

8½ in. In each division was a group of figures standing under a tree. Some of these were ladies with attendant pages, others were dancers and musicians. Pl. CV gives a hint of the grouping, and the plan on p. 655 shows the proportions of the complete panel, though it must be said that the upper part of the tree may possibly not belong to the palm-like stem below, but to a similar tree in another panel. The more the fragments are studied, the more one is driven to the conclusion that the painting was of considerable extent, and that pieces which at first sight seemed to belong to the same group are not really connected. For instance, it was tempting to find a place for the scarlet skirt on Pl. CVI in the group under the palm, but, for one thing, the edge of skirt showing in that group has a pattern of three white spots, not four. Such a pattern occurs on the red sleeve of the page at the right-hand side of Pl. CVI; but he stands under a spray of fruit blossom, and must belong to a different panel. Similar dresses, it is obvious, were repeated in the different groups.

'Of the three fragments of green foliage, two appear to belong to the same tree; the third is different, perhaps mulberry.^{10a} This presumes two panels; the palm gives a third, and there was at least one panel, if not more, with a blossoming fruit-tree (peach or almond?). The bamboo-like stem behind the head of the lady in the centre of Pl. CVI suggests a fifth panel. The whole would seem to have pictured a musical festival in honour of spring.'

Links with
early relics
of Japanese
painting.

Mr. Binyon next proceeds to point out those features of detail and general style which link our fragments with 'some of the most ancient relics of Japanese pictorial art. The lady and page under the palm recall by their grouping, attitude, and expression the famous portrait of Prince Shōtoku and his two sons, in the collection of the Imperial Household.'¹¹ There is close resemblance also in details of the page's dress, such as the ornamentation of the robe with little spots arranged in a lozenge pattern. A still more remarkable parallel is offered by the panels of a screen preserved in the Shōsōin, on each of which is painted a beautiful woman standing or sitting under a tree.^{11a}

'But not only is the plan the same: the type of woman shows the same ideal of beauty—the T'ang ideal of full, rounded cheeks, small mouth with full, red lips, and rather massive figure—portrayed with same conventions, such as the two or three lines indicating the curves of the throat; and there is a remarkable similarity in the heavily heaped-up coiffure, with a big knot in front over the forehead. In both pictures we notice the same fashion of painting spots of colour on forehead and cheek. The Japanese painting was no doubt closely modelled on a T'ang prototype, even more closely, perhaps, than has hitherto been supposed. How interesting to find, far away on the other side of China, this confirming evidence! In the secular painting of this period, we infer, there was a common ideal of style which pervaded China from east to west and imposed itself even outside the Empire, and in the Astāna fragments we have a genuine echo of the central school of Chinese painting as it was in the early eighth century.'

Mr. Binyon's inference as to the common ideal of style pervading Chinese secular painting of this period is fully borne out by the fact that two pictorial relics, less elaborate in design and of simpler execution, which Mr. Tachibana recovered in the course of his Turfān excavations and which Count Otani has published,^{11b} exhibit a similar character in subject and treatment. One of them bears a date corresponding to A. D. 716. The Japanese paintings referred to by Mr. Binyon may likewise be safely ascribed to the early part of the eighth century, the screen with the panels of 'Beauties under the Trees' certainly dating from before 748, when the dedication of the Shōsōin treasures took place.

^{10a} 'We owe the suggested identifications of leaves and blossom to Dr. A. B. Rendle, Keeper of the Department of Botany in the British Museum.'

¹¹ See *The Kokka*, No. 147; *Fenollosa, Epochs, &c.*, i. p. 52.

^{11a} See *The Kokka*, No. 226; *Shōsōin Catalogue*, Pl. III.

^{11b} Mr. Binyon refers for these finds to Count Otani's publication in *Sai-iki Kōko Zufu* (1915), with Japanese text by Professor Sawamura.