*, but formerly called *Rivers and Hills in Wind and Rain* (*Hsi Shan Fêng Yü*), a name which may have applied better to the whole thing than to the portion preserved. It shows neither rain nor wind, but the soft and quiet atmosphere of an autumn day, clearing after rain. (Pls. 94-96.) The mist is rising between the wooded mountain ridges which gradually descend towards an open stretch of water. The mist and the water form, so to say, the bridge to the infinite; they dissolve into the unlimited space. But the big masses of the mountains and the clusters of the dark trees are painted with a firm and resolute brush, which gives to

¹ *Ch'ing-ho Shu Hua Fang*, vi, l. 37. Cf. Giles, op. cit., p. 99.

every detail its full volume. It is seldom that one finds in monochrome ink-paintings such a complete realization of the forms and the successive planes and such a rich scale of colouristic effects. At closer sight one may discover a number of intimate details: the small boats on the water, the men on the promontory waiting for the ferry, the pilgrims on the path that leads to the temple at the bottom of a misty gorge. They are like small bits of lyric poetry interspersed in a grand epic of mountains, woods, and water. The conditions of the continuous scroll-composition are utilized with consummate skill; no portion is detached, no breaks occur, yet, it lends itself to a gradual enjoyment as it is unrolled. The picture is one of the few surviving masterpieces which transmit an immediate impression of the whole range of beauty and expression in this type of art.¹

The monk Chü-jan was a younger contemporary and close follower of Tung Yüan. He represented the same kind of mountain scenery, though in a somewhat looser and more impressionistic fashion. His pictures had less strength and definition of form; his tone was softer, his touch weaker, but he was not less skilful in creating depth and atmosphere.

The most interesting example of Chü-jan's art that I have seen is a high and narrow composition in the possession of Mr. Shao Fu-ying in Peking, which represents a high mountain and, at the foot of it, trees and water. (Pl. 97.) The forms are rounded, almost woolly, rendered in a fashion which seems to foreshadow the manner of Mi Fei, though with remarkable contrasts of light and shade. It is the kind of picture that served as a model for Wang Mêng and the other masters of the Yüan period, when Chü-jan's works were highly appreciated.

Chü-jan's art does not show the same variety or richness of invention as for instance Li Chêng's or Tung Yüan's. Several pictures by him are known, but they repeat more or less the same motives of high rounded mountains, sometimes covered by snow, sometimes grown with shrubs and trees, which by their shapes and the soft brush-work take on some likeness with hay-stacks. Three prominent examples may be seen in the Palace Museum in Peking, among which the snow-covered mountains are most effective at least from a colouristic point of view.² Another characteristic work by the master is the short scroll in the National Museum in Peking representing precipitous cliffs and some hamlets in the crevices, executed with somewhat stiffer brush in a greyish black tone. Less convincing as a work by the master is the long topographical scroll in the Freer Gallery known as *Views along the Yang-tzû River*.³

¹ Another fine picture by Tung Yüan is the mountain landscape in the Palace Museum in Peking called *The Cave of the Immortals*. It is reproduced in *Ku Kung Shu Hua Chi*, vol. i. Size: 5 ft. 7 in. by 3 ft. 8 in. In the *Chung-kuo Ming Hua Chi* is a picture, called *A Secluded Villa*, reproduced under the master's name, but it looks like a later work.

² The three pictures are reproduced in *Ku Kung Shu Hua Chi*, vols. iv, v, and vi; they are all mentioned in *Shih Ch'ü Pao Chi*: 1, Snow Landscape; 2, Streams and Wooded Mountains; 3, Autumn Mountain with a Taoist's Abode. Another large picture by the master is in the collection of Mr. Fuji in Kyoto.

³ Cf. *Kokka*, 252, where the picture is ascribed to the South Sung period.

Somewhat younger, though still of the same school as the above-mentioned painters, was Fan K'uan, who also holds a place in the foremost rank. He was "still alive in 1026", and may thus have been born about the middle of the tenth century. His real name was Fan Chung-chêng, his *tzŭ*, Chung-li; but the people of his native place, Hua-yüan, in Shensi, called him K'uan (Broad), because of his generous and good-natured disposition. Few artists are presented by the old historians with more sympathy and understanding of their genius.

In the *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u* we are told that he was: "a stern and old-fashioned man, careless in his behaviour, fond of wine and with no command of the ways of the world. He spent much time rambling between Lo-yang and K'ai-fêng as he loved to paint landscapes. To begin with he studied the art of Li Ch'êng, but one day he woke up and said to himself with a sigh: 'My predecessors have not yet tried to seize the things as they really are; surely, it is better to take the things themselves than men for teachers, and a still better teacher than material objects is the heart.' Thereupon he gave up his old manner of study and retired to T'ai-hua in the Chung-nan mountains. Here he lived among the cliffs, the rivers and the forests, studying very closely the effects of clouds and mists, of wind and moon, and of the darkening and clearing skies, motives difficult to convey in shapes. He met with them in the silence of his soul and expressed them with the point of his brush. And such were his thousand cliffs and ten thousand gorges that they instantly made one feel like walking along a path in the shade of a mountain and, however great the heat, to shiver by cold and to wish for a cover. Therefore it was said that K'uan knew how to express the spirit of the mountains. He was of equal fame with Kuan T'ung and Li Ch'êng."

The same traditions about Fan K'uan are related by Liu Tao-ch'un, though with some interesting variations.¹ He tells that K'uan sometimes "sat the whole day gazing at the scenery all around, looking for interesting motives. Even when the snow was thick and the moon was shining, he walked about observing and searching for inspiration. He studied the art of Li Ch'êng, and though he reached a high degree of perfection, he still remained inferior; but then he placed himself simply in front of the real scenery and expressed his conceptions without any ornamental details. He drew the very bones (structure) of the mountains, according to his own style, making them strong and old-fashioned and quite independent of his predecessors. From that time he was equal to Li Ch'êng. During the long reign of the house of Sung these two masters were the only landscape painters who reached the very summit of their art. The people of the time said that, if one looked at the things which were near in Li Ch'êng's pictures, they seemed thousand *li* away, but if one looked at things which were far away in Fan K'uan's pictures, they seemed to be quite near. Both may be said to have made divine things."

Truly, a landscape painter by the grace of God; an artist who created from the depth of his soul, which had been nourished through constant communion with nature. It may well be asked if ever there has been a painter of landscape more completely absorbed in his work and more untrammelled by material conditions of motives and technique.

Pictures honoured with the name of Fan K'uan are not uncommon, but comparatively few are of a convincing quality. Foremost among them should be mentioned the three large mountain views in the Palace Museum in Peking and two minor pictures, beside a large landscape, in the Boston Museum. Their firm

¹ Cf. *Shêng Ch'ao Ming Hua P'ing*, chap. ii.

and forceful brush-work is of a definite kind; the strokes are like raindrops or sesame seeds, to use the Chinese expression, and they may be said to bring the great motives very close to the beholder.

The most old-fashioned is the *Hsi Shan Hsing Lü t'u* (Travellers among Mountains and Streams) in which a gigantic mountain fills the whole background.¹ Separated from this by a light mist-screen appear the wooded terrace and the stream in the foreground where some donkeys with their drivers are coming down. The figures and animals are smaller than ants, a proportion which makes us realize the enormous scale of the motive. The execution is exact in every detail, down to the needles of the pine-trees; yet, by no means disturbing the unity and harmony of the imposingly monumental design. The *Lin Liu Tu Tso t'u* (The Solitary House at the River) is a richer composition.² The huge mountain massif, which gradually recedes towards the background, is broken up into a number of separate cliffs and boulders between which the mist is circling like clouds and wreaths. The water rushes down from both sides in broad streams, and between them is formed a rocky promontory where some leafy trees are grouped around the solitary house. It is a picture of great atmospheric beauty and immeasurable depth. The third picture is known as the *Hsiao Temple in the Snow-covered Mountains* and has always been considered one of Fan K'uan's greatest masterpieces. (Pl. 99.)³ An Lu-ts'un, who describes the picture, says⁴: "The brush-work is rich and luminous, the design grand and heroic. The dry trees on the tops of the high mountains are all distinct. The rocks are painted with 'wrinkles like rain-drops'. In the foreground the large trees form a deep forest (?) and further away there is a cottage with a man who looks out through the door (?). In the middle of the mountains the Hsiao temple can be seen. . . . Every part is true to nature. It is the masterpiece of Fan K'uan."

The pictures in Boston represent also wintry scenes with bare trees and snow on the ground, as may be seen in our reproductions. (Pls. 98 and 100.) Everything in these pictures has a strong plastic significance, and as the forms are more isolated than in the larger views; they stand out still more firm and forceful.

More difficult to see and appreciate (because of its darkened condition), is the large picture in the same museum of a mountain with narrow gorges on either side and water in the foreground. The composition has an extraordinary richness of detail. The mountains are made up of endless folds, "wrinkles," and crevices; the trees are a tangle of branches and twigs. The innumerable details are almost indistinguishable, particularly since the picture has lost something through age and dirt. Yet, one may still discover here the atmosphere of a wintry eve, when the sky

¹ *Ku Kung Shu Hua Chi*, vol. ix. Size: 6 ft. 5 in. by 3 ft. 2 in.

² *Op. cit.*, vol. iv. Size: 4 ft. 9 in. by 3 ft. 2 in.

³ *Op. cit.*, vol. ix. Size: 5 ft. 7 in. by 3 ft. 4 in. All mentioned in *Shih Ch'ü Pao Chi*.

⁴ *Mo Yüan Hui Kuan*; the description does not correspond in all details to the picture in the Palace Museum.

is covered and the snow is melting. The more one penetrates into its dusky forests and winding pathways, the more one feels the significance of the interpretation. Mi Fei may well have had such a picture in his mind when he wrote: "Fan K'uan's landscapes are high and craggy mountains like Hêng shan or T'ai shan; the far-away peaks rise in front of us strong and with innumerable crevices . . . The streams and valleys are deep and wide, one can almost hear the roaring of the water. He painted snow-covered mountains and followed, in doing it, the much-admired Wang Mo-ch'i. In Li Ch'êng's paintings, which were done with spare ink, things appeared as in the mist of a dream; the cliffs were like clouds, the roots were cleverly done, but not quite real. Fan K'uan's manner was grand and heroic, but at the same time deep and mysterious like the waning light of evening. The stones could not be distinguished from the ground, the objects appeared mysteriously beautiful. He was, indeed, superior to Li Ch'êng."

We are furthermore told that towards the end of his life he used too much ink, which made the forms on the ground almost indistinguishable; yet, he was the painter who "grasped the very bones of the mountains".¹

A discussion of the minor painters who were contemporary with or slightly earlier than the above-mentioned masters would carry us beyond the limits of this book; very few works of theirs have been preserved. There was Tu K'ai, a Ch'êng-tu man, who painted decaying trees and craggy cliffs with an air of profound mystery.² There was Yen Wên-kuei from Su-chou in Kiangsu, whose fine miniature-like manner aroused great admiration.³ And there were other landscape painters, who became members of T'ai Tsung's academy and who followed more or less closely in the footsteps of Li Ch'êng and Fan K'uan, but none of them rose to the level of these great predecessors. The only man who may be compared to them in artistic importance was Kuo Hsi, but his artistic activity started only about the middle of the eleventh century; it will be discussed in a later chapter.

The great masters of the Five Dynasties and Early Sung period became in later times the unsurpassed ideals of Chinese landscape painters, because they fulfilled to a high degree the specific conditions of this kind of art. Their technical

¹ A beautiful little picture which may be an original by Fan K'uan is in the collection of Mr. Hayasaki in Tokyo. Two large mountain landscapes, attributed to him, are reproduced in the *Chung-kuo Ming Hua Chi*. Other examples in his manner though probably of later origin, may be seen in the Freer Gallery and in the Metropolitan Museum. Cf. *Chinese Pict. in Amr. Collect.*, pls. 105, 106.

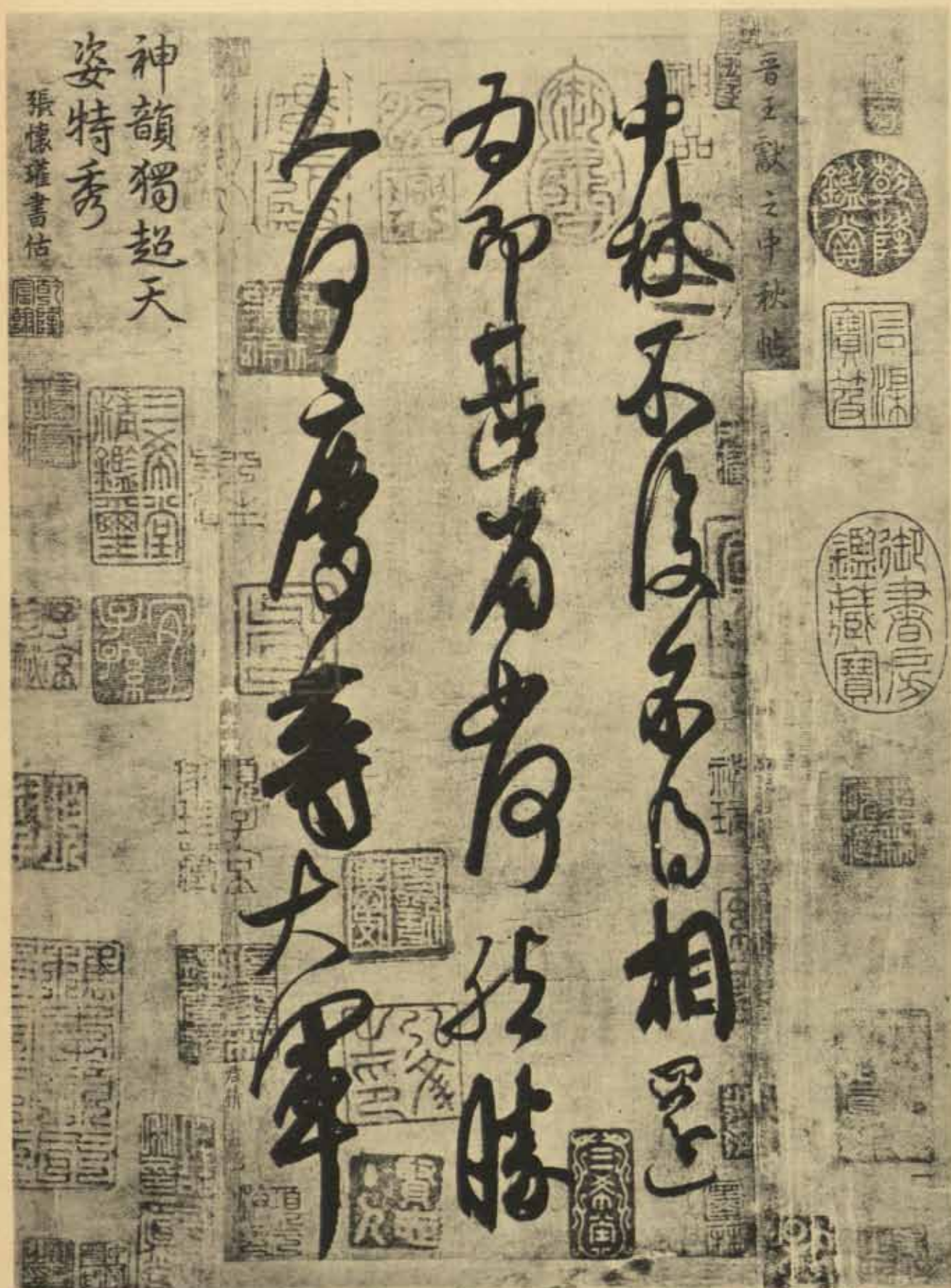
² According to the *Hsüan-ho Hua P'u*, he was active in the Five Dynasties and highly appreciated for the poetic spirit of his creations.

³ Yen Wên-kuei's most famous picture was a seascape, one foot large with a boat small as a leaf and figures no larger than grains, but in which nevertheless every detail could be distinguished. Cf. *Ch'ing-ho Shu Hua Fang*, vi. Pictures attributed to Yen Wên-kuei, though probably of later date, may be seen in the National Museum in Peking and in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. A beautiful picture that may be an original by Yen Wên-kuei is in the collection of Mr. Abe Fusajiro. It is a horizontal scroll representing *Rivers, Mountains and High Buildings*. Cf. *Soraiwan Kinsho*, pls. x-xii.

methods and mannerisms may have been surpassed in later schools of monochrome painting, but the grandeur of their conceptions, their extraordinary realization of the great creative forces that pulsate through mountains, streams, and forests, as well as through the human mind, was something that gave to their works a never fading glow of life and harmony.

ILLUSTRATIONS

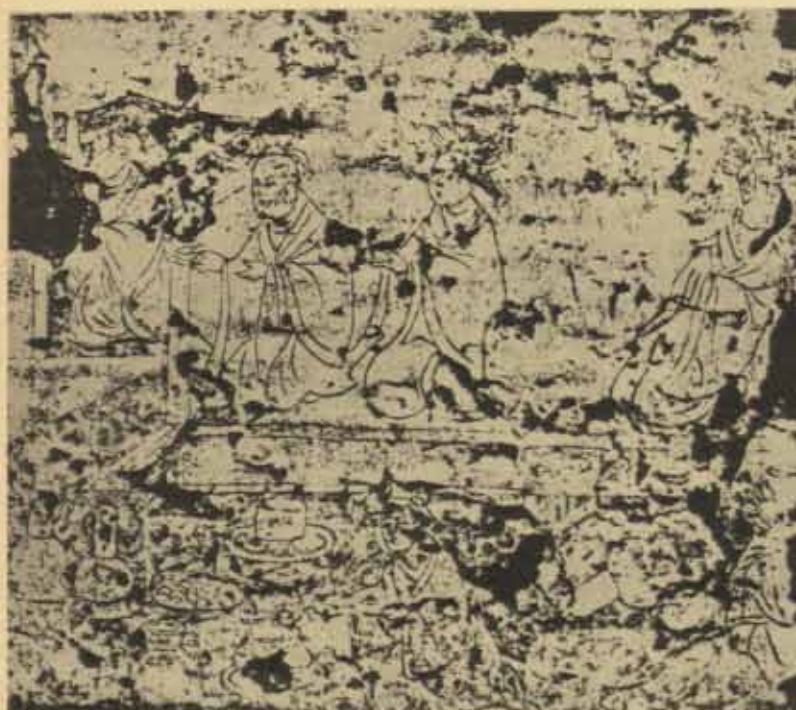




Calligraphy by Wang Hsiens-chih (344-388).



Engraved designs from Hsiao Tang Shan, Shantung (Before 129 A. D.)



Engraved designs from the Sacrificial Hall of Chu Wei. Chin-hsiang, Shantung.



Animal Fight (one half). Painted brick slab. Boston Museum.



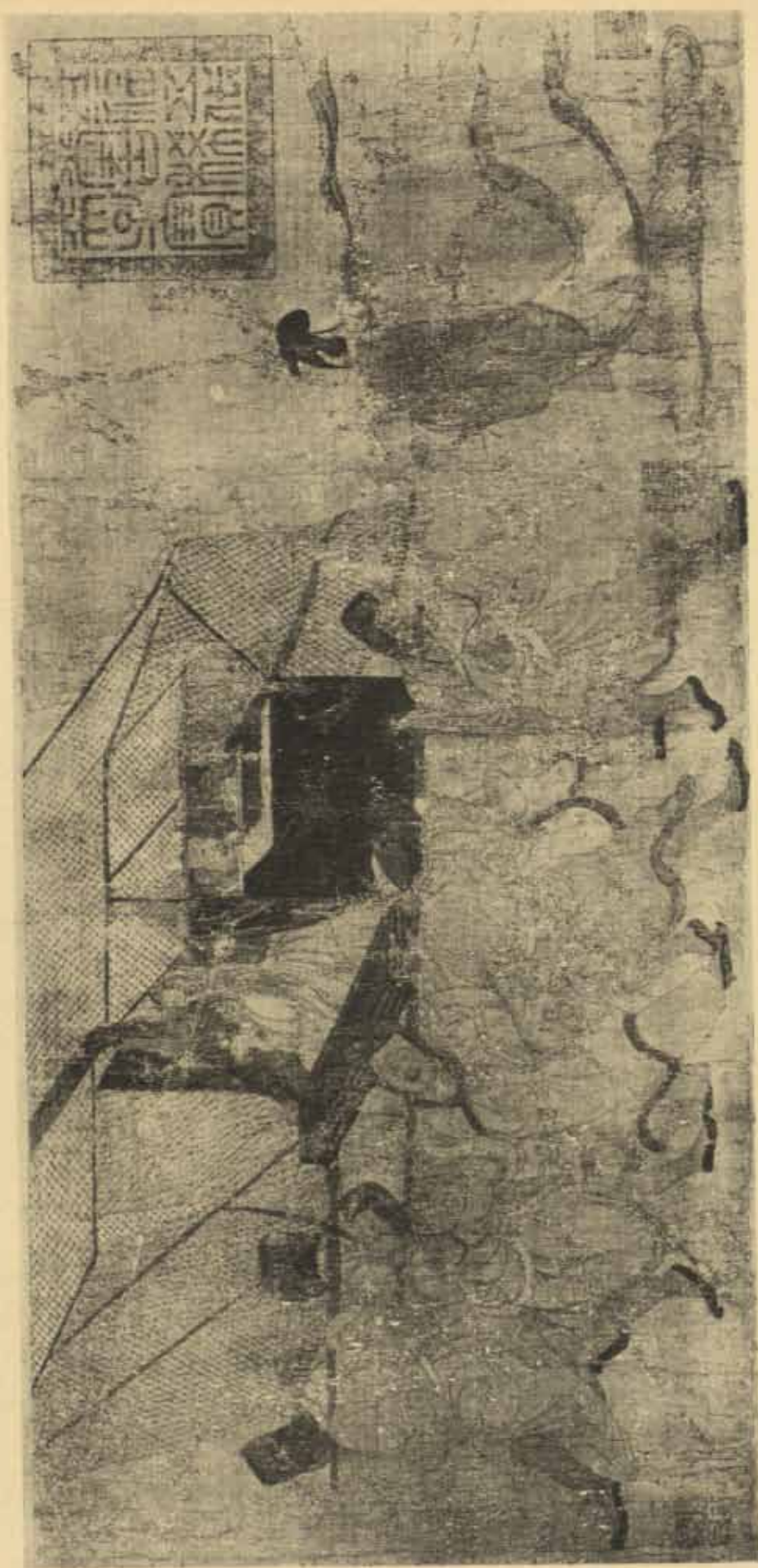
Men in Conversation. Painted brick slab. Boston Museum.



A Man with a Baby and other Figures. Painted brick slab. Boston Museum.



Young Ladies. Painted brick slab. Boston Museum.



Ku K'ai-chih, Lady Pan refuses to ride with the Emperor. British Museum.



Ku K'ueichih, A Landscape with a Hunter. British Museum.



Ku K'airchih, A Man seated at a Lady's Bed. British Museum.



Ku K'aischih, A Husband with his Family, British Museum.

歡不可以瀆，龍不可以專，實生謬愛則極
 遠致盈必損理存固然美者自美翻以
 取尤治容求好君子所仇結恩而絕寔
 此之由



故曰翼於福所以興靜本自思將顯所期



Ku K'at-chih, A Lady listening to her Husband's Reproaches, British Museum



Ku K'ai-chih, The Instructress writing before two Ladies, British Museum



After Chang Sengyu, Brushing the Elephant. Freer Gallery. Washington.



A Donor's Family. Tomb-painting (V-VI cent.), Shinchido, Korea.



Winged Dragon, Tomb-painting (V-VI cent.), Gukcheon-ri, Korea.



Tortoise and Snake. Tomb-painting (V-VI cent.). Gukkenri. Korea.



1.



2.



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Early Wall-paintings at Tun Huang. 1. Cave 110; end of V cent. 2. Cave 135; beginning of VI cent. 3. Cave 120 N; beginning of VI cent.



Fresco-paintings from Karakhodja (VII—VIII cent.) Berlin. Museum.



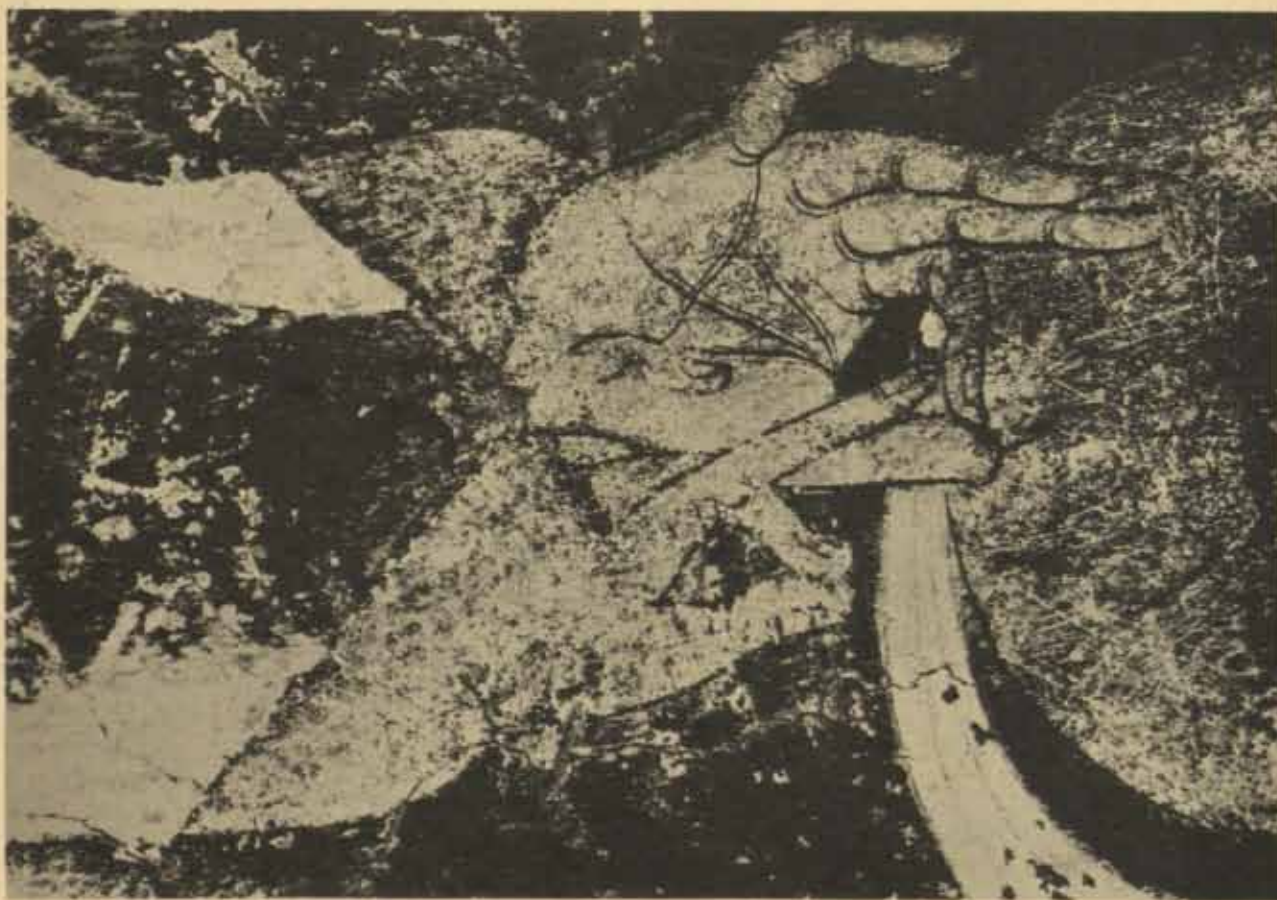
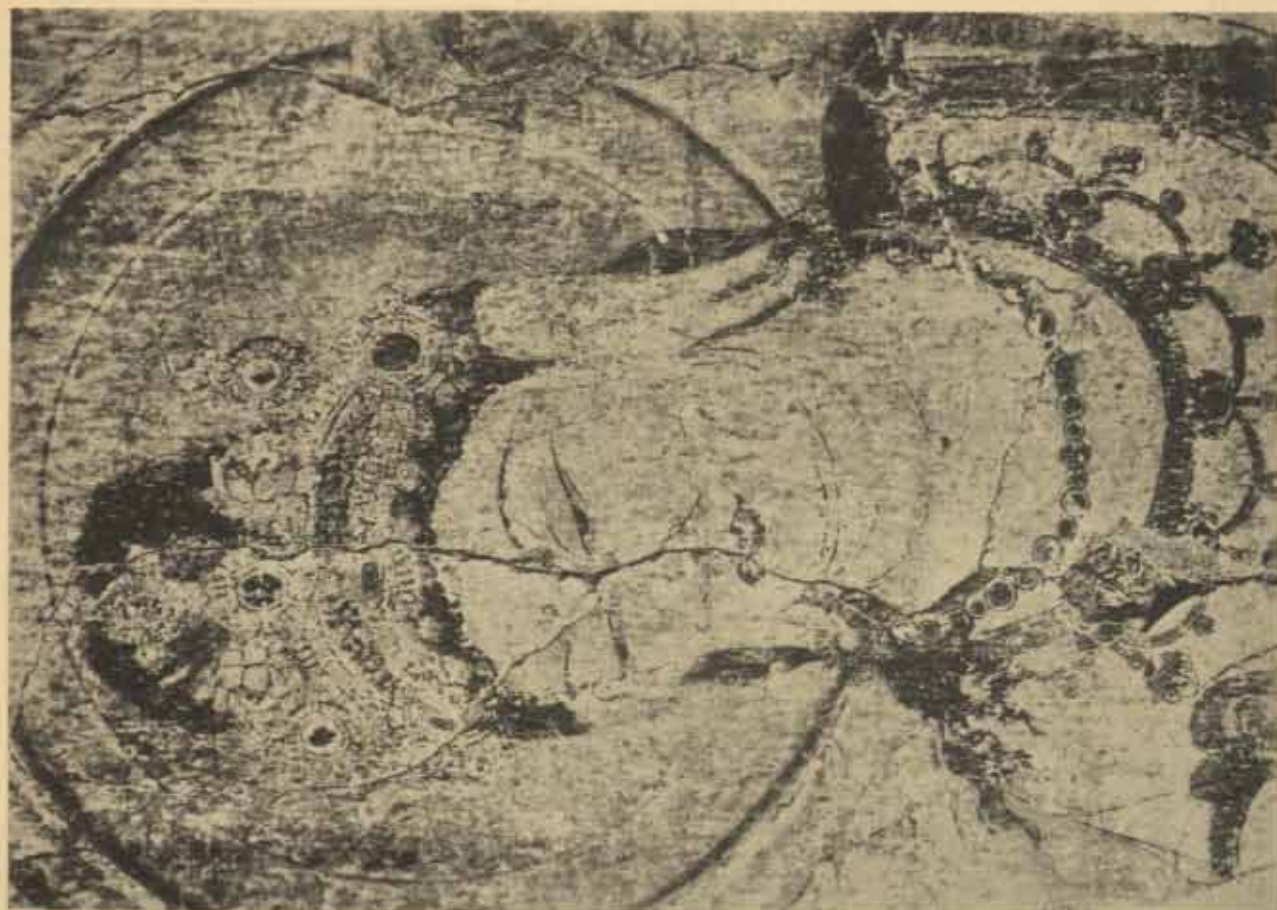
Vaisravana after Wei-chih I-seng. 1. Early copy. Palace Museum, Peiping. 2. Late copy. Freer Gallery, Washington.



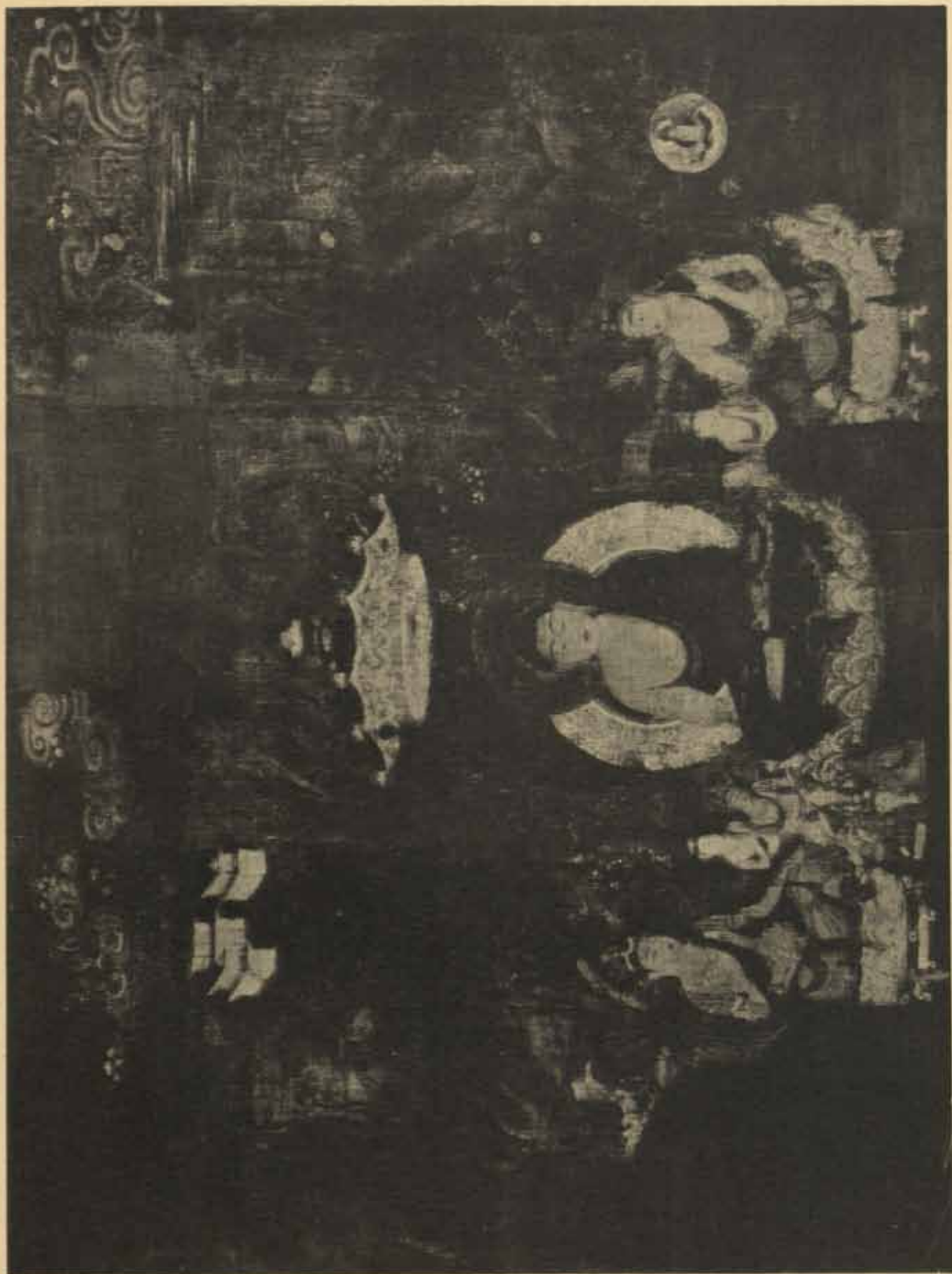
Bhaishajyaguru and Bodhisattvas. Wall-painting. Early VII cent. Hōryūji. Nara.



Shakyamuni and Bodhisattvas. Wall-painting. Early VII cent. Hōryūji, Nara.



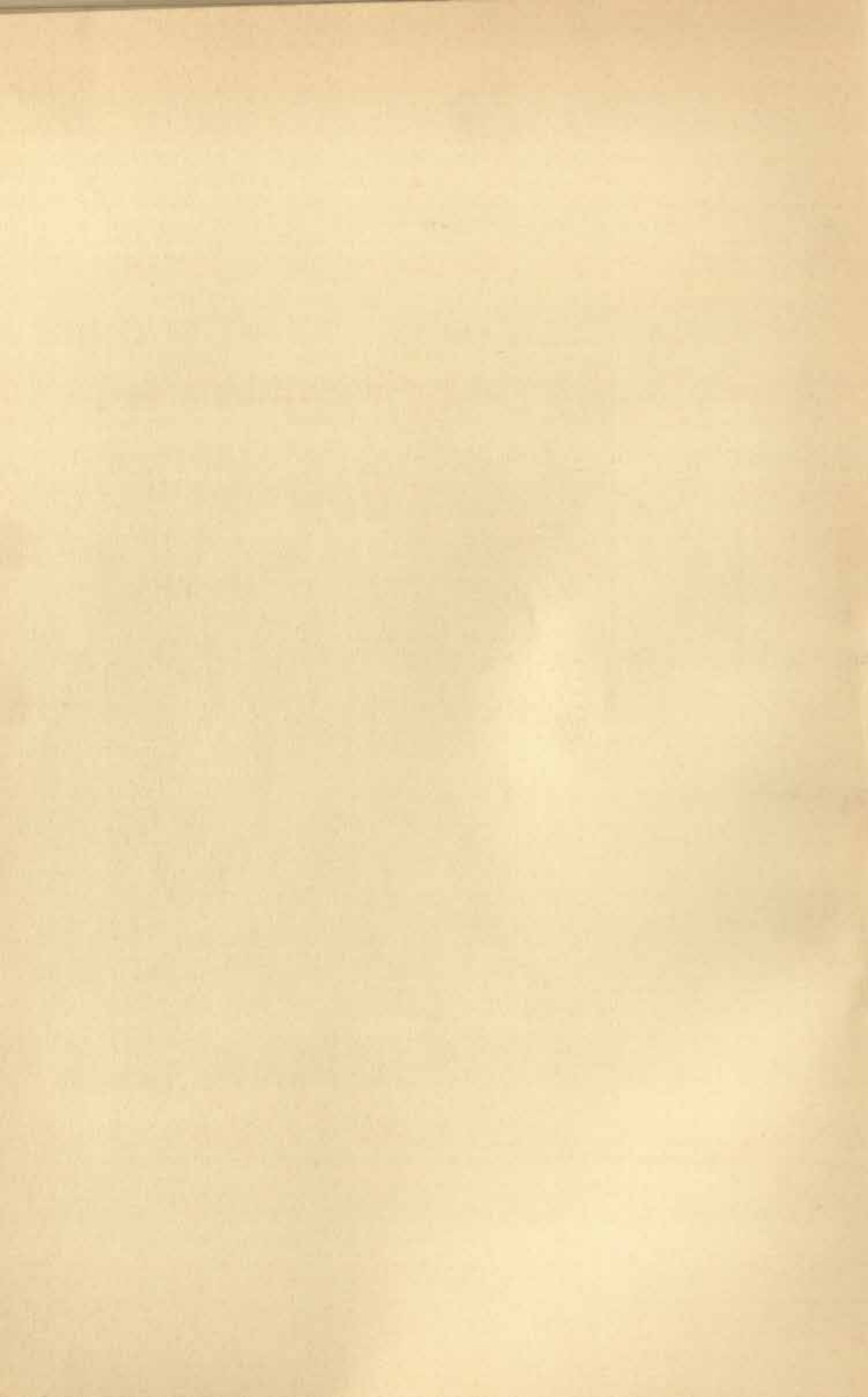
Details of the Wall-paintings in the Kondo of Horyu-ji, Nara.



Hokke Mandara. Painting on silk. VII cent. Boston Museum.



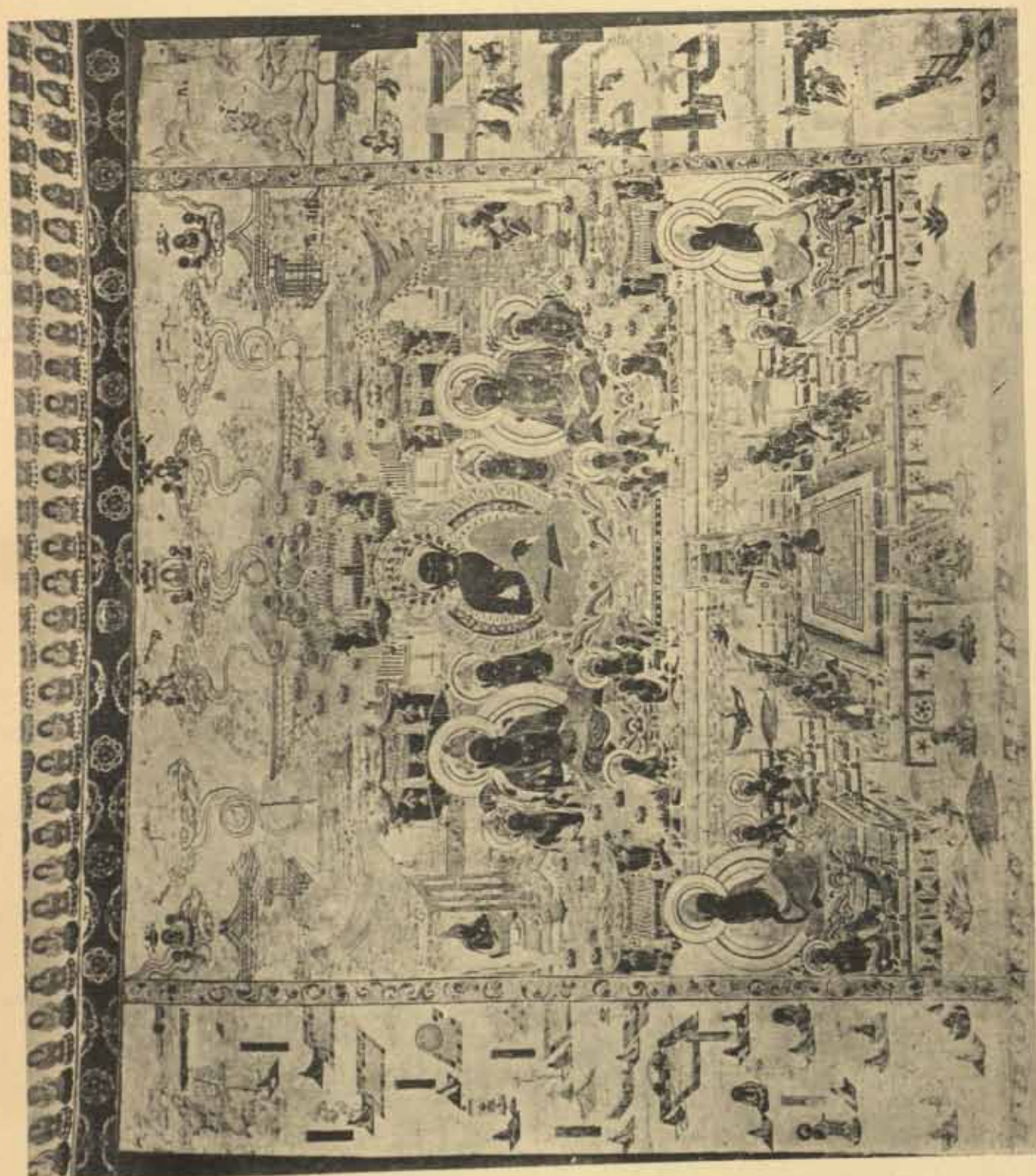
Wall-painting at Tun Huang. Cave 70. Early VIII cent.





Wall-painting at Tun Huang. Cave 70. Early VIII cent.

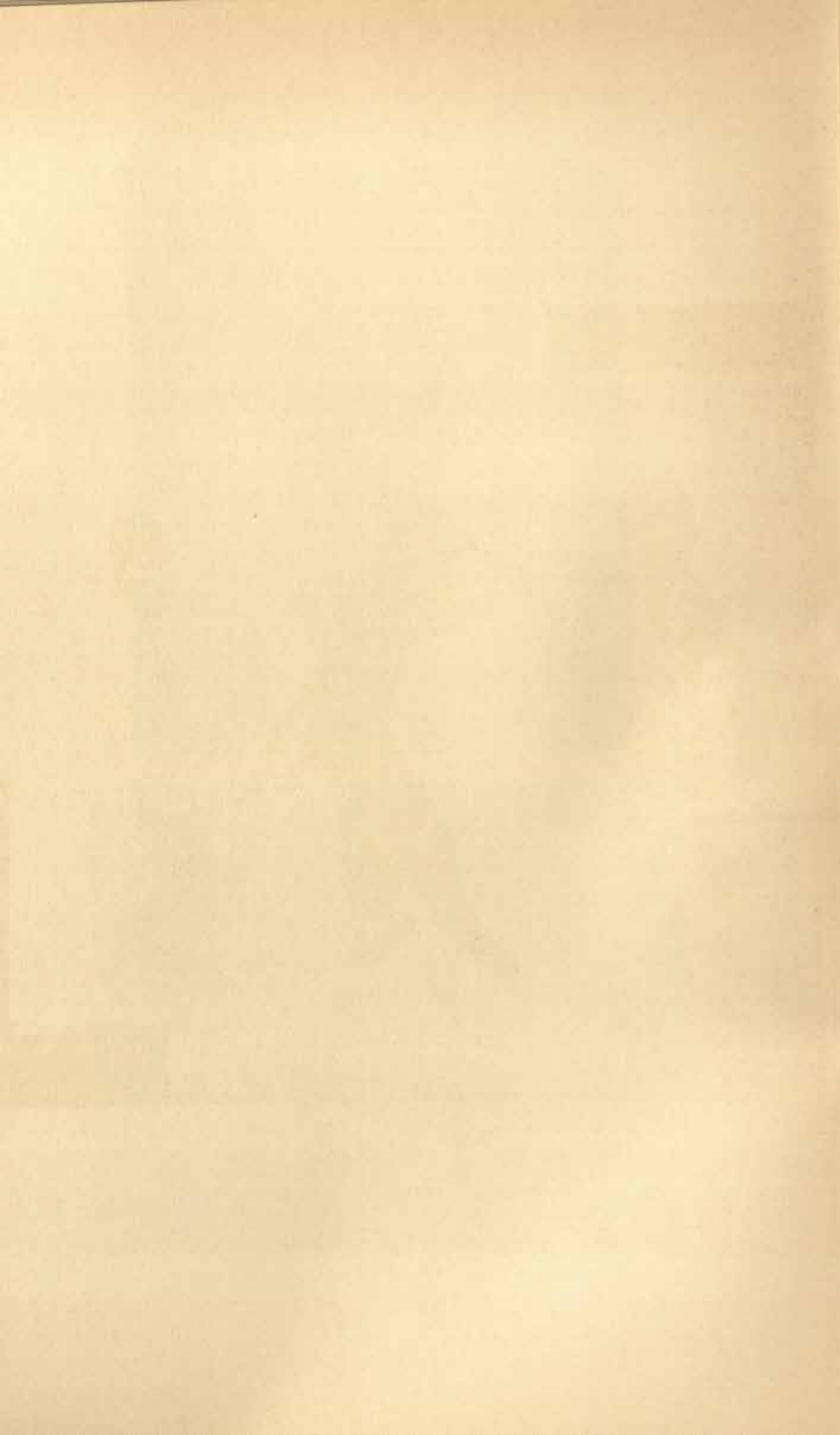




Wall-painting at Tun Huang. Cave 139 A. Early IX cent.



Wallpaintings from Tun Huang. VIII cent. Fogg Museum. Cambridge. Mass.

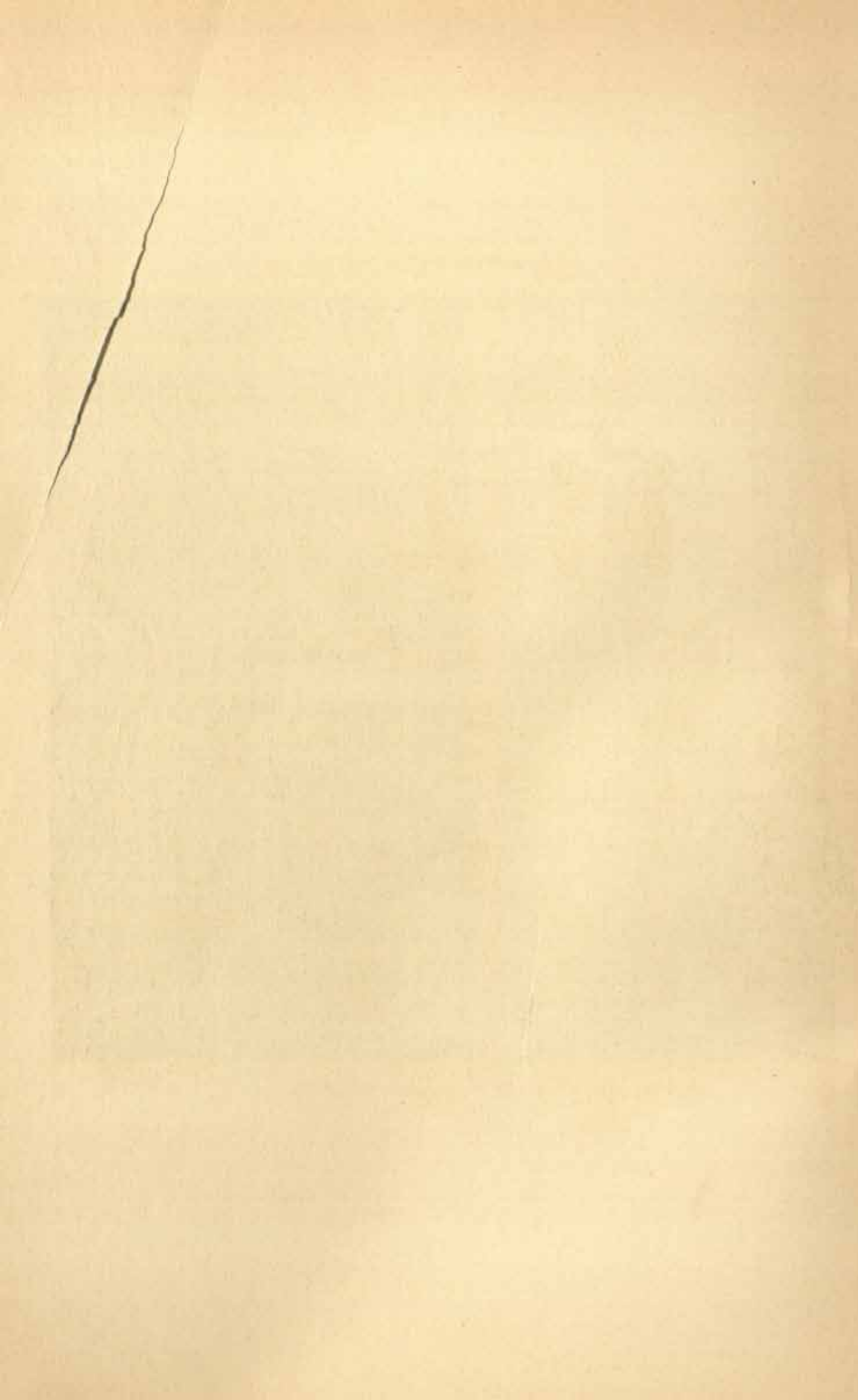




Wallpainting from Tun Huang. VIII cent. Fogg Museum. Cambridge. Mass.

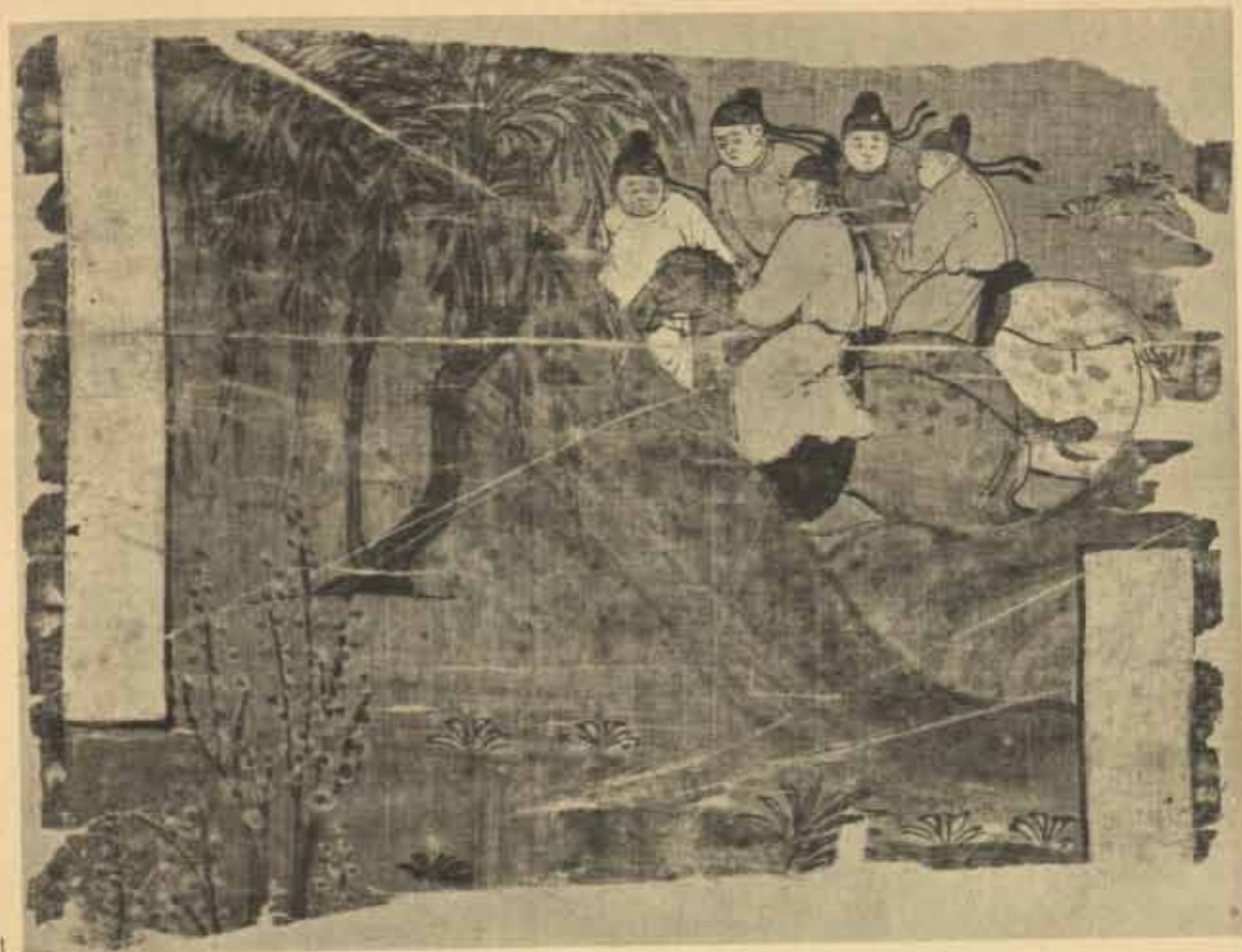


Paintings from Tun Huang. 1. Kashyāpa, dated 729. 2. Kuanyin, X cent.
Musée Guimet. Paris.

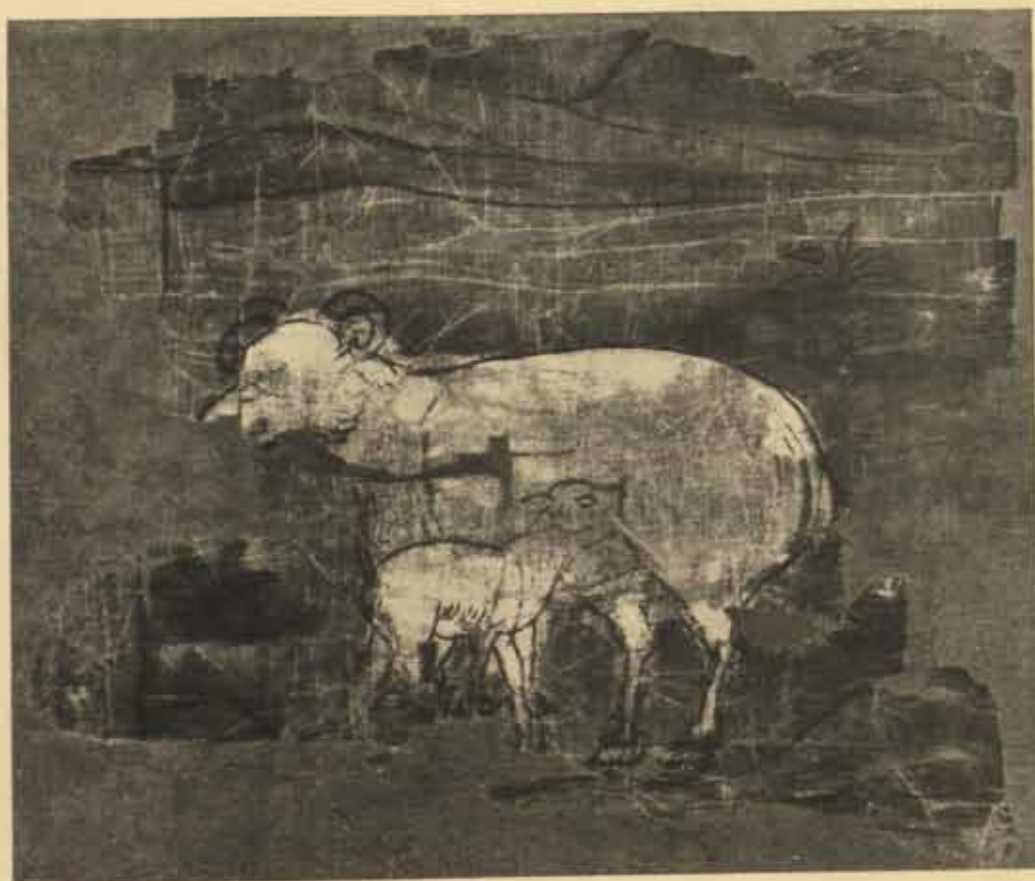




Buddha with Planetary Divinities. Dated 897. From Tun Huang. British Museum.



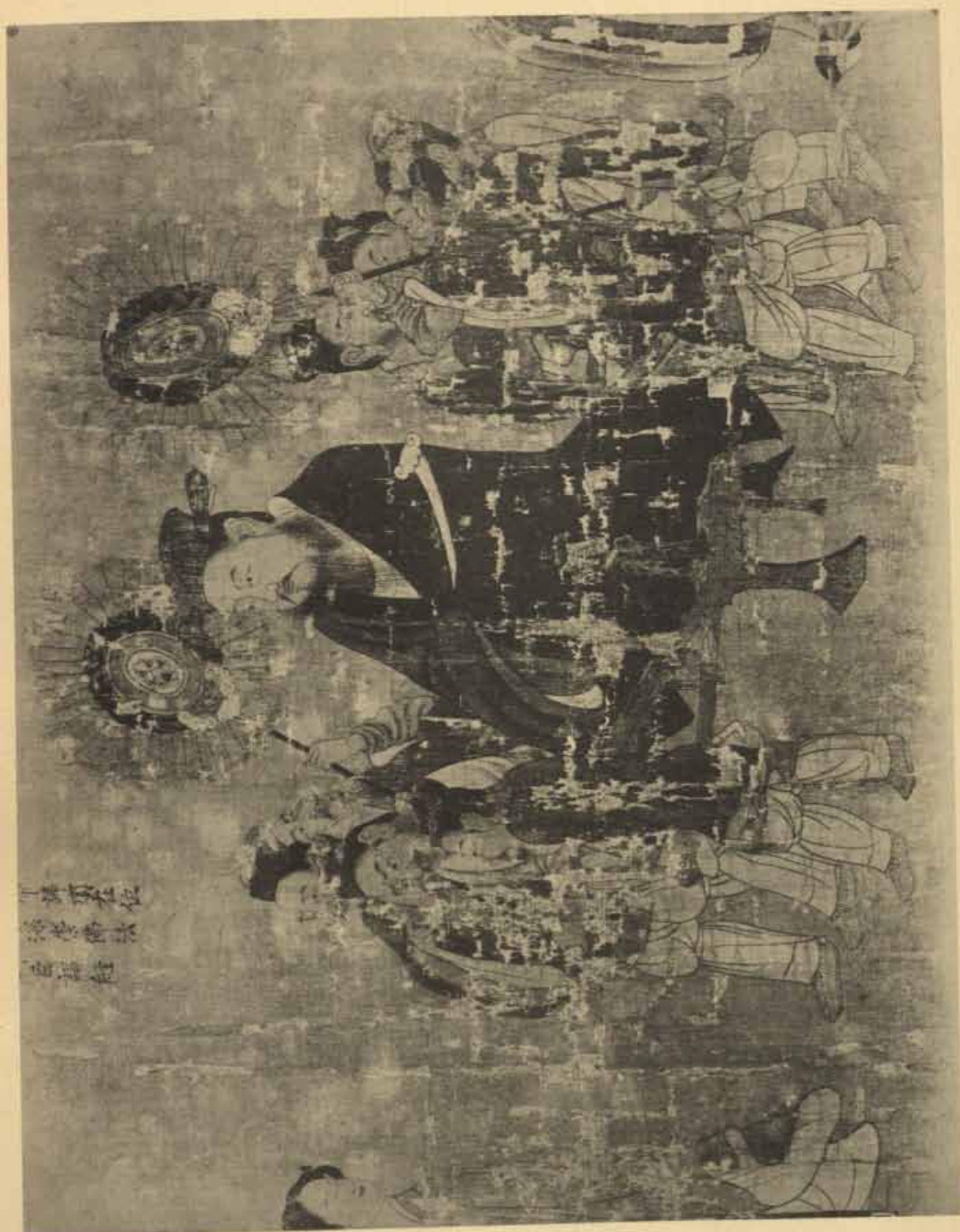
Paintings from Tun Huang. 1. The Search. British Museum. 2. An Official and his Squire. Louvre.



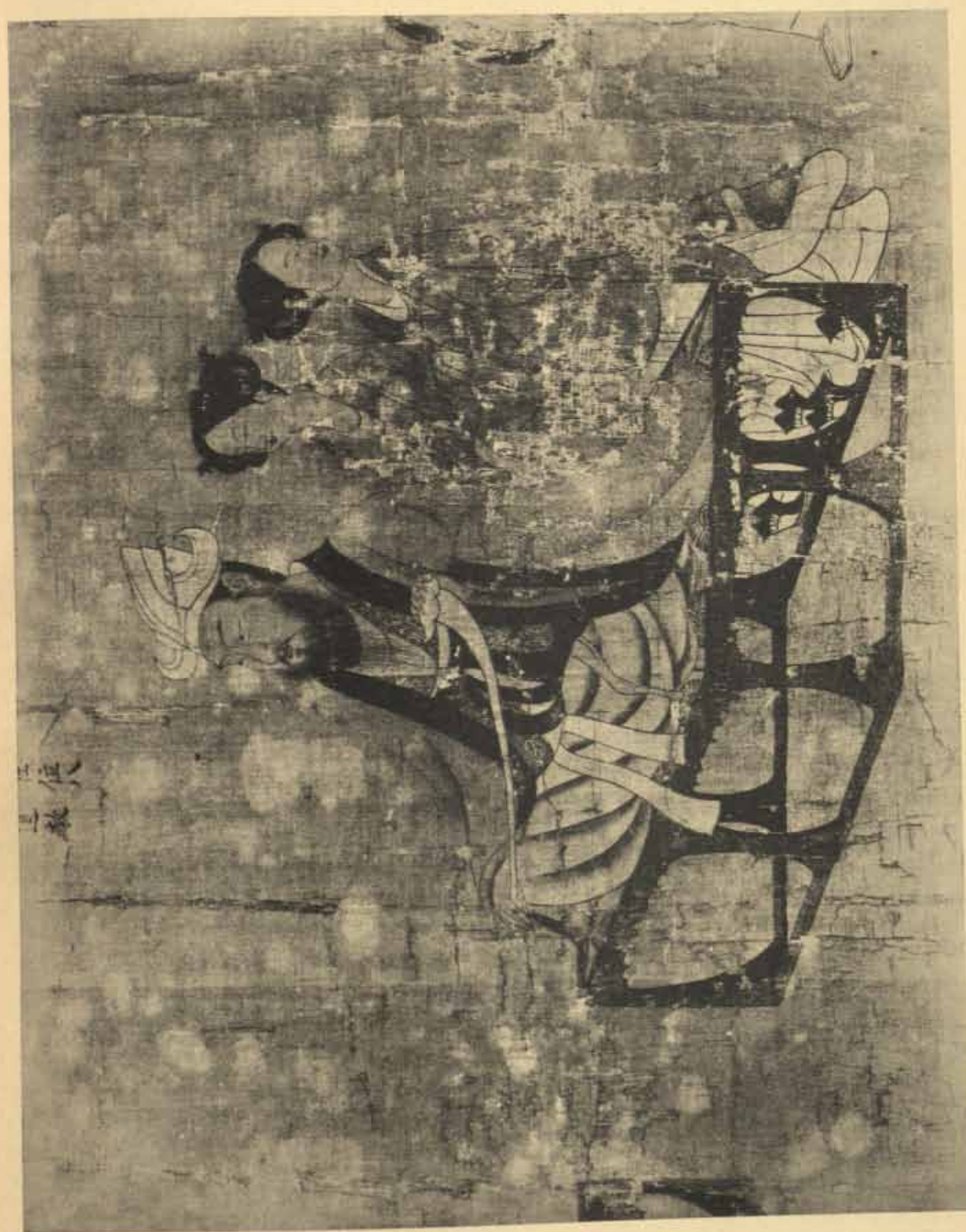
Paintings from Tun Huang. The Simultaneous Births. British Museum.



Yên Lî-pên, Parts of the scroll of the Thirteen Emperors. Boston Museum.



Yen Li-pên, Emperor Ch'en Hsuan Ti. Boston Museum.



Yen Li-pên, Emperor Ch'en Wen Ti. Boston Museum.



After Chang Seng-yu and Yen Lipên, The Drunken Taoist. M. A. Stoclet, Brussels.



After Chang Seng-yu and Yen Li-pên, The Drunken Taoist (second half).



Copies after Yen Li-pên's pictures: 1. The Tribute Bearers. National Museum, Peiping.
2. "Collating the Books." Boston Museum.



Copy after Yen Li-pên's "Collating the Books"; Central group. Boston Museum.



Copy after Yen Li-pen's "Collating the Books". Servants and Grooms, Boston Museum.



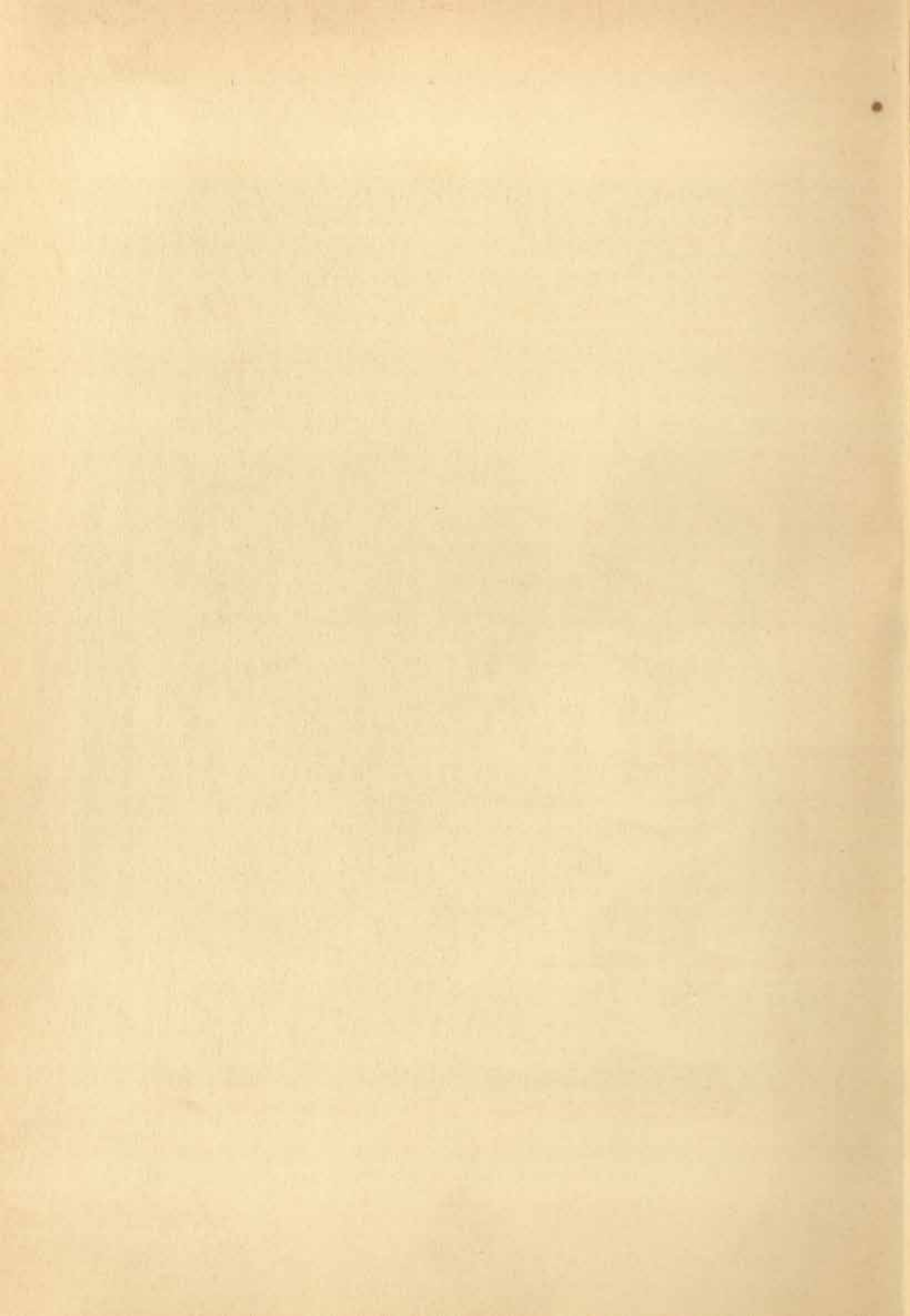
Copy after Yen Li-pên's "Collating the Books". Four heads (enlarged). Boston, Museum.



Copy after Li Ssü-hsün. Landscape scroll. Washington, Freer Gallery.

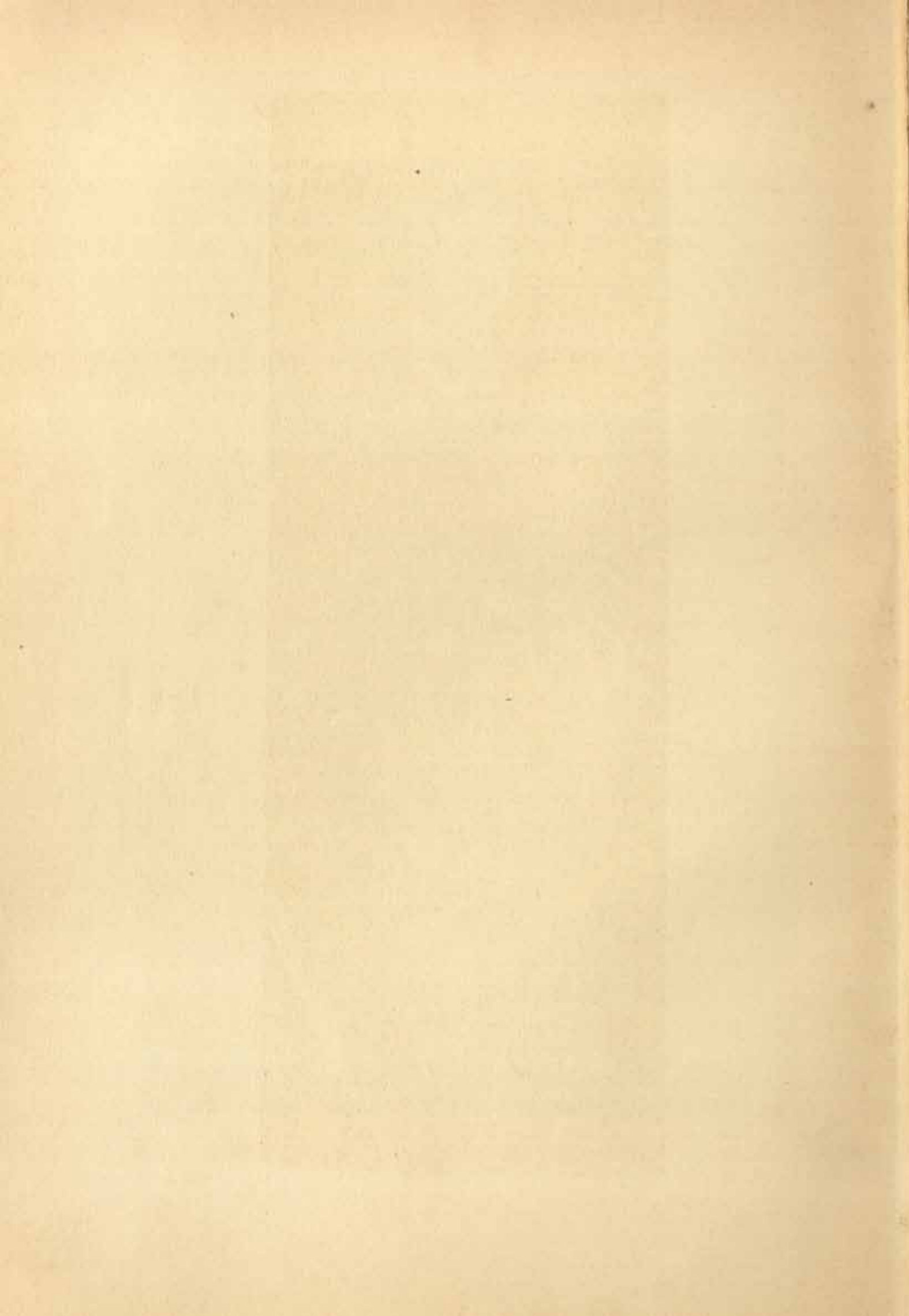


Li Chao-tao, attributed to. A Summer Palace. Boston Museum.



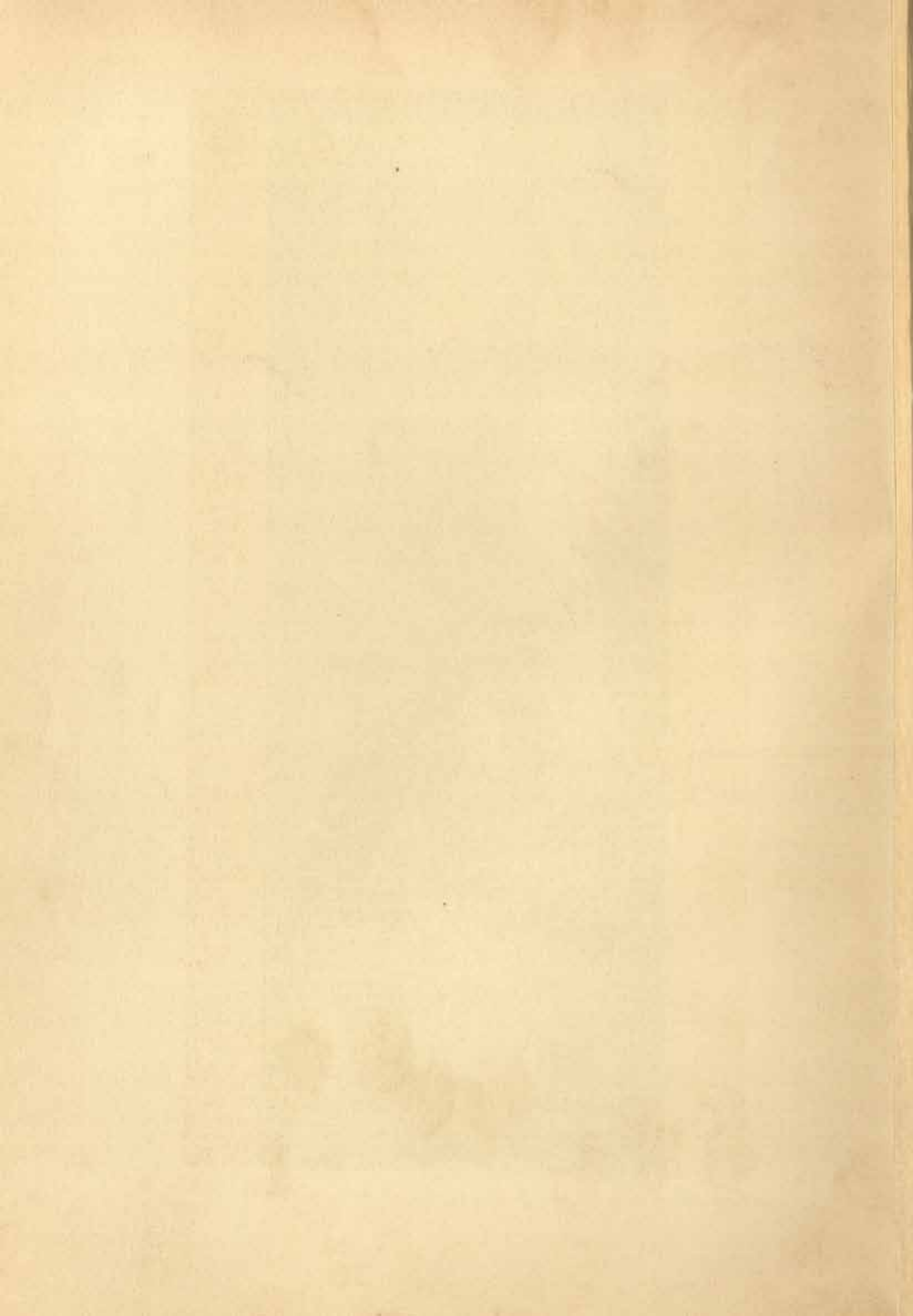


T'ang painter, attributed to. Mountain landscape with Travellers. National Museum. Peiping.





Rubbing after a design by Wu Tao-tzu, Kuanyin. Linlao Shan.

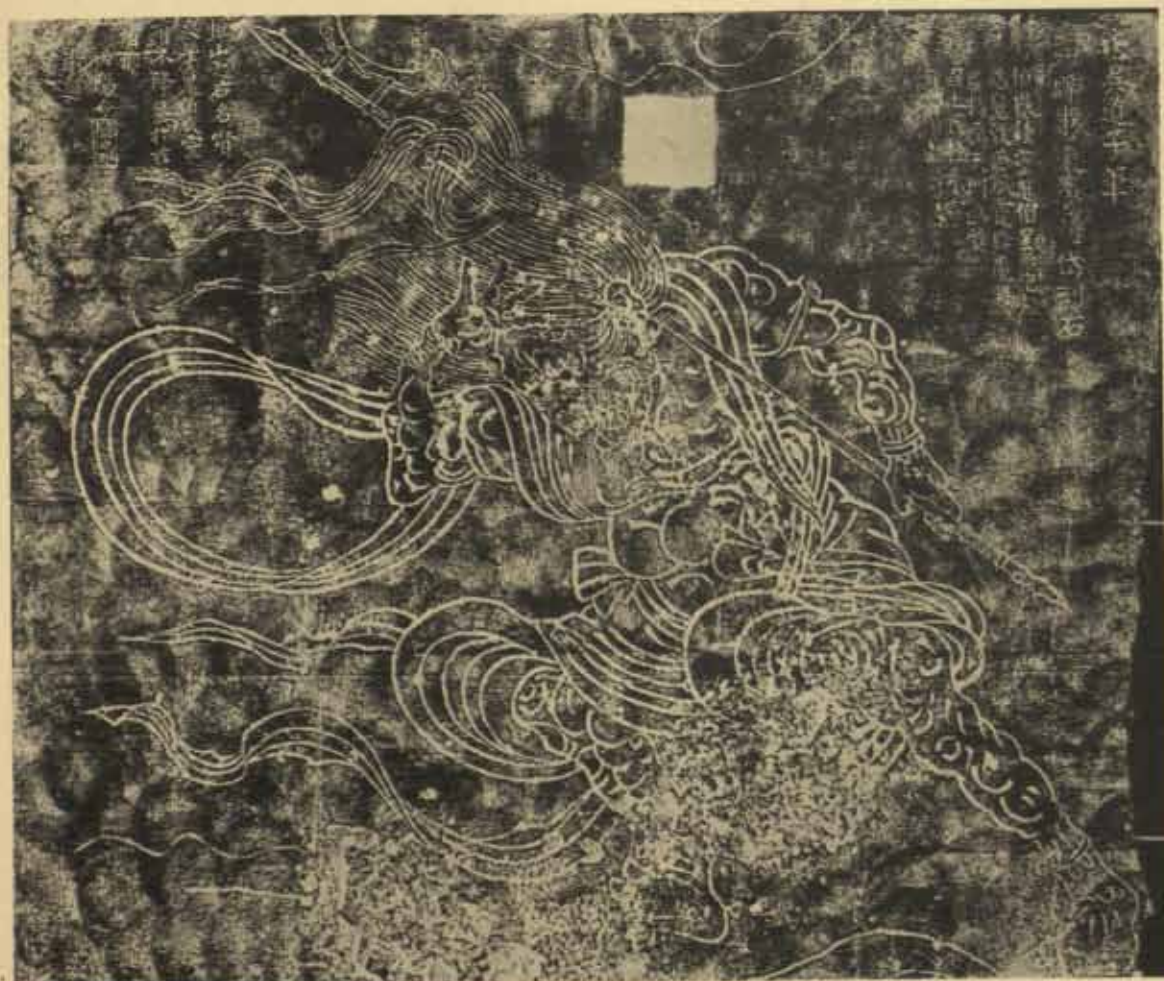




Rubbing after a design by Wu Tao-tzu, Tortoise and Snake. Ch'eng-tu. Szechuan.



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2.

Rubbings after designs by Wu Tao-tzu. 1. Confucius and Yen-tzu. Pei-lin. Sianfu.
2. The Flying Devil. Chū-yang. Hopei.



After Wu Tao-tzū. Manjuśrī and Samantabhadra. Tōfukuji. Kyoto.



Copy after Wu Iao-tzu. The Birth and Presentation of Buddha. Mr. T. Yamamoto, Tokyo.



Stone relief of Kuanyin, executed in 1107 after a design by Wu Tao-tzu.
Freer Gallery. Washington.



Engraving on stone after Wang Wei's Wang-ch'uan scroll.



Copy after Wang Wei's scroll: Clearing after Snow etc. Mr. Lo Chensyü, Tientsin.



Copy after Wang Wei's scroll: Clearing after Snow etc. Mr. Lo Chen-yü. Tientsin.



Copy after Wang Wei's scroll: Clearing after Snow etc. Mr. Lo Chen-yü, Tientsin



Copy after Wang Wei's scroll: Clearing after Snow etc. Prof. M. Ogawa. Kyoto.



Wang Wei, attributed to. Mountains in Snow. Palace Museum. Peiping.



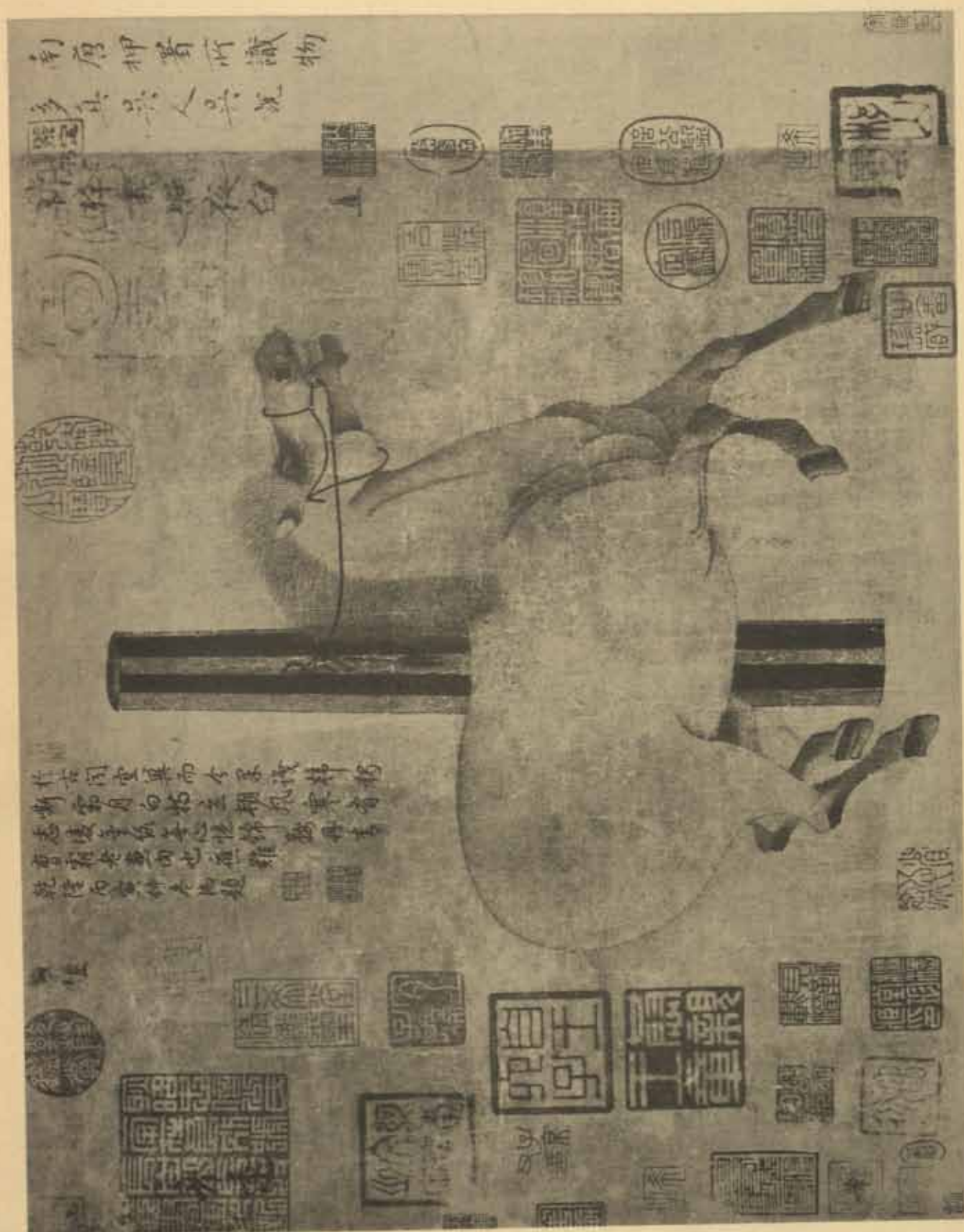
Wang Wei, attributed to. Snow by the River. Ex Imperial Manchu Collection.



After Wang Wei (?). Waterfall. Chishakurin. Kyoto.



Copy after Han Kan. Envoys with Tribute Horses. Freer Gallery, Washington.



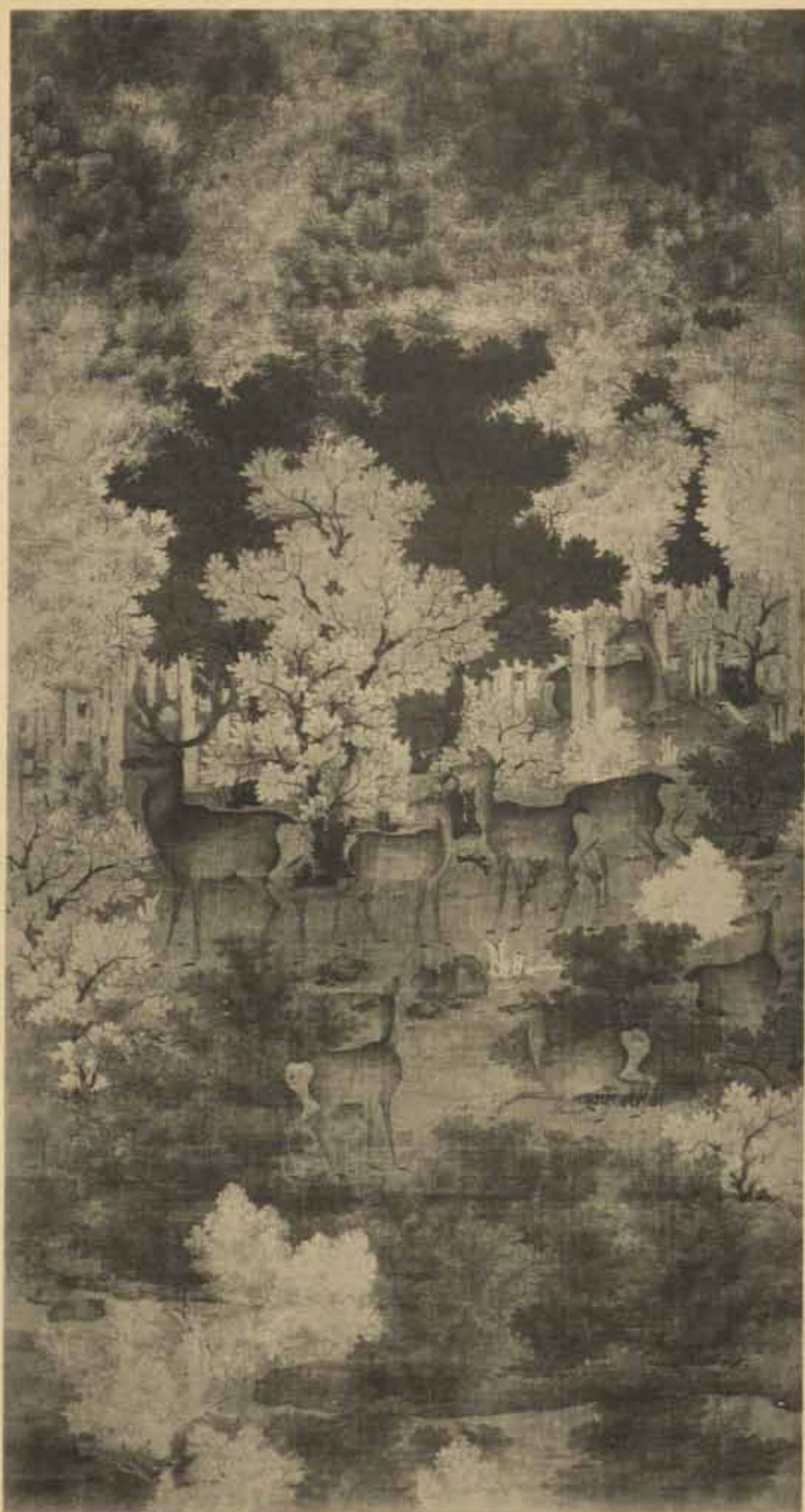
Han Kan (?). One of Emperor Ming Huang's Horses. Prince Kung's collect. Peiping.



Han Kan (?). The Head of the Horse. Prince Kung's collect. Peiping.



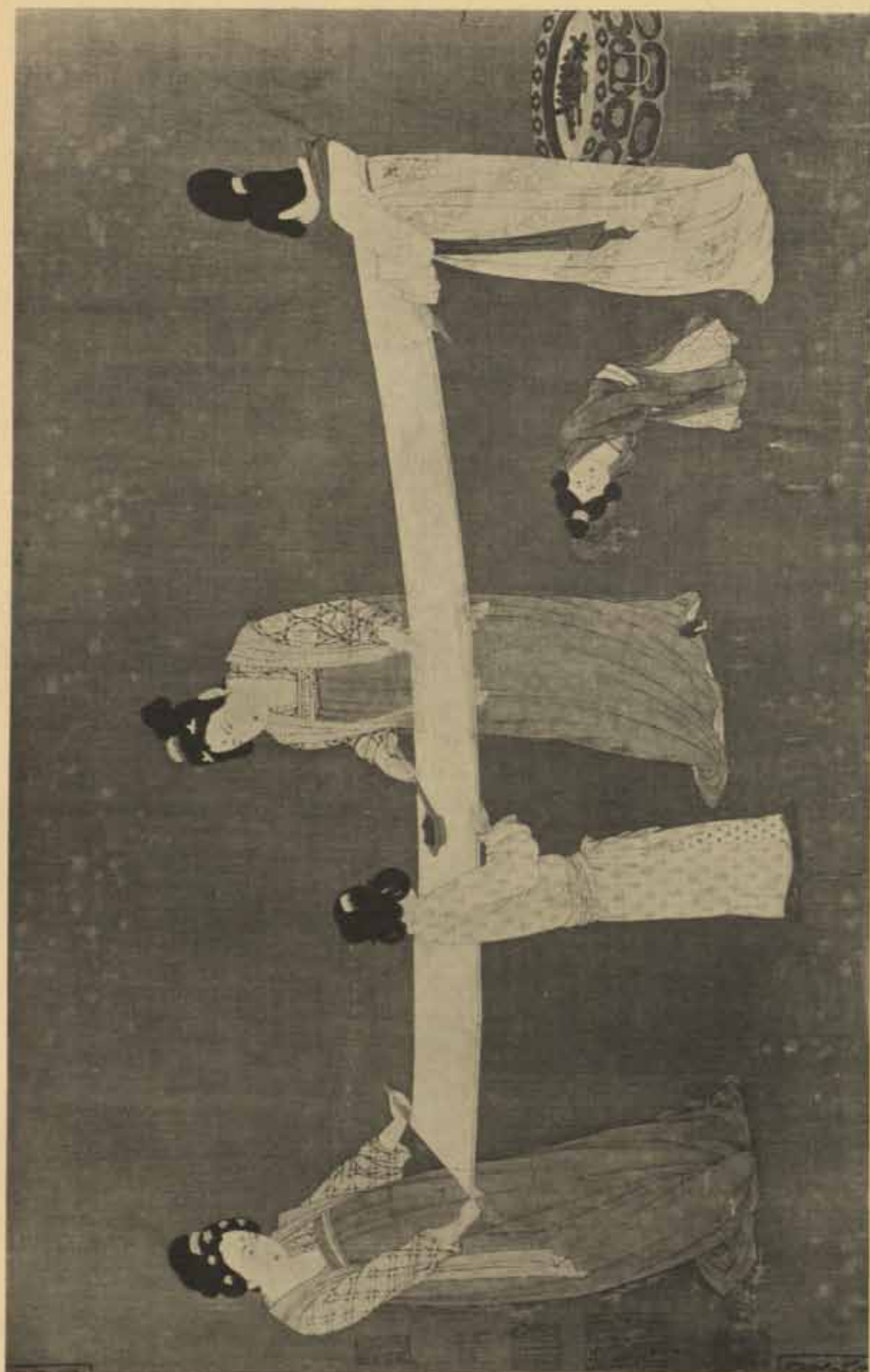
Tai Sung. Water-buffaloes fighting. National Museum. Peiping.



Unknown Painter, Deer in a Wood in Autumn. Palace Museum. Peiping.



Copy after Chang Hsüan, Women preparing Silk. Boston Museum.



Copy after Chang Hsüan, Women preparing Silk. (second part.). Boston.



Copy after Chou Fang. The Fairy Ma Ku. National Museum. Peiping.



Copy after Chou Fang. Playing the *Chin* in a Garden. Mr. Lo Chen-yü, Tientsin.



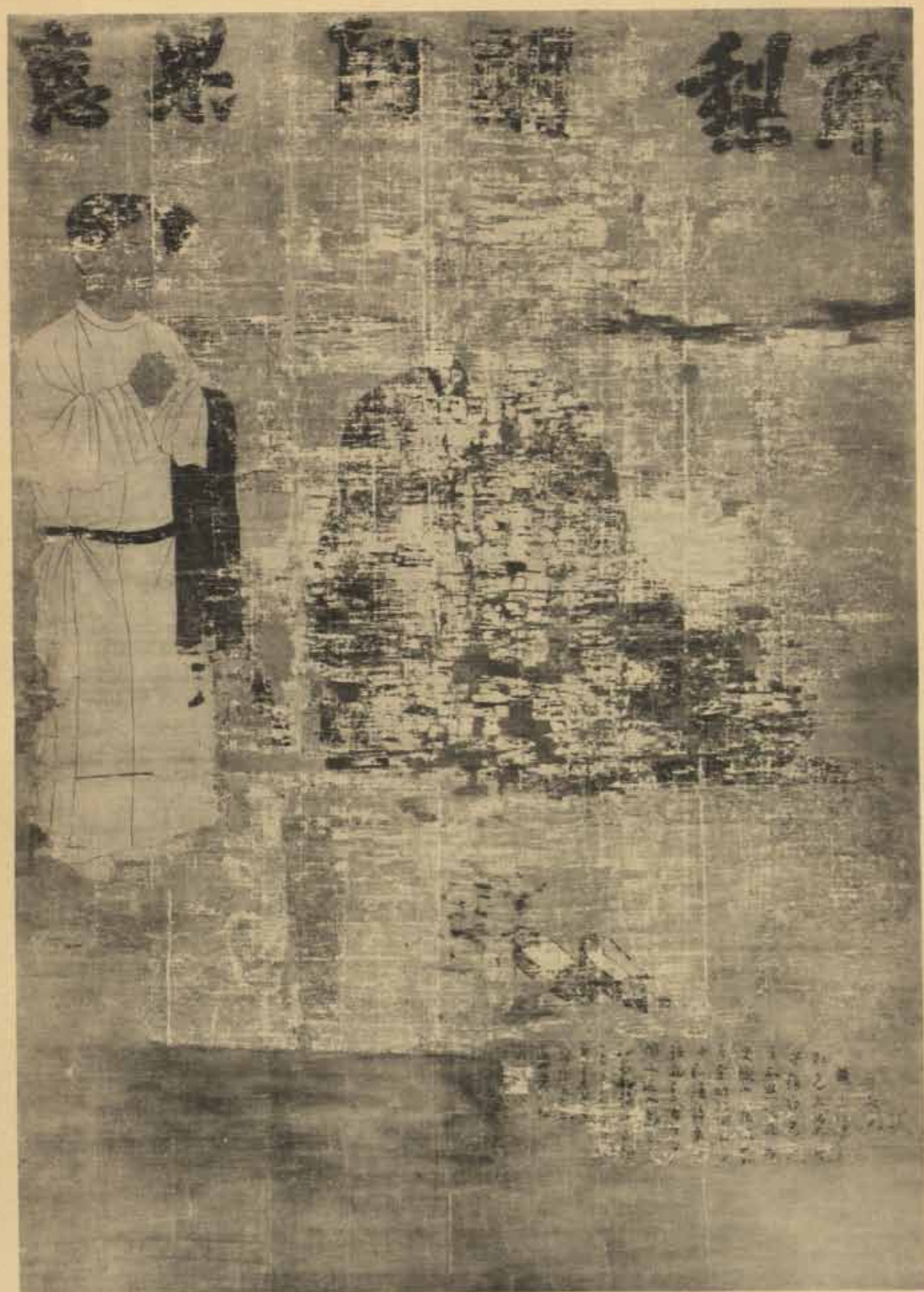
Painting from a tomb at Kara-khodja. Early VIII cent. Museum. Delhi.



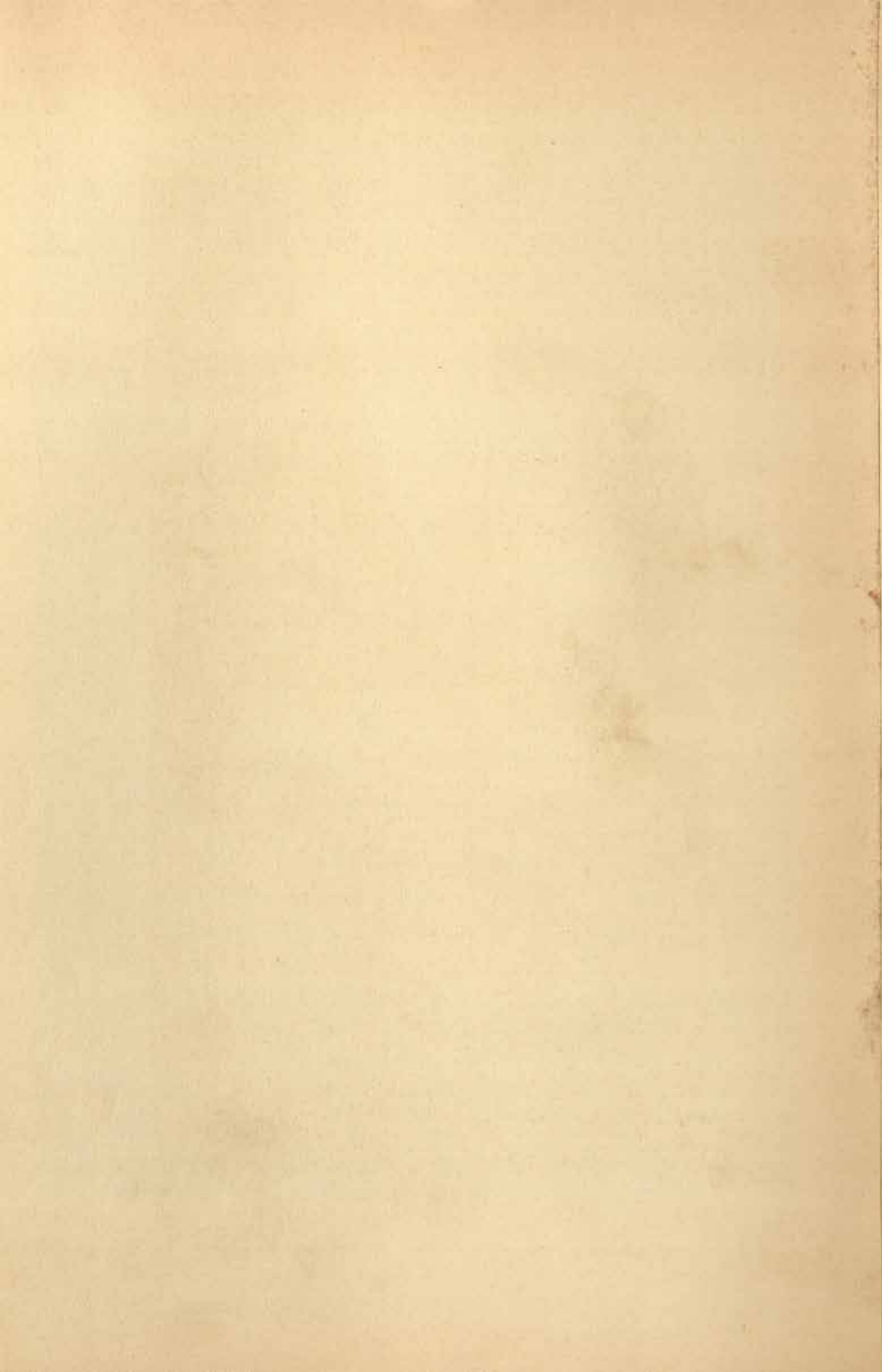
Part of a Screen. Early VIII cent. Shoso-in. Nara.



Li Chén. Portrait of The Priest Amoghavajra. Tōji. Kyoto.



Li Chên. Portrait of The Priest Kui Kuo. Tōji. Kyoto.





Kuan-hsiu (?). One of the Arhats. Imperial Museum. Tokyo.



Kuan-hsiu (?). One of the Arhats. Imperial Museum, Tokyo.



Shih K'o (?). "Two Patriarchs with their Minds in Harmony." Shōhoji. Kyoto.



Huang Ch'üan, Cocks and Rose-Mallows. Part of a scroll.



Huang Ch'üan, Swans and Ducks on the Water. Part of a scroll.



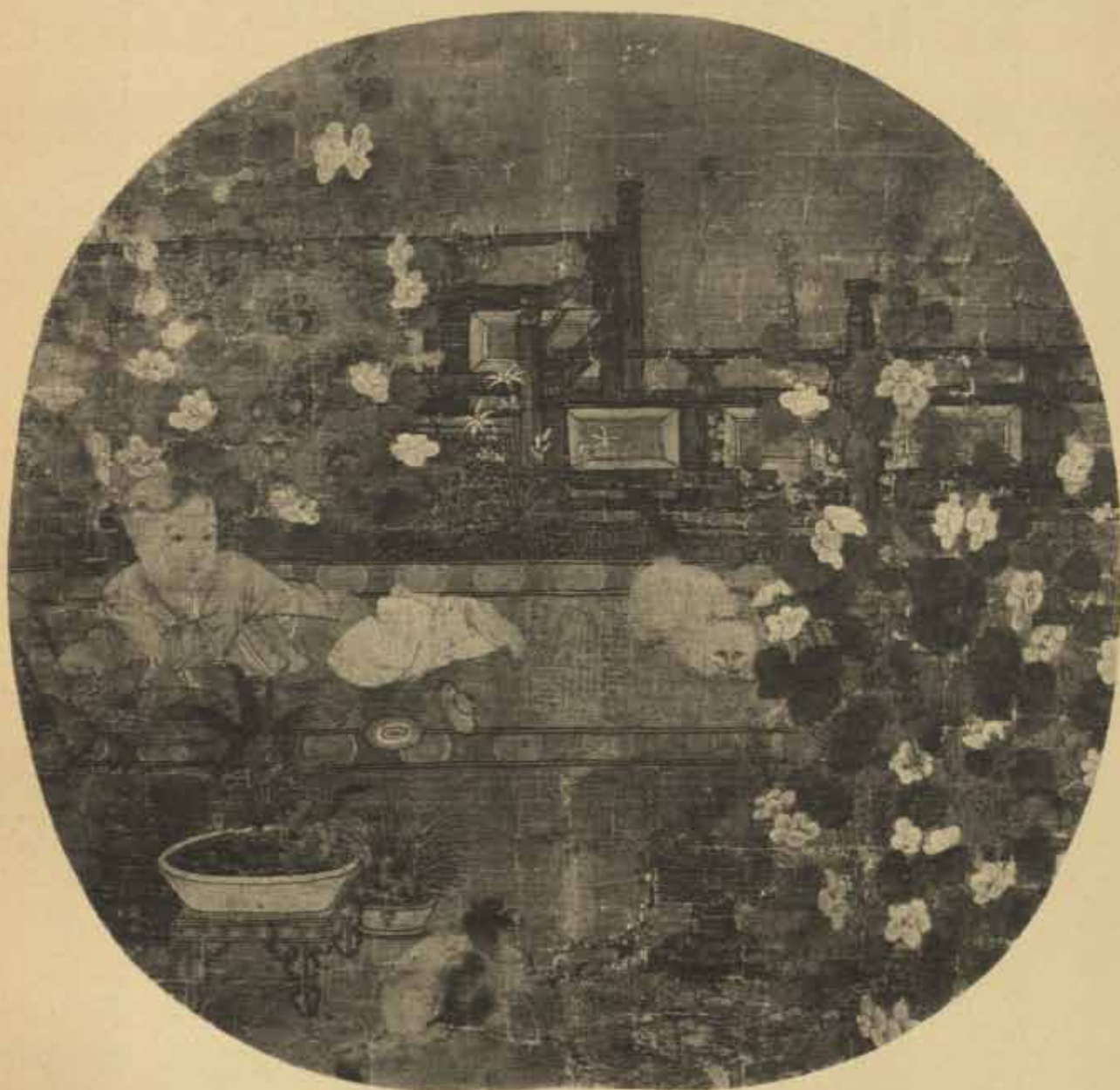
Hsü Hsi, attributed to. Lotus in the Wind. Chion-in, Kyoto.



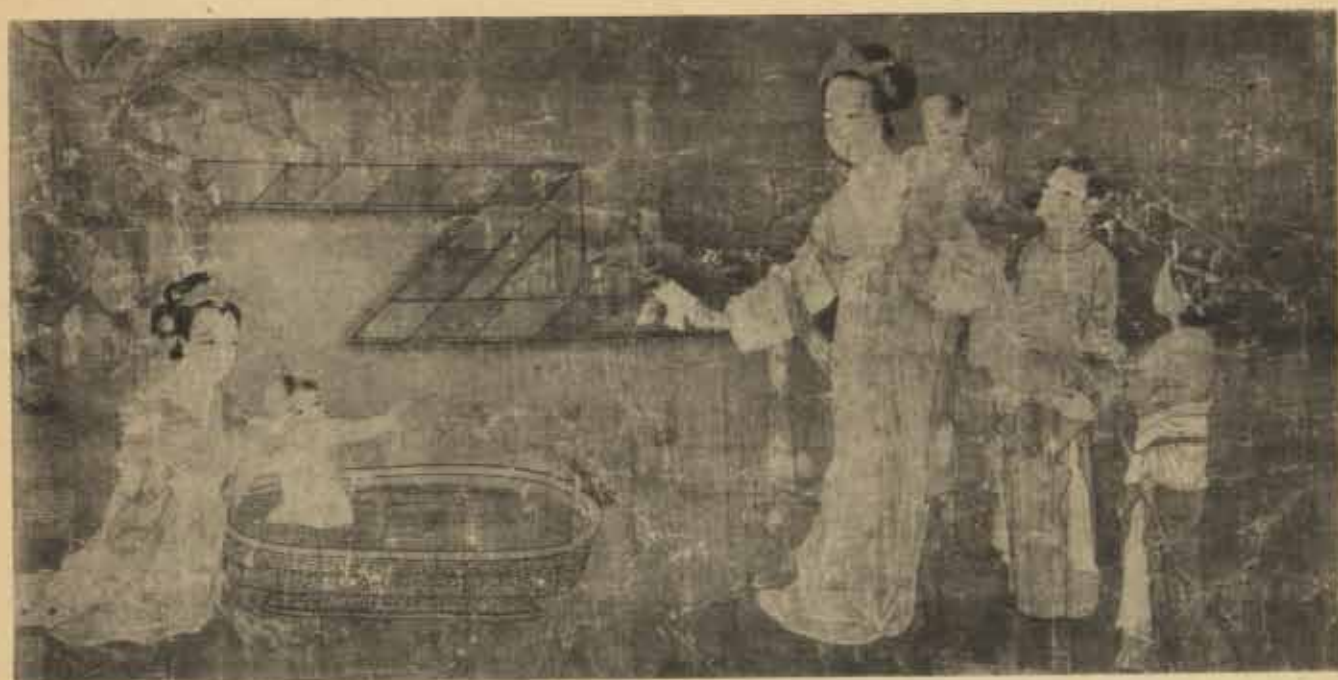
Hsü Hsi, attributed to. Lotus and White Heron. Chionrin, Kyoto.



Chao Ch'ang. White Jessamine. Marquis Inouye Collect. Tokyo.



Chou Wen-chü, A Child among Rose-Mallows. Boston Museum.



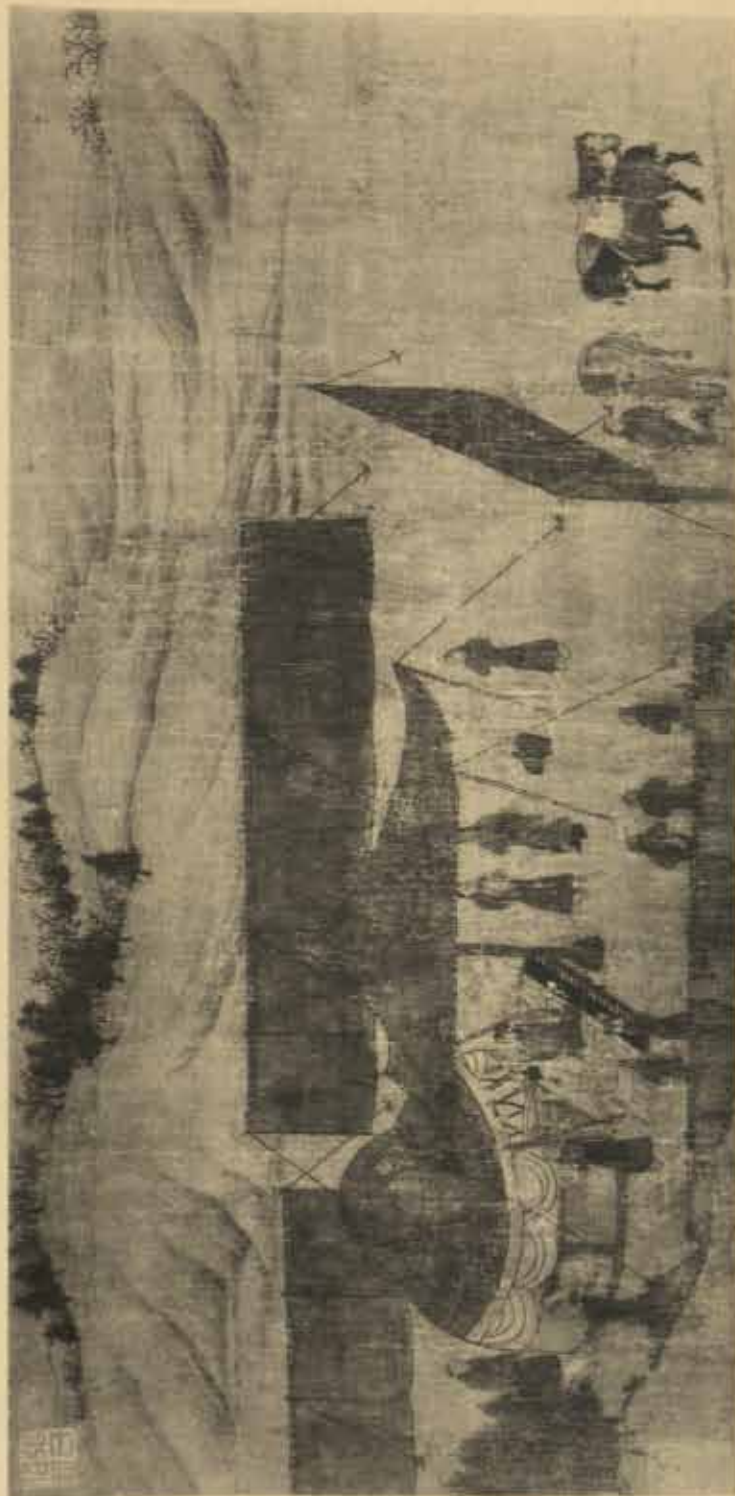
After Chou Wen-chü, Ladies with Children on a Terrace. British Museum.



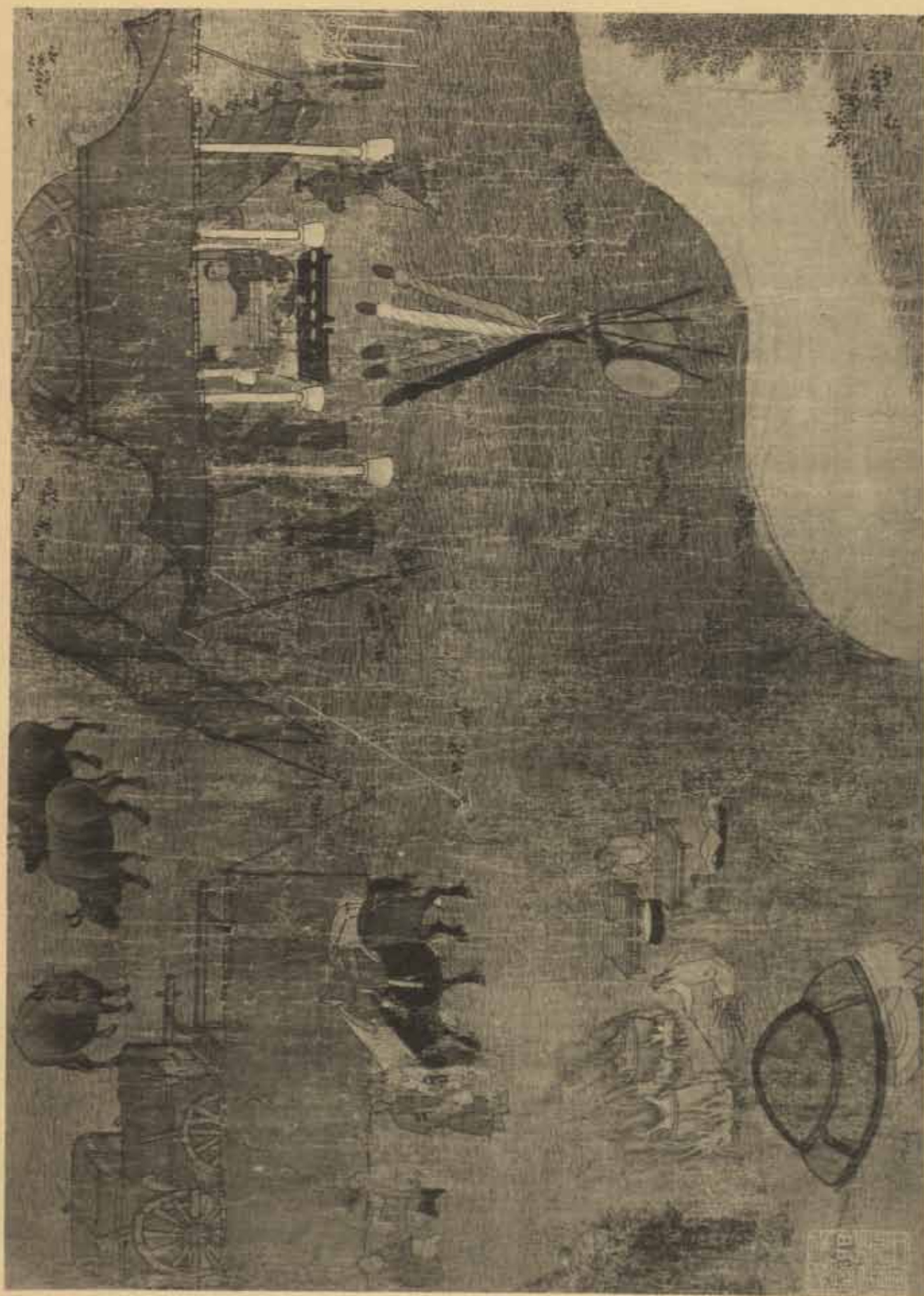
Wang Ch'i-han (?). Lady and Children playing. Boston Museum.



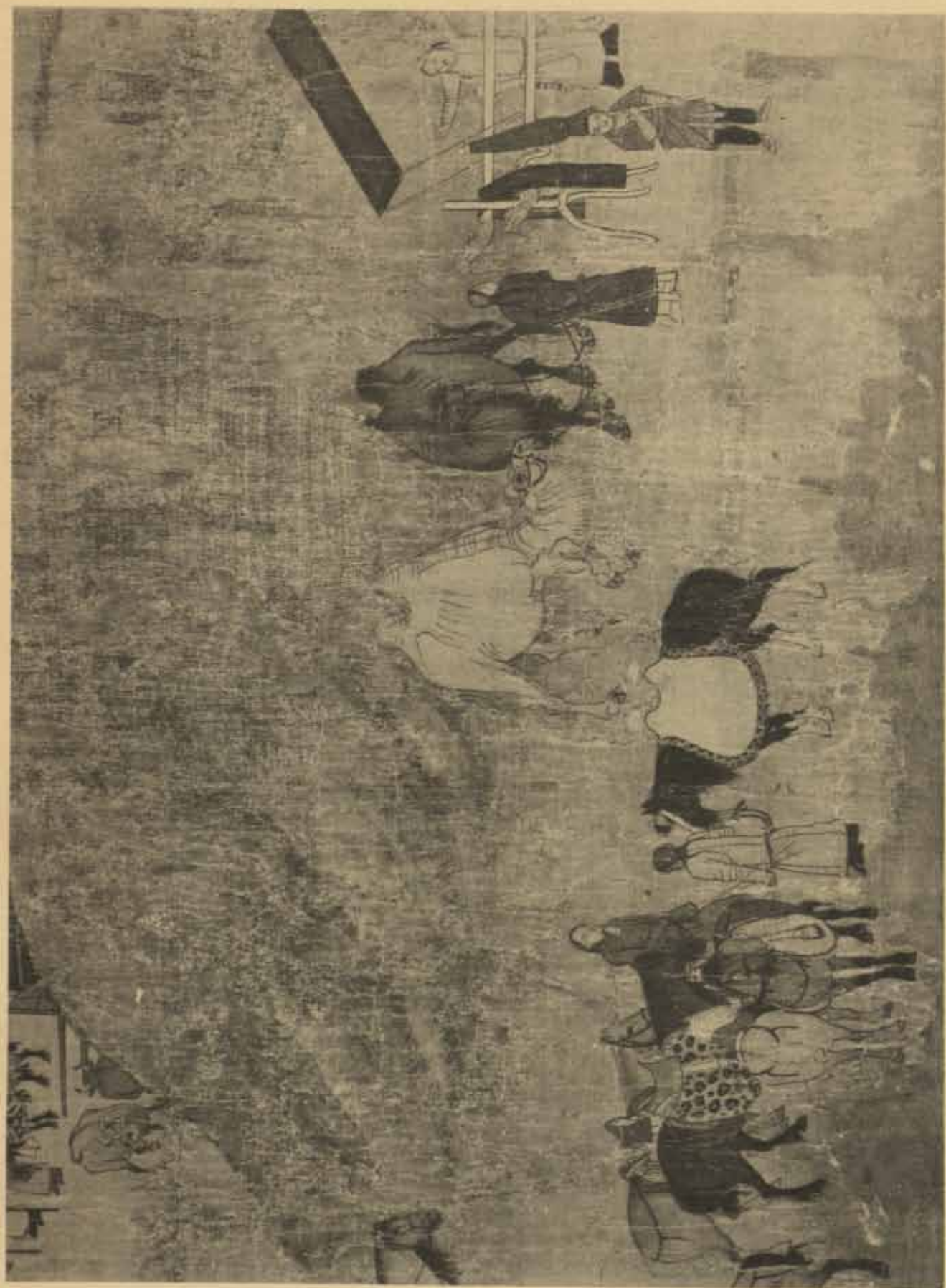
Hu Kuei, attributed to. Barbarian Horseman. Boston Museum.



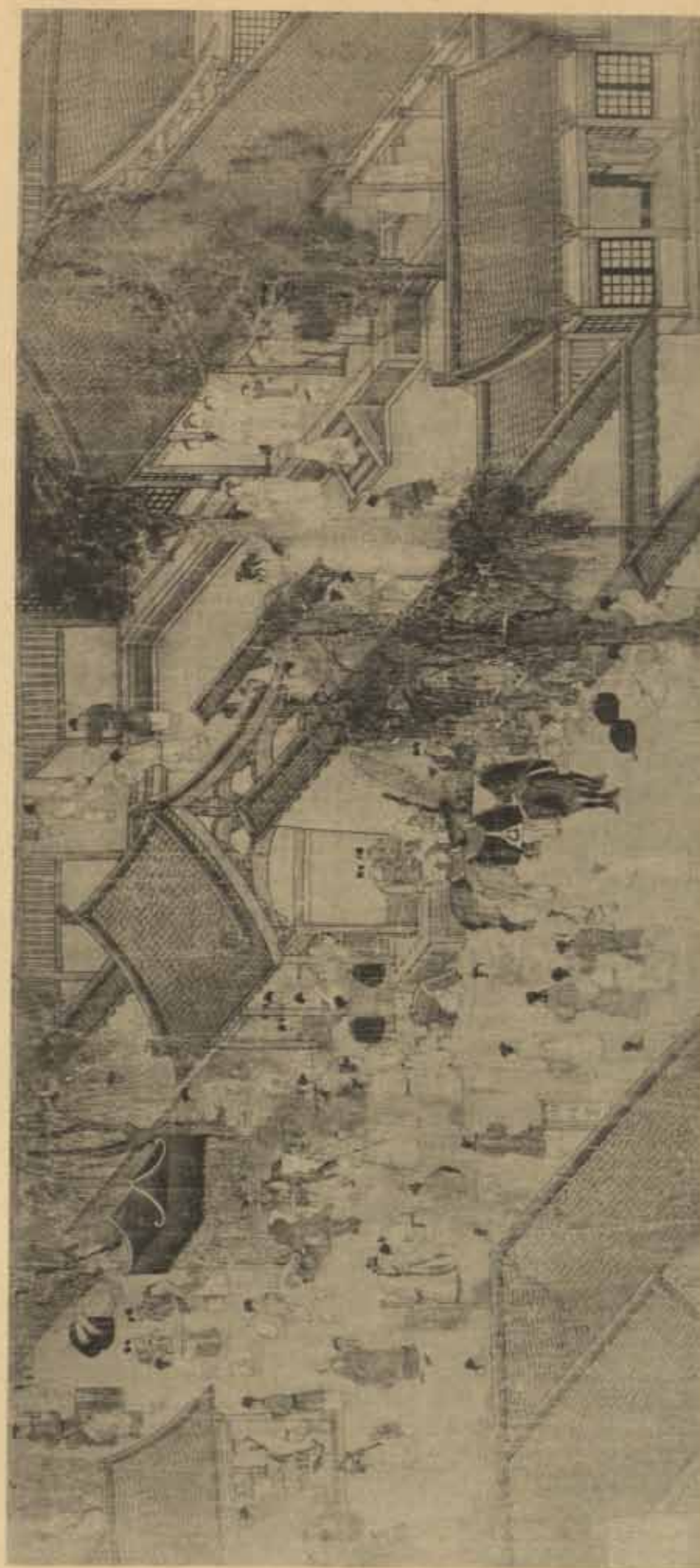
Parts of Scroll illustrating Lady Wench'chi's life in Mongolia. Boston Museum.



A Mongolian Camp. Part of the Wenchhi scroll. Boston Museum.



Horses and Camels. Part of the Wen-chi scroll. Boston Museum.



Wen-chi's Return to her home in China Boston Museum.



Ching Hao, attributed to. Mountain landscape. Freer Gallery. Washington.



Kuan T'ung, Mountain Landscape with a Ferry. Palace Museum, Peiping.



Li Ch'eng, Travellers on Snowy Hills, Boston Museum.



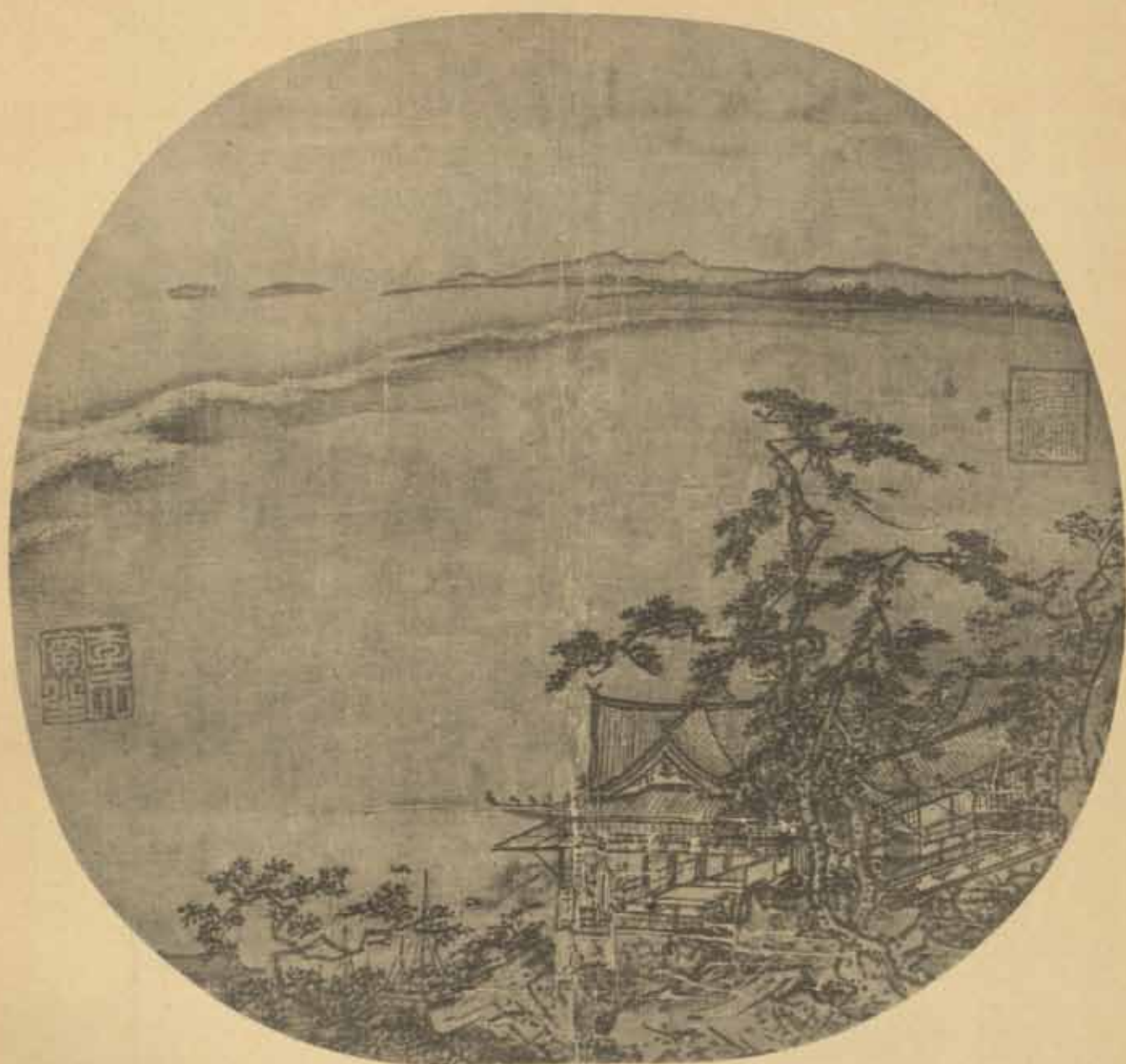
Hsü Tao-ning, Mountain Pass in Snow. Palace Museum, Peking.



Li Ch'eng. "Reading the Stone Tablet". Mr. F. Abe. Sumiyoshi.



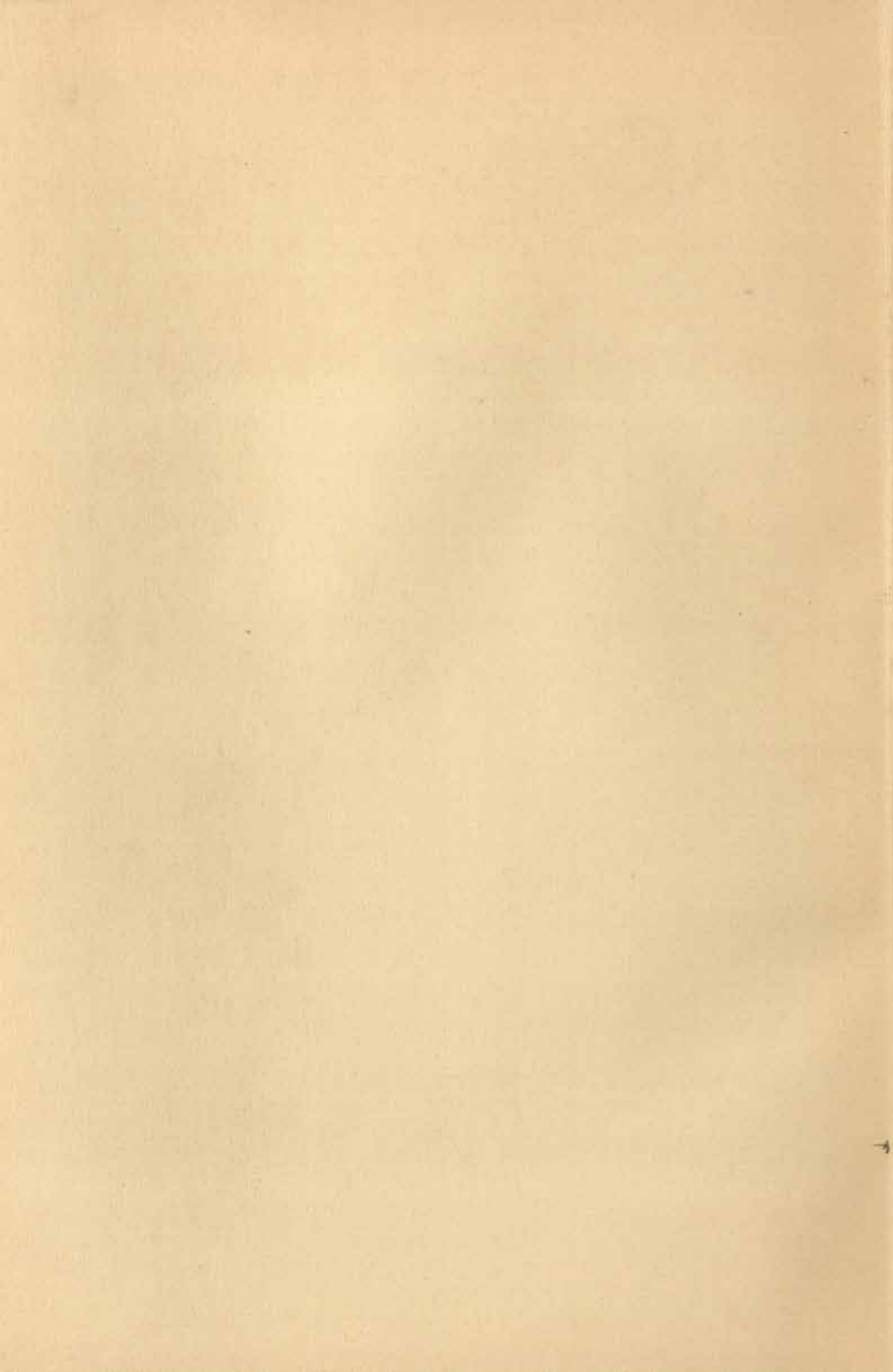
Hsü Tao-ning, Mountain landscape, Mr. Wang Hung-yüan. Peiping.



Hsü Tao-ning (?). A Man in a Pavilion watching the Tide. Boston Museum.



Tung Yüan, Part of the scroll: "A Clear Day in the Valley." Boston Museum.





Tung Yüan, Part of the scroll: "A Clear Day in the Valley." Boston Museum.



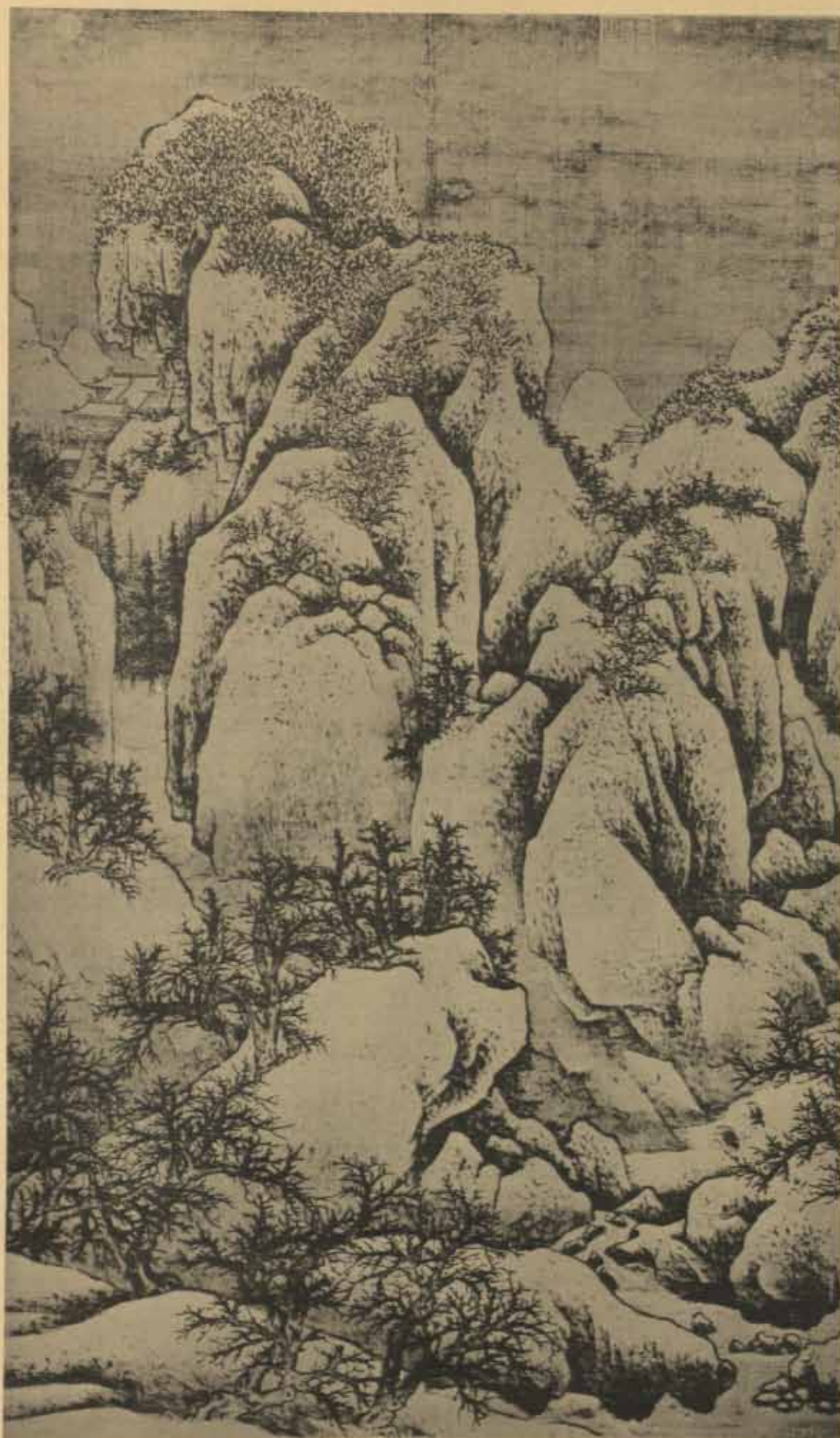
Tung Yüan, Part of the scroll: "A Clear Day in the Valley." Boston Museum.



Chū Jan, Mountain and Water. Mr. Shao Fu-hsing. Peiping.



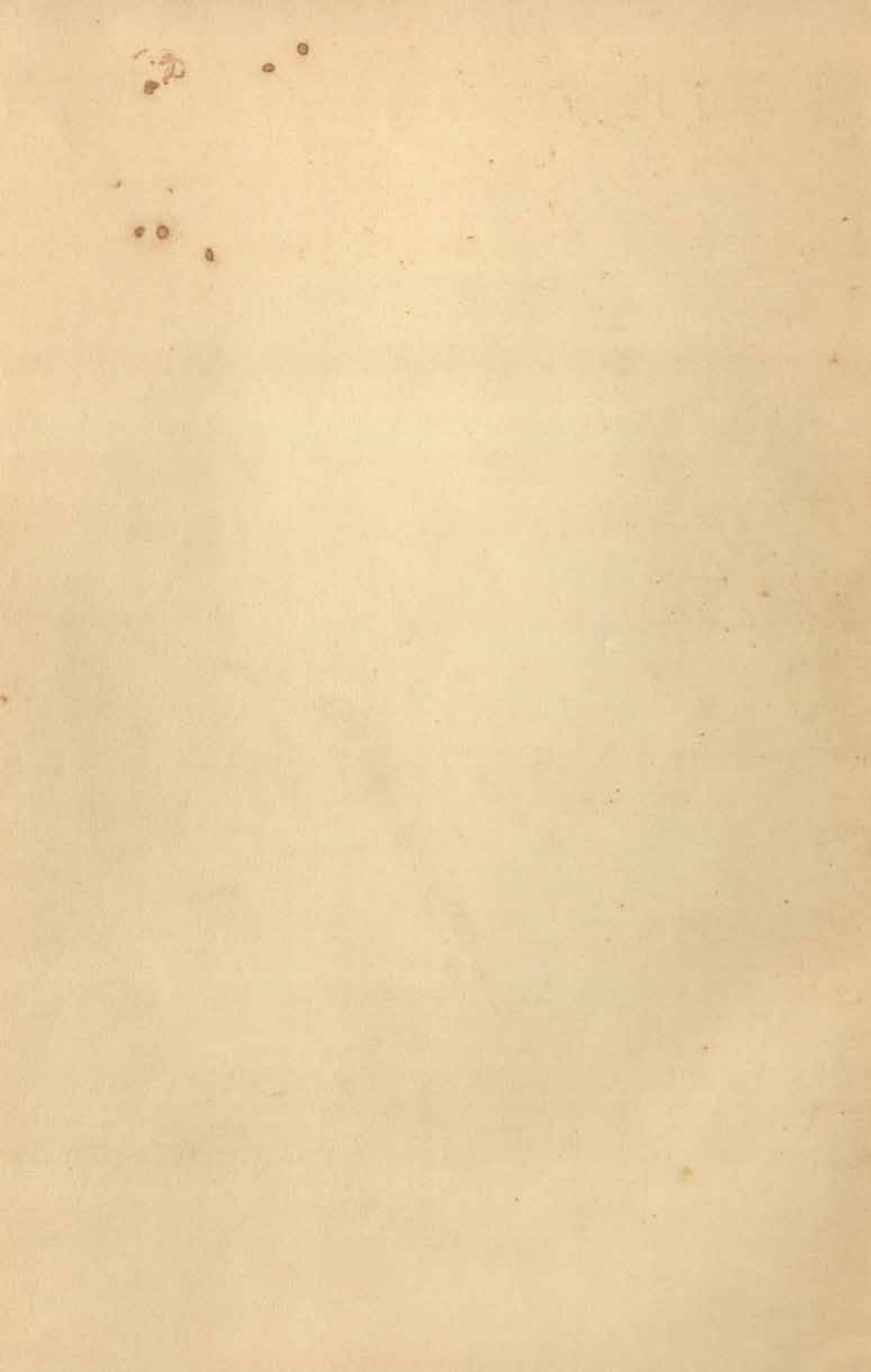
Fan K'uan, Old Trees and Snow-covered Stones. Boston Museum.

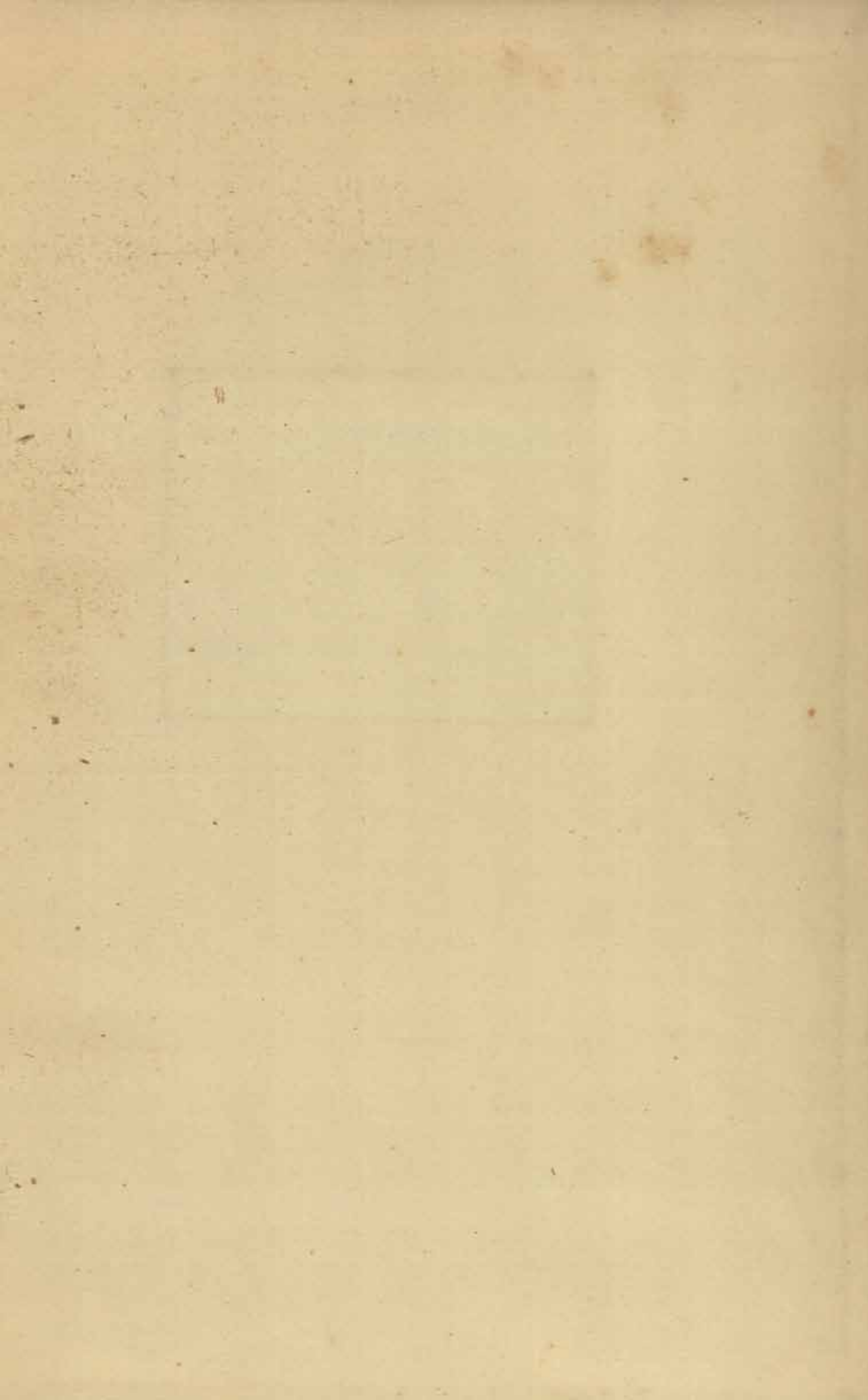


Fan K'uan, A Temple in the Gorge of Snow-covered Mountains. Palace Museum, Peiping.



Fan K'uan, Snow by the River. Boston Museum.







S. Cat
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N.C

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