

The first metal group from Minussinsk which contains forms which are also found at the Chinese frontier is that of Plate III line III called by Teplouchoff that of "Kara-Suk". He dates it about 1000 B.C. Tallgren has later mentioned that this date appears too early (6). If we allow a margin of a half millennium, we reach approximately the same date for the Kara-Suk civilization as for the beginning of Scythian art, the oldest art around the Black Sea. We might then give the same reason for the retardation experienced at the Chinese frontier of elements coming from the west as was undergone at Minussinsk, that is the use of objects for burial ceremonials and for schamanism, uses for which conditions had changed or disappeared in the regions where these forms were created.

Teplouchoff calls the next Minussinsk civilization that of the Kurgans. He divides it into three periods which correspond to Plate III, line IV, 1-3. He gives no date to the first group of which there are numerous parallels in the art of our region. Characteristics of the two following groups are often repeated at the Chinese frontier. The Russian author dates them "middle of the I millennium B.C.". It is only in the third Kurgan group that we find the use of iron supposed to have been brought by the Huns. Teplouchoff continues this period until the I century A.D. Von Merhart gives the same date to this civilization (7), but he calls it by another name, that of "separate tombs with stone slabs". As is shown by Plate IV, line V-VII, 1, this period is followed by groups, poor in artistic form, that have no connection with the Chinese frontier. According to Teplouchoff, after the III or IV centuries the Minussinsk basin is occupied by the Kirghise. In the VI century their place is taken by the Turks. The Kirghise are there again in the VIII-X centuries, but they are, however, kin to the Turks who are the stronger tribe. Plate IV line VII, 2, gives us a good idea of their burial paraphernalia. There are many objects, reliquias of which are frequent at the Chinese frontier, reliquias that cannot possibly be dated earlier than their models. It is in this same period that we should place the stone documents of the Jenissei and of the Orkhon, although their artistic contribution is of little importance.

b) The Western Steppe.

From different artistic and cultural centres of the Steppes, influences went not only to the east but to the west. The astonishing similarity that is found in extreme sections of the Steppes has often been noticed. Sometimes objects from the west can be connected with historical events, as for instance, the famous occupation of land by the Hungarians, which took place in 896 (8). This is one more reason, although slight and isolated, for the existence of Eurasiatic forms after the Han epoch.

c) The Si-hias.

We have included some objects bearing Si-hia inscriptions only recently deciphered. Mr. Baruch has very courteously allowed me to insert here his study on Si-hia and K'i-tan writings.