

Even if the definite documentary evidence to be presently noticed were not available, we should be justified in attributing our painting to the same period of production on the ground of the archaeological indications furnished by certain of its details. The musical instrument played by a girl in the fragment (Ast. iii. 4. 010. e) on the right of Pl. CVI closely resembles in shape the type of the *genkan* which the *Shōsōin Catalogue* (i. Plates 41, 57) illustrates from specimens actually to be found in the great collection deposited by the Empress Kōken in A. D. 748. Similarly, the decorated wooden pedestal or stand, with carved arches below the top, a piece of which appears in the fragment, Ast. iii. 4. 010. b, seen at the bottom of the panel on the left in the sketch, p. 655, has its counterpart among the objects illustrated in the *Shōsōin Catalogue* (iii. Plate 147). The fact that the same ornamentation is also found on the fragments of the wooden pedestal iii. 4. 021, 028-33, 062 (Pl. C), and on the miniature model of such a stand, iii. 4. 052-4 (Pl. XCIV), deserves to be specially noted; for it supports the view that the painting is a work of the period during which the burial itself took place. Finally we find, in the attire and coiffure of the ladies, points of contact with figures from this and other Astāna tombs which can be confidently assigned to early T'ang times. They are, perhaps, less marked in the coiffures than in the dress of the ladies. This, with its narrow long sleeves, stole thrown over the shoulders (iii. 4. 010. c; Pl. CVI), and high waist, also recalls the dress of donatrices in the earliest of our Ch'ien-fo-tung paintings.¹² But there is a certain resemblance, too, in the mode of doing the hair with that seen on the stucco figures of women, such as Ast. i. 8. 08 (Pl. CI); iii. 2. 022 (Pl. XCIX), though the topknot, in the case of the ladies shown by our painting, appears to be brought forward in peculiar fashion. However this may be, attention should be called to the striking similarity between the ladies' coiffure here and that worn by the figure of the Chinese lady which in the fine Ch'ien-fo-tung painting, Ch. lvii. 002, represents a soul being guided by Avalokiteśvara to heaven.¹³

No sepulchral inscription could be found at the tomb which had yielded the remains of the remarkable painting just discussed, nor at any other of the tombs comprised in this group iii. The absence here as well as at other tombs of an inscriptional record such as might have furnished the exact date of the burial is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that the slabs of hard brick used for such inscriptions are nowadays prized locally as flooring material. It is therefore particularly fortunate that there were found in tomb iii. 4 close on two dozen crumpled-up Chinese papers, some complete, which judging from observations made in other tombs¹⁴ must have been used to prop up and secure the body as it lay in the coffin. Among these 'waste papers' of iii. 4, which had been thrown out when the body was dragged away for closer search near the entrance and the coffin itself broken up for removal of its timber, not less than eight have proved to be exactly dated, and these enable us to fix the time of this burial with a close approach to accuracy. According to the information which Dr. Lionel Giles supplied to me after a preliminary inspection of these papers and before they were transmitted to M. Maspero for examination, five fairly large ones are official records dated in the first year of *Shên-lung*, corresponding to A. D. 705. Three others, among them a deed for the lease of a piece of land, bear dates corresponding to the years 690, 693, and 709. From the evidence supplied by these dated papers we may safely conclude that the burial took place during the first quarter of the eighth century or very soon after, and this conclusion is

Archaeo-
logical
indications
of date.

Dated
documents
from tomb
Ast. iii. 4.

¹² Cf. the ladies' dresses in *Th. Buddhas*, Pl. X, XI (Ch. liii. 001; Ch. xlvii. 001; *Serindia*, ii. pp. 1049, 1056); Pl. XXXV (Ch. 00260; *Serindia*, ii. p. 984); also in the stucco figures Ast. iii. 2. 022; iii. 4. 064 (Pl. XCIX. A), described above.

¹³ See *Serindia*, ii. p. 1081; iv. Pl. LXXI. This curious

similarity of head-dress may well suggest the question whether the difference in general style which distinguishes this fine picture from other representations of Bodhisattvas among the Ch'ien-fo-tung paintings may after all be due to some reason other than late origin, as there assumed.

¹⁴ See below, p. 653.