

of which is spotted, has long sleeves, and reaches below the waist. His head is covered by a mushroom hat put above a skull-cap and tied under the chin by scarlet bands. On his back is seen a bundle of manuscript rolls tied in a cover and slung by a chain to a thorny branch. The attachment of this branch to the hermit's person is not clear; but in another picture of the same subject a pole supporting the bundle is shown as carried on his right shoulder.

On the further side of the old man there advances a tiger of disproportionately small size. Both figures stand on a cloud of dark red fire, and above them in the left top corner appears a small seated Buddha, also on a cloud. The paint used for the cloud scrolls has destroyed much of the paper, and of the figure too, where it was used on it. The only other colours are grey and a light pink, distributed over the clothing and figure, while the flesh is left uncoloured. The drawing of the hermit's figure is done with masterly skill, especially in the features, to which impressive strength is imparted by a few lines combining firmness with great freedom.

Very different in character is the picture on the left (Ch. 00150), one of the very few non-Buddhistic paintings from the 'Thousand Buddhas'. Its subject has not been determined with certainty, but may possibly be related to the story of how the Emperor Fu-hsi, the legendary founder of the Chinese polity, first received the system of written characters from a 'horse-dragon'.⁶⁹

Before the kneeling monster we see standing a bearded man, with smiling face, who holds tablet and brush in his hands in the act of writing. The back of his figure has been cut off when adapting the picture as a mount for the two woodcuts under which it was discovered. He is clad in a white-sleeved under-robe, long pink mantle, and a stiff black head-dress with a square ornament stuck in front. A branching column of flame rises from the tablet. Others stream from the dragon's head and body.

The dragon is a composite monster. The head is of a conventional lion-like type, with voluminous upstanding mane, out of which rise three sharp-pointed objects resembling mountain peaks. The body suggests that of a scaly snake, with wings of curling feathers attached and with the forelegs of a bull (?). In the foreground lies a string of square-holed Chinese coins, an emblem the meaning of which at present escapes us. The whole is drawn with much vigour and, in spite of the fearsome appearance of the monster, with a distinct touch of humour.

PLATES XXXIV, XXXV

EMBROIDERY PICTURE OF ŚĀKYAMUNI ON THE VULTURE PEAK

THE large hanging in silk embroidery (Ch. 00260), to which the small scale, one-tenth, and certain photographic difficulties do not allow full justice to be done in this reproduction, is by its size—the perfectly preserved central figure is close upon life-size—by its remarkably skilful execution, and by its fine colours one of the most impressive of the pictorial remains recovered. That it represents Śākyamuni on Gṛdhra-kūṭa, the 'Vulture Peak', famous in Buddhist legend and situated near Rājagṛha, the present Rājgir, is conclusively proved by the rocks behind the Buddha's figure in the centre.

This fine, if hieratically stiff, figure, as I have already had occasion to point out,⁷⁰ when discussing the statues shown by the pictures in Plates XIII and XIV, in every detail of its pose and dress reproduces a specific type, fixed originally by some Indian sculptural representation.⁷¹ But if its iconographic characteristics are determined by long hieratic tradition, it is different with the setting it has found here. In the whole composition of our picture

⁶⁹ Cf. Mayers, *The Chinese Reader's Manual*, p. 48.

⁷⁰ See above, pp. 25, 27.

⁷¹ For full details of the iconographic evidence I may refer to *Serindia*, pp. 878 sqq.