

originally developed in Indian Buddhist art or shows transformation by Chinese art. The larger Bodhisattva paintings can again be subdivided by purely iconographic features. A third group, well defined both in iconographic character and in style, is formed by the pictures of Lokapālas and Dharmapālas (Vajrapāṇis), which among all divine attendants of Buddhist mythology have attained most popularity in Chinese worship.

In the second category, that of paintings showing whole groups of celestial figures and mostly of larger size, we shall first review those in which assemblages and processions of divinities are represented. From them we shall turn to the sumptuous and artistically important compositions which bring before our eyes scenes of Buddhist Heavens, especially the Western Paradise or *Sukhāvātī* of Amitābha Buddha, with its abundance of heavenly personages and rich display of quasi-mundane pleasures. There will still remain for examination a group of miscellaneous pictures, mostly drawings, comprising also a few non-Buddhist subjects, sketches for paintings or frescoes, designs of the human figure or of magic purport, and the like. Finally we shall have to devote a brief notice to the woodcuts, most of them provided with text or votive inscriptions and affording proof of the considerable development which the art of wood-cutting had attained in China at a relatively early period.

SECTION II.—TIME AND *MILIEU* OF PRODUCTION

In the preceding section I have fully explained the reasons which render it partly unnecessary and partly impossible for me to attempt here any discussion of such general questions of Buddhist iconography and art as are raised by our collection of pictures from the Thousand Buddhas. For them I must refer the student to those portions of the full memoir planned by M. Petrucci, which M. Chavannes' kind help has succeeded in preparing for publication,¹ to the essay contributed below by Mr. Binyon's competent pen,² and to the succinct but stimulating account in which M. Petrucci in 1914 had summed up for a wider public the main results of his study of our paintings.³ Before, however, proceeding on the lines above sketched out to a concise survey of the pictorial remains, it is desirable that we should acquaint ourselves with the main facts at present ascertainable about the time and local *milieu* in which the paintings, etc., were produced; about the purpose they were intended to serve, and about the materials and technique used for them.

As regards the dates and origin of the pictures we receive exact and relatively ample guidance from the inscriptions which are preserved on a number of them. As M. Petrucci has exhaustively treated these in his chapter on the Donors,^{3a} it is easy briefly to note here the essential facts. The inscriptions, which are all in Chinese and of a votive character, show dates ranging from A. D. 864 to 983. The latter date closely approaches the commencement of the eleventh century, at which time we must assume the chapel to have been walled up.⁴ But that there may be among the paintings some older ones also seems *a priori* very probable. This is suggested by the analogy of the dates in many of the Chinese manuscripts from the same deposit which reach back centuries earlier.⁵ It must be remembered also that among the larger paintings just those which, judging from their superior style and execution, appear to belong to an earlier period have often suffered considerable damage, and in consequence have lost their bottom portions together with the inscriptions which they are likely to have borne.⁶

General questions of Buddhist iconography.

Dates of inscribed paintings.

¹ See below, Appendix *E*; for the publication in the *Mémoires concernant l'Asie orientale*, planned by MM. Petrucci and Chavannes, cf. above, p. 835.

² See below, Appendix *E*, IV.

³ Cf. *Annales du Musée Guimet*, tome xli (Conférences faites au Musée Guimet en 1914), R. Petrucci, *Les peintures*

bouddhiques de Touen-houang (*Mission Stein*), pp. 115-40, Figs. I-II.

^{3a} See below, Appendix *E*, II.

⁴ Cf. above, pp. 820, 827.

⁵ See above, p. 821; below, pp. 917 sq.

⁶ See, e.g., Pl. LVI, LVII, LIX, LXIII, LXXI.