

Tungus (4). On the other hand the western Hu belonged to a race of people of whom Chinese texts speak as barbarians of the north and northwest : Hiung-nus. Cahun believes the latter to be neither a nation nor a tribe, but that the Chinese used this expression for all foreign peoples to the north of the Huang-ho (5). According to recent discoveries they were a mixture of Tungus and Mongols, the Mongol element dominating (6). The Hiung-nu came into contact with the Chinese in the III century B.C. At first they were welcome allies against the Yue-chi, whom Franke considers Tungus, perhaps identical to the Jung (7). According to Grousset the Yue-chi were of uncertain race, but he believes they were Indo-Europeans related to the Scythians (8). Towards the middle of the II century B.C., the Hiung-nu made decisive victories. They chased the Yue-chi forever from the Chinese frontier. Part of their uncontested domain lay inside of the Great Wall. Already in the Han dynasty there are transitions in the peasant life of the Chinese of the hunting and pastoral life of the barbarians. This fact constitutes the basis of a hybrid art.

Towards 125 B.C. new conquerors in appeared Mongolia, the Sien-pi, a Mongol tribe (9). The question of race now lost all importance for the peoples of the Steppes, just as did, later, the question of religion. Behind these moving ethnical groups constantly reinforced by new waves risen from the immense territory of Eurasia, appeared one sole motive force, the instinct of rape. Even in the VIII century A.D. the Turkish Bilgä Khan had inscribed on the monument erected to his honour : " Because the Turks were hungry they went to other countries " (10). The Chinese Empire easily managed to withstand these hordes just so long as they did not become too strong. They engaged them and payed them as mercenaries, sent them against interior and exterior enemies, but also one against the other. Cahun always maintains that these nations of horsemen lacked all cultural inheritance. He grants them a certain importance, but only as a violent intermediary between the two big centres at the beginning of our era, between Persia on the west and China on the east (11). This author's statements, however, do not concern art.

After the Han dynasty, the Chinese and the barbarians become more closely connected. Once again it was the Hiung-nu who approached nearest to the centre of civilization (12). The northwest of the Chinese frontier belonged to them, while the Sien-pi held the northeast. One can find the same dissolution and the same disorder in the two groups as reigned in China after the period of the Han, due to frequent changes in dynasty. Such circumstances must have favoured hybridism.

In the IV century A.D. there appeared on China's horizon a race of horsemen, a people whose hearth should be sought for in the north of central Asia, probably in the Altai. These were the Turks. One of their tribes, the T'o-pa,