

recalls Japanese art at its best. Far away in the background the mountains of Meru, the range representing the Himalaya in Indian mythology, and appropriately assigned to the 'King of the Northern Region,' close the scene. The whole bears the impress of a master hand, and could hold its own in any collection of Far Eastern art.

The silk paintings which represent scenes in Buddhist heavens are particularly numerous; but as most of them are large and crowded with figures, it is difficult to reproduce them adequately here. They usually show a Buddha as their central figure seated on a lotus platform, with an elaborate structure resembling the terraced gardens which often adjoin Chinese temples, and surrounded by a host of saints and heavenly attendants. Two or more Bodhisattvas, distinguished by larger size and more lavish adornment, are seated by his side or symmetrically enthroned in separate pavilions. On a series of elegantly decorated terraces below we see crowds of haloed figures representing Arhats or saints enjoying the divine presence, and the scene is rendered festive by the dancing which gracefully whirling girls perform to the music produced by Gandharvis and other celestial entertainers. Lotus-filled tanks are often shown between the terraces; and in the background architectural vistas, sometimes of considerable beauty, provide an appropriate setting to the amenities of this heavenly revel.

It is difficult, without protracted research, to ascertain which of the various heavens known to Buddhist mythological fancy is intended in each picture. Nor does it much matter from the artistic point of view or that of the student of religion. Whether it is Sukhavati, the heaven far away in the extreme west of the world, or Maitreya's paradise where dying Hsüan-tsang fondly hoped to be re-born, it is clear that what the pious donors and painters of these pictures looked forward to as the final goal of bliss was a very human paradise not lacking the good things of this world. However remote this conception is from the true Nirvana, the Enlightened One's real goal, we may appreciate the air of dignified repose and enjoyment which all these scenes breathe. Their architectural