

## III

## CHINESE CHARACTERS ON FIGURED SILKS

L. C. 03.

(See above, i. p. 246; Pl. XXXV.)

昌樂

'Resplendent joy.'

L. C. 07. a.

(See above, i. p. 247; Pl. XXXIV.)

韓仁繡文宏吉子孫無亟

'May this decorative pattern of Han Jên bring great good fortune to his descendants  
(for generations) without end.'

M. L. Aourousseau has discussed this sentence at some length in the *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 1920, Pt. 4, p. 175, and reads it thus:—

韓仁繡又(?)宏吉子孫萬世

'Broderie de Han Jen . . . grand bonheur (à vos) enfants (et) petits enfants (jusqu'à) dix mille générations.'

韓, of course, is a surname, so that 仁 can hardly be anything but the personal name (名). At first I was inclined to take 仁繡 together as forming a rather more likely name; but, on the other hand, the fourth character is almost certainly 文, which gives exactly the meaning required in combination with 繡. As M. Aourousseau points out, 宏 stands probably for 宏 'great'. The last two characters are the most perplexing, and 萬世 seems to be only a rather wild guess, in order to make the sense obviously needed, without much regard for their actual shape. In the reading which I offer, 亟 would stand for 極, the character being written without its radical, like 宏 above. According to K'ang Hsi, the two forms are interchangeable. 無極 is a very common locution, of which no fewer than twenty-one examples are given in the *P'ei wên yün fu*. My reading as a whole is supported by the nature of the design on the brocade, consisting as it does of six auspicious animals displayed on a background into which certain birds and other objects of good augury are worked.

[The sixth character in the sentence (which is not very accurately reproduced in Mr. Andrews's article in the *Burlington Magazine* for July–September, 1920) is so doubtful that I am tempted to suggest the alternative reading 宏 (or possibly 法) 者. The meaning then might be: 'May Han Jên-hsiu and Wên Kung-chê have

period of twenty-five days were exempted from the *tiao* tax, and those who served for thirty days were exempted from both *tsu* and *tiao*.'

The corresponding passage in *Chiu t'ang shu*, ch. xlviii, f. 3, differs in a few details. The laws dealing with land are assigned to the year 624, and the term 世業 (i.e. 永業) is explained as land which after the owner's death descended to his heir, whereas 口分 was land that reverted to the State and might be allotted to some other individual. The *tiao* tax is said to have consisted of '20-ft. rolls of *ling*, *chüan*, or *shih*, or a quantity of hempen cloth greater by one-fifth. Those who paid in these silken fabrics also contributed 3 ounces of floss silk; those who paid in cloth contributed 3 catties of raw hemp.' Finally, the period of extra service exempting one from the *tiao* tax is given as fifteen instead of

twenty-five days.

<sup>7</sup> Lan-ch'i Hsien still exists under the same name.

<sup>8</sup> 12 September–11 October, 706. The mark inserted before the date may be an abbreviation of 斤兩 'catties and ounces', together with a numeral, indicating the weight of the *luan*. After 年 comes another mark which I cannot identify, and at the end the character 緒, of doubtful meaning in this connexion, is written with the same brush.

There are four red seals on this piece, each 5.5 cm. square. The first contains four characters, of which only the last two (之印 'seal of . . .') are decipherable. The second appears to consist of eight characters, the last two again being 之印. The third seal may be a repetition of the second, but the fourth is quite illegible.