

founded in 436 a Chinese dynasty in the north of the Empire. It appears that this dynasty kept little of its native art elements (13). This dynasty also had to defend itself against the hordes we believe to be Mongol, and among whom the Juan-juan or Avars were the most important.

Finally in the VI century the Turks flowed in a body towards the Chinese frontier. It is not known when they left their primeval home, but they remembered it as long as they lived in the east. For this reason it was the forests that seemed to them the most propitious. "Grow strong in the forests of the mountain", this is what we constantly find on inscriptions discovered in Mongolia (14). Later Marco Polo relates that all the great Khans and all the descendants of Cingis were carried into the Altai to be buried (15).

The Empire of the Turks, at first including all the east of the circle of the Steppes, was already in the VI century divided into eastern and western sections. The latter region was particularly important for the formation of a mixed Turco-Chinese art, not only because it bordered China, but above all because it included ancient Siberian centres of metal production around the Jenissei, Lake Baikal, and the Selenga. Several of these centres, especially in the vicinity of Minnusinsk were at that time in the hands of the Kirgises, who, however, were entirely assimilated by the Turks. Since they were the link between southern Siberia and northern China, the eastern Turks may be considered as the creators of many of the works of art reproduced here. They had not only been recognised in Chinese texts ever since the VI century, but they themselves left authentic documents. The Turkish inscriptions from the Jenissei, although by the Kirgises, belong to the VII century (16). The monuments of the river Orkhon date from the years 731 and 733 (17). At this period the empire of the eastern Turks was already dependent on China and in 741 was destroyed by another Turkish tribe, the Uigurs (18), who for a long time had inhabited Turkestan, that is, to the south of the circle of the Steppes. There they most certainly attained a much higher culture than that of their northern kin. It is probably because of this that Chavannes wrote that the gold plaques (which, however, belong for the most part half a century earlier), were the work of the Uigurs (19).

In 840 the Kirgises took the place of the Turks as neighbours of the Chinese (20). In the X century began the success of the K'itan, a Mongol tribe (21), who for a certain time managed to secure the northern section of China.

A Tangut tribe, the Si-hia, founded a barbarian state in the province of Shen-si in 1032 (22). We shall speak later on of their writing which allows us a possibility of dating their monuments. Towards 1120, the K'itan gave way to the Tungus, the Ju-chen (23), who, coming from the northwest, probably brought with them but little civilization and but few artistic forms. Finally in the XII century came the advance of the Mongols. In the second half of