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## NOTICES

### STRAY NOTES ON CHINESE PAINTING

*Occasioned by William Cohn's Monograph*

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(*With 1 plate*)

The first edition of William Cohn's *Chinese Painting* appeared in 1948, with a preface written in 1945, and has since been allotted a permanent place in art literature. The more positive of the reviews see in the book a convenient initiation into a recondite world so easily obscured by uncritical homage or an over-dose of historic zeal. Cohn's treatise is, on the whole, accepted both as matter-of-fact and as laid out with subtle understanding.

In 1950 a second edition appeared<sup>1</sup>, the text remaining almost unaltered. After five years of fast changing directions and the publication of much unknown material of the later periods, the author apparently had no intention to adjust his own opinions to interpretations which attempt to invest the styles of Yüan and post-Yüan Wen-jen art with new significance, often at the expense of hitherto sacrosanct standards. The Wildenstein Exhibition of April 1949, successfully repeated at Rome and Zurich<sup>2</sup>, brought these tendencies to a climax and led to arguments which seem to divide the modern Western connoisseurs into the Wu and Che camps of the sixteenth century. But William Cohn remains conservative, his view being that of a pioneer generation which, for the Western world, had paved the way to a first appreciation of Sung pictorial art.

It is not the purpose of these belated lines to suggest fundamental changes in a long-matured essay. However, I would like to make some comments based on the experiences of prolonged contacts with Chinese and other art lovers. In doing so I restrict myself more or less to the first eight chapters, not wishing to discuss now all the controversial problems involved in the latter part of text and plates.

Already the manner in which the author has condensed and organized his vast material shows his comprehension. Instead of beginning with an historic account, he plunges right into basic considerations, and finds in five chapters lasting answers to some of the crucial questions.

1. William Cohn, *Chinese Painting*, Phaidon Publishers Inc., London, 1950.

2. Alberto Giuganino, *Mostra di Pitture Cinesi Ming e Ch'ing*, I. s. M. E. O., Roma, April 1950; E. H. von Tscharner, *Große Chinesische Maler der Ming- und Tsing-Dynastien*, Zürich, June 1950.

What, first of all, do we know about Chinese painting? Still not too much, and thus the author pronounces stern warnings, particularly, so one would guess, to those who have not been trained under Chinese tutorship. The Chinese specialist, provided he is not personally biased, is of course the last instance for any attempt to come to more final conclusions. But he is not easily discovered. The sad experience of Otto Fischer in the China of 1925 proves how difficult it has often been for Western scholars to gain contact with the Chinese Happy Few. While in Japan Fischer was shown almost every private and public collection, he saw in China – and that by chance – just some privately owned paintings of importance. Of the then existing rich collections and their expert owners he was unable to know, and his admission to the Palace was of a casual kind, in spite of all official receptions. When reading the list of studios whose scrolls were examined by Dr. Contag in Soochow and Shanghai ten years later, one realizes what an amount of first-rate material remained, until recently, out of reach for most Western students.

To Jean-Pierre Dubosc and Victoria Contag, limited as the range of their interest may be, must be left the merit of having groped a way into the ivory towers of many a private collector, of having discussed painting with them, and of having made some of their scrolls known. To these two mainly, favoured with years of life among Chinese connoisseurs, but also to Osvald Sirén, we owe the unveiling of that Wen-jen art which has of late attracted so much attention. Dubosc with his *Pao Hui Chi* (1937), Sirén in his *History of Later Chinese Painting* (1938) and Contag with her *Six Great Ch'ing Masters* (1940) were first to publish masterpieces of the Ming and Ch'ing periods which Fischer and his contemporaries had no chance to see and judge. One only needs to recall the unfortunate copy of a Wang Yüan-ch'i motif, formerly in the Eumorfopoulos Collection (Pl. 215) which for years remained the one example supposed to represent to Western collectors the standards of a master who himself claimed his brush to be a "demon's rod." Now, after first-rate works of his have been exhibited and published, he stands out as one of China's foremost abstract painters.

Wang Chi-ch'üan's and Contag's publication of seals (1940) reveals to the newcomer the importance of knowing at least something about the wealth of such documents, no matter how often they may have been faked. Yet it seems to me that seals *plus* signature imitated on a "copy" are not signs of respect but of fraud. Both seem to have been faked with delight and ingenuity even by noted masters, as the examples of Wang Hui and of some contemporary celebrities shockingly confirm. Here the very danger is lurking; here the trained eye has to differentiate, and such discrimination is again better left to the Chinese expert, if he is at all willing to speak and not only to hide behind commonplaces or the Augur's knowing smile. Provided, also, that he possesses modern technical experience. I once observed an outstanding Chinese adept hail the collotype reproduction of a superb Shih-t'ao land-

scape, signed and sealed, duly mounted and reproduced photographically with all its marks of early damages, as an authentic chef-d'œuvre. Yet I also remember a distinguished European orientalist who would not hesitate to expertise a "T'ang" painting, but would fail when confronted with an authentic work of art whose intricate ts'ao-shu colophon, however, he could decipher without stumbling. "La nuance," one would like to demand with Verlaine, "rien que la nuance!" Philology, however, is not necessarily a sister of Muse or Grace, and a master-mind not always that of a seer.

Cohn's chapter on Technique and Form seems to me particularly successful. "The West steered towards illusionism, while the East tended towards a kind of expressionism bound by calligraphic ties"—this old truth could perhaps not be better recalled, and there are more of such terse sayings. Still, one remark may here be permitted. Is the delicate border of a Chinese painting really nothing but a "surrounding" element to heighten its decorative character? I rather think that, exactly as the plastic frame of the heavy Western panel or canvas, it is a means to isolate, to intensify. A typical Chinese composition on a hanging scroll, far more than the original Latin term would suggest, is an organism of entwined, interdependent life-lines, "dragon-veins." It is a closed composition (exceptions frequently occur, especially in Wen-jen painting), just as the multiple complex of an ideogram with its functional hooks, sinews and angles. The Chinese themselves, as referred to by Petrucci on page 33 of his translation of the "Mustard-seed Garden", quote the character for "hua," painting, ever since the *Shuo-wen* as a symbol revealing both the meaning of the brush and the limitations of a "fenced-in" compound of proportioned linear elements. An un-mounted Chinese picture looks to the Chinese eye as awkward as to the Western eye a canvas without frame.

Moreover, it *does* make a great difference "whether silk or paper serves as paint ground". Landscapes and descriptive pictures in the meticulous academic manner we would expect on silk, while the spontaneous brushwork of the Wen-jen masters called, and still calls, for the different kinds of hand-made paper with all its varieties of soft, rich and living textures. The preference some collectors show for paper has been dubbed "snobbish," but they have good reasons for their exclusive choice.

The Third Chapter is devoted to the relation of Painting and Calligraphy. It is, of course, not quite the same graph employed for "hua", painting, and "shu", calligraphy, cognate though the two graphs are. Decisive for the close connection of Chinese painting and writing is the fundamental fact that both use the same brush and, in ink-painting at least, the same color medium. Certainly, "the entire evolution of Chinese painting would have taken quite another course", if that had not been the case. Even the slip ornament on Neolithic ware of the Yellow River region betrays the use of an animal tail or a primitive hair-brush, already capable of serving a dynamic wrist to charge a line with energy, to produce that elastic "crescendo

and diminuendo" which makes the geometric décor of some painted Kansu urns so superior to that of other early painted ceramics. The modulated line has remained the very characteristic of Chinese brushwork throughout time. And, "may it not be with China, as with so many peoples, that abstract but significant ornament was the prelude to both script and painting"? About this there can be no doubt.

Behind the graphic element sways the void, as dynamic space in the construction of a two-dimensional character with its inward tension, as a "floating, boundless and immeasurable universe" for a painter's mystic sight. The very words chosen by Cohn suggest how for the Chinese visionary masters the material world could not have been an illusion, much as to the transcendent Indian mind it may be. I am not entitled to discuss the Indian and the Chinese understanding of one and the same Buddhist idea of the "void". This much, however, I dare say, that it must have been as different for two so incongruous national temperaments, as the verbal interpretation of the canonical term drawn from the original sūtras remained unaltered. At least the Chinese painter's "void", so I hold, is not "empty" in the original Buddhist sense of the word, but akin to the gold-ground of the Christian Primitive Masters. It would thus be a kind of unfathomable depth out of which the image is conjured. An apparition, however, is not an illusion, neither for him who has the power to evoke nor for the enthralled beholder. It has often been said that it was the Ch'an painters in particular who, in a state of illumination, were able to visualize in their suggestive technique, the astral qualities of matter; to see the "unreal within the real," if I may use here this surrealist expression (Pls. 111, 160). Yet the knowledge of an incorporeal essence immanent, alive and active in matter, and of the atmosphere surrounding it, is one of the conditions of all Chinese art, awake since the discovery of nephrite in the Neolithic and continuing down to the creation of an alchemic glaze of Claire-de-Lune. Buddhism, intensified in the esoteric spirituality of Ch'an, gave to this craft a new meaning and raised it in painting from the sphere of feng-shui magic into that of pure divinity. "In Claude Lorrain," Goethe said, "Nature has proclaimed herself eternal." And so, too, we add, through the brush of the great Chinese landscape masters since Wang Wei, regardless of their period and their denomination (Pl. 98).

Yet gradually, especially since the Yüan period, more and more formal, if not geometrizing interpretations of nature gained in significance, side-by-side with the surviving classical landscape traditions. Those who found new ways of expression, "*les indépendants*" as one may call the typical Wen-jen painters, had a temperamental pedigree still a thousand years older. Advanced, exquisite, some of them sophisticated to an almost insane degree, they could claim as their ancestors the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove<sup>3</sup>. Among these spiritual *frondeurs* a highly complex, bold, a really modern genius was born which found its last æsthetic realization in the

3. Cf. E. Bálazs, *Etudes Asiatiques*, 1948, pp. 35 *et seq.*

theories of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang and the Wen-jen painting of Ming and Ch'ing. Particularly interesting for a modern student would here be the styles of Ni Tsan (Pl. 148) and Huang Kung-wang (Pl. 150), the former because of its dynamic treatment of space, the latter because of its disciplined composition and its disintegrating brush-work. This art culminated in the landscapes of Wang Yüan-ch'i. In his extreme case, in Wu Li's work and in the landscapes of Chu Ta<sup>4</sup> the emotional element, never quite absent in true Chinese painting, has been de-personalized to a final degree. If some of Wang's landscapes appear as if haunted, for instance the formidable mountain scene published as Fig. 4 on page 112 of *Oriental Art*, III, 3, the oppression one feels is of a strangely impersonal kind. It is, so to say, suspended in the crystalline and roundish formations, in a network of inherent geometry which has been suffused with cold structural colors. Beyond this abstract lyricism the formal elements of nature serve Wang Yüan-ch'i and his kind as a welcome pretext, as a ready medium supplied by the traditional standards. In such imperative terms his non-representational, purely spatial and rhythmic sensations were captured without being entirely reduced to non-objective forms.

A translation of the representational into the non-objective was not worked out by individuals, as in modern Western art, but by the Chinese people as a whole. The abstract yet still somewhat descriptive images of their primordial pictographs, once the possession of a priestly cast, became in time the spiritual property of the whole people, modified and multiplied throughout generations until a kind of standardization had been achieved. In the Lesser Seal Script the geometric transformation of the ancient pictographs has been perfected, abundant in complex units which are superb in their curvilinear elegance and their balanced proportions, powerful in their thoroughly controlled strain. But although the styles of writing are now the property of all, it is only a creative interpretation which will give to any character in any style the value of an individual graphic work, significant for its own formal sake beyond any possible objective meaning. In fact, Chinese calligraphy represents the realization of that abstract geometric ideal in art for the achievement of which so many contemporary Western painters have been striving. In China it has been one of the dominant agents of all artistic creation, from the rigorous patterns of the proto-Chinese Pan-shan décor on. It is well-known that the Chinese themselves consider calligraphy as the highest, the most spiritual accomplishment in all their artistic endeavour. They rejoice as much in the characters of a trivial private letter written by a hand of genius as in the calligraphy of a grand scroll, regardless of the content. In this same sense an ode by Pindar or a cryptostanza by Mallarmé will be enjoyed by a congenial ear, intoxicated with the rolling of the mantic sounds before it cares for the intelligibility of the poem.

Paul Klee seems to have admired the Chinese script for this very reason. But how

4. A. Giuganino, *loc. cit.*, pls. 32-40; E. H. von Tscharner, *loc. cit.*, pls. 10, 11.

far are the graph-like signs and manikins of his last period, obviously stimulated by Chou characters, from a genuine archaic graph. For, to repeat this, the basic composition of the Chinese graph is not the wilful work of an individual, much as an individual artist may eventually endow it with his personality. It is, along with that of thousands of others, a creation of the collective genius of the Chinese race, conditioned in its composition by the initial build-up of the pictograph, but then, in calligraphy, reduced to abstract formal significance totally independent of its primitive meaning.

Indeed, evocation and formal discipline are the two dominating factors which in Chinese pictorial art continually conquer and complement each other, ever since the magic designs in the ornament of Shang. We here remember Braque who, in his early Cubist days, would claim to like the rule that controls emotion, but who now holds that it is rather emotion which inspires the rule. The reciprocal function of these two agents, for Chinese painting always at work, could not be better expressed.

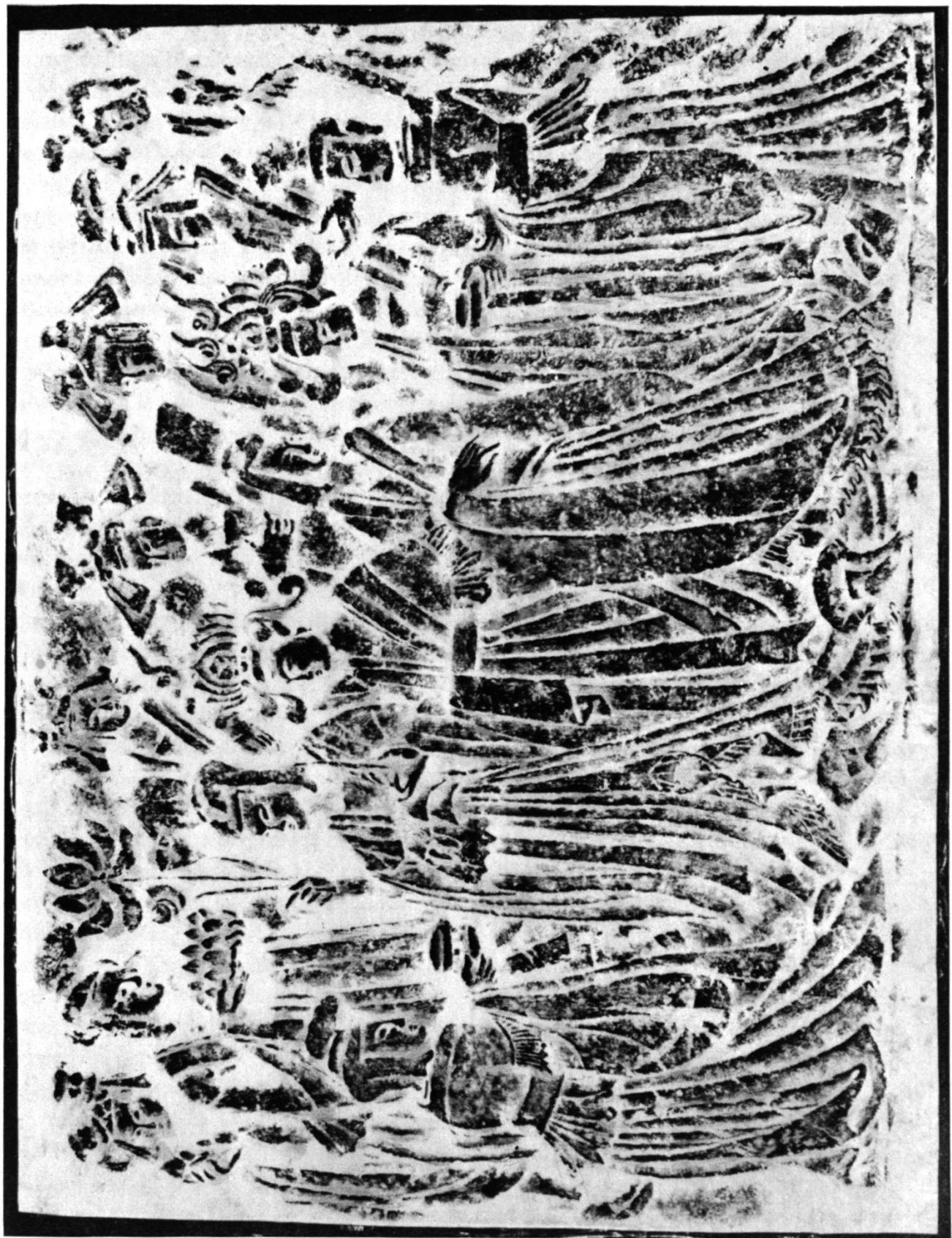
“What Painting Means to the Chinese”, is the title of the Fourth Chapter. First the sociology of the Chinese painter is discussed, “so different from that in the West”, and then a word said in defence of the Chinese Academies, whose influence can “hardly be said to have been as unfavourable as that of similar Western institutions”. The leaders of the Chinese Independents were not so optimistic, and their impassioned utterances against the Che School prove that the combat between academic and spontaneous creation knows neither time nor country. Here the revived plea for the esoteric Wen-jen School has made its new start, with a pronounced contempt for genre and sentimental poesy. Not that narrative elements or lyric tunes are altogether shunned by the Chinese masters of the l’art-pour-l’art. But for them an apparition is contradictory to mere appearance, the visionary presentation of an image the enemy of a descriptive re-presentation. The Demon’s Rod, however, a lordly furor of the brush, remains the decisive power. For this reason the Ma Yüan and Hsia Kuei Schools, especially their later derivatives, so often lauded in Japan and the West because of their poetic atmosphere, find fewer admirers among the fastidious Chinese connoisseurs. For them the appellation “Ma Hsia P’ai” has almost become a condemnation. But who, we may ask, would like to reject Ingres because of Delacroix, or sacrifice both to the schools of Post-Impressionism! A tradition has it that Ingres and his foe eventually became friends, after meeting on a staircase, while Plato is said to have kept a copy of *Lysistrata* under his pillow. Ch’iu Ying, as narrative as any descriptive artist could be, by some zealots even today called a craftsman and denounced because of his script, was admired by Wen Cheng-ming and with him chosen by posterity as one of the Four Great Ming Masters—owing to the unearthly finesse of his scenes and colored landscapes, owing also to the fairy quality of his Human Kind which, as the Chinese saying goes, was transformed from that of the Dragon Fly.

And yet, which, even of the most persuading scrolls signed "Ch'iu Ying", is unanimously accepted as genuine? It was mainly Ch'iu Ying himself who founded the Soochow workshops where the renowned "Su-chou p'ierh", silk handscrolls loved by some collectors because of their tales and their glaring colors, were multiplied right into the last century.

Chapter Five: The Subject. We agree, "the great majority of Chinese pictures that fill the art market and collections are mass-produced" or copies, and—faute de mieux—quite a number of such copies were used for illustrations by Cohn himself. Long ago the author had pointed out that, in order to build up a fairly complete history of Chinese painting, one would often have to rely on such painted reproductions. But authentic early paintings do survive, and in view of the Scholar Fu Sheng, of Liang K'ai's Li T'ai-po (Pls. 22 and 102) and other equally outstanding figure paintings I would suggest adding to the traditional series of subjects that of the Imaginary Portrait. Long before Walter Pater the Chinese knew of this idea, and in their intuitive grasp of personality seem to have reached deeper than in actual portraiture, some times deeper than any of the great Western diviners.

The following chapters offer a general survey, but here also the author's analytical interest prevails above his strictly historic approach. The Sixth Chapter, on the Formative Period, shows how a humanized painting had emerged out of a world of primitive spell. Zoomorphic symbols in symmetric array are gradually replaced by more decorative motifs, still symmetric, but elegant rather than ferociously magic. The Han style brings liberation, fore-shadowed by the local Hui-hsien School of carved (rarely painted) dancing figures, with a treatment in the full round and with free movement in the sense of a spiral axis. In the Han style frontality and symmetry, though not entirely abandoned, yield more and more to a dramatic grouping of definitely psychological character, including attempts at realistic, if not mocking, individualisation (Pl. 4). Along with this goes an increasing concern about spatial depth. It is suggested by diagonals with a circa  $45^{\circ}$  inclination, introduced sometimes on both sides of a composition, as if to indicate the convergence of vanishing lines in crude anticipation of a central perspective. In three-quarter views of heads and figures, and in their torsional movement, the relations of a solid body with the surrounding space are fairly well mastered. All this is discussed and illustrated. But one would have liked to see included an illustration of the Noin Ula Landscape<sup>5</sup>, not only because it is a landscape in the pure Han style and "the earliest one we know", but also as a timeless Chinese work which, with its archaic symmetry, its fantastic proportions and its enchanted atmosphere leads from the age of mythic bondage (which for China never ceased to exist) right into the sphere of contemporary Chinese folk art where kindred designs occur, rendered with the same sense of naive grandeur.

5. Cf. *A Commemorative Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Chinese Art, London 1936*, Plate 145.



Part of the Procession of the Wei Empress, an inked squeeze taken from a bas-relief formerly at Lung-men in Honan. Northern Wei, first quarter of the Sixth Century after Christ. The original relief, partly restored, is now in the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art in Kansas City.

**Chapter Seven : First Developments.** I have always felt that the art of Wei is „Chinese” only in a wide sense of the word and ought to be given special consideration. In my opinion it shows the fascinating spectacle of how the primeval vitality of mongoloid nomads from the Gobi and the Steppe gradually surrenders to Buddhist spirituality and to the eternal Chinese force of form. Under such impacts the stern and yet so exuberant Wei style grew and matured. The achievements of the Toba rulers in monumental architecture are known from the Sung-shan Pagoda and from the reports of the *Lo-yang Chieh-lan Chi*; much of the greatness of the age and its terrible lords from the mural Processions of the Pin-yang Cave at Lung-men (Fig. 6). Would it not have been better to reproduce the Wei empress and her retinue from an inked squeeze, instead of from the grand stone rendering? The pictorial freedom of the group and its rhythmic sway, liberated from the weighty rock setting and seen against the white void of the paper, would then show up to full advantage. Our illustration is taken from the best of several sets of rubbings made more than twenty years ago under the supervision of Mr. Laurence Sickman and the writer of these notes. This paper rubbing, especially, as it recaptures the lofty fresco quality of a preexisting design, justifies a comparison with Piero della Francesca's Queen of Sheba which has been suggested. Representing the majestic genius of Wei, the Procession says more to a student of Toba history than any statistical account. Rather what William Blake must have had in mind when he pronounced that it is God who provides for the Lion, and that the Wrath of the Lion is the Wisdom of God!

A different world is portrayed in the family group of Ku K'ai-chih's famous Admonitions (Color Pl. 1). It is that of the Chinese patriarch which, in the moralizing motifs of a manual for young ladies might appear insipid to the Western taste, were it not for the tremendous interpretation. Thus we are led beyond the code of the instructress into a sphere of adamant rite and lofty obligation. The compositional as well as the perspective problems of the scroll are mastered with skill and inventive cunning, but what impresses us above all is its form, its awe-inspiring atmosphere. Cohn stresses “the noble accord of the contours, the restrained dignity of the figures, their exalted expression”, and we agree that here the essence of some Confucian ideals has been visualized as nowhere else in Chinese art. Yet, so one may ask, why should Ku K'ai-chih (assuming that he actually is the author) have been “experimenting” with a landscape which is magnificent (badly reproduced in Fig. 3), perhaps the most impressive part of the entire scroll. Here, indeed, lingers on a sovereign disregard for size and realistic proportion which is so apparent in certain Han compositions – the Second Sight of legend and dream.

Added to these scarce documents should be the paintings on the Tamamushi Shrine, as its Chinese origin is now almost generally accepted. The linear composition of the Jâtaka scenes, the calligraphically stylized rocks, the airy bamboo, according to Wang Shih-hsiang the earliest bamboo in Chinese painting, and the Bod-

hisattvas, dematerialized to a celestial degree, own singular significance. They are the tokens of a last archaic refinement attained before the advent of new formal forces rising with the growth of T'ang.

T'ang painting is treated in Chapter Eight. Of special importance here are the pictures illustrated on Plates 22 to 24, as they are authentic, while parts of Yen Li-pen's Emperor Scroll (Plates 18, 19; Fig. 9) seem to betray the brush of the copyist.

When discussing the "spiritual portrait" of Fu Sheng (Pl. 22), Cohn mentions the peculiar pose of the sage which, with its regard for the demands of the flat picture area, seems to be quite modern. The bench-table, of an ancient type known to Ku K'ai-chih and the Han masters, is not only reproduced with perfect technical understanding, but laid out along the old 45° diagonal, with a slightly reversed perspective of the top which presses it fan-like to the picture surface. Equally forced into the two-dimensional area is the tilted-up mat, and, most of all, the bending figure himself, strained in spiral torsion and yet spread into the picture plane. The gauze gown, the out-stretched withered arms and the S-curves of the manuscript complete a composition which is both bold and endowed with enigmatic significance. This is indeed the work of a "revolutionary master, such as Wang Wei was known to be"—how wise to bring it next to the soberly posed Amoghavajra by Li Chen (Pl. 23)!

In this latter painting, also, the construction of the dais confirms the date. It is of pure T'ang design, as we know from pieces of a related kind surviving in the Shōsōin, and it is drawn with a cabinet-maker's knowledge of the joinery. The devices of the composite uprights and the apron design were later forgotten in China (though not in Japan), while the frame-and-panel device of the top with its mitre-joints has survived in Chinese cabinet-making throughout three thousand years.

In fact, some technical knowledge of carpenter styles and architectural devices is of help in identifying, if not the actual date of a painting, so at least the period of the style it represents. A faithful copy, or the inked squeeze from an early stone engraving, may still correctly render technical details. The platform of Wu Tao-tzu's Confucius (Fig. 12), that of the Collating Scholars (Pl. 21) and those of the Emperor Scroll (Pl. 18) indicate the same T'ang construction represented on Li Chen's Pu K'ung (Pl. 23). The dais of Vimalakīrti (Pl. 54), on the other hand, suggests a Sung device, possibly one of the Northern period. The architecture of the Palace, originally attributed to Li Ssu-hsün (Fig. 10), betrays a late style, probably that of Yüan or Ming. Another Palace (Fig. 11) attributed to Li Chao-tao, has a genuine Sung character down to the brackets and to other details, while again the design of a temple supposed to be by Hsü Tao-ning (Pl. 39) repeats a common Ch'ing cliché. The elastic roof type, cantilever-balanced, low-pitched and with far protruding eaves, reveals a dynamic style of architecture which disappeared in China after the

catastrophe of 845<sup>6</sup>, while surviving at Nara to the present day. It appears in the roof and the paintings of the Tamamushi Shrine and in many a Tun-huang composition (Fig. 23), but is later on misunderstood or forgotten. It is the only type of roof a genuine T'ang painting or an early tracing would show.

The Horse Bound to a Stake (Pl. 24) I examined while it was still in Lord P'u Ju's Collection. I am inclined to follow the judgment of Chinese experts who see in this demonic creature not only an outstanding example of T'ang painting, but definitely a work by Han Kan. Of particular interest here is the stylised shadowing of the skin folds, perhaps an instance of the puzzling "broken-ink" (*p'o-mo*) device. These pleat-like folds correspond with the misinterpreted skin-folds of the Kuan Hsiu type Lohans (Pls. 29, 30) and the clumsy drapery folds of some figures of the Emperor Scroll. In the Sung copy of the Collating Scholars, otherwise so delicately traced and rendered, this typically early device has already disappeared.

With the chapter on T'ang painting my random comments have come to an end. It is particularly the rest of Cohn's book which has aroused criticism and oral opposition. Perhaps due to such stimulation several new studies of the subject are now in the making. Whether they will have the last word remains to be seen. All lovers of Chinese art, however, will agree with William Cohn that Chinese Painting is "the most refined realization of Chinese creative power".

6. When, by imperial decree, 4600 Buddhist temples were destroyed – cf. L. C. Goodrich, *A Short History of the Chinese People*, New York 1943, p. 126.

## BÜCHERBESPRECHUNGEN · COMPTES RENDUS

H. W. BAILEY, *Khotanese Buddhist Texts*. Cambridge Oriental Series No. 3. Published on behalf of the Faculty of Oriental Languages. Editor Prof. G. HALOUN. 157 pages, 8<sup>vo</sup>. London, Taylor's Foreign Press, 1951.

Die hier erstmals publizierten Texte aus Khotan aus dem 8.–10. Jahrhundert, die vor über vierzig Jahren von M. A. Stein und P. Pelliot nach Europa gebracht wurden, sind von hohem Wert einmal für die Sprachwissenschaft, zeigen sie doch jene von Ernst Leumann erschlossene Sprachform des Sakischen, dessen genealogische Stellung längere Zeit umstritten war, denn es handelte sich um die Frage, ob wir es hier mit einem dem indischen und dem iranischen Zweig gleichgeordneten Idiom («Nordarisch») zu tun haben, oder mit einem iranischen Dialekt, der allerdings stark mit indischem Wortmaterial durchsetzt ist, was sich aus dem Charakter der Texte unschwer erklärt. Sodann aber sind diese Handschriftenfunde von größter Wichtigkeit für die Geschichte der Ausbreitung des Buddhismus in Zentralasien,