

the background show much skill in conveying a sense of great width and distance. In the pair Ch. xlix. 006; lv. 0016 the workmanship is equally delicate and the colouring very pleasing; but the banners have suffered more damage.³⁵ The third pair, Ch. lv. 0011, 0012, though not as fine in colours, is remarkable for life-like and expressive drawing of figures, and once again demonstrates a high degree of artistic feeling in the landscapes.³⁶ The two banners Ch. xlvi. 004, 005 are specimens of poor composition and hasty design, but claim at least the merit of having their cartouches duly filled with inscriptions which explain the badly-drawn scenes. Concluding this rapid survey, we may note that it leaves us with only a few banners for which companion pieces are wanting. Among them Ch. 0071 may be specially named here for the very careful colouring of the figures, well set-off by the harmoniously blended quiet tints of the landscape.³⁷

After these remarks on the style and grouping of the banners we may proceed to review the subjects represented in their scenes. No attempt can be made here systematically to discuss the iconography of these subjects with reference to other graphic and plastic representations of the same, whether known to us from India, Central Asia, or the Far East. Still less does it come within my scope to compare their iconography with the descriptions which texts belonging to various periods and branches of Buddhist literature furnish of the corresponding incidents in Śākyamuni's life-story. All that can be aimed at is a classification of the scenes and some record of general observations bearing upon their presentation and character.

Subjects represented in scenes.

In the first place attention may be called to the fact that, just as in the case of the corresponding plastic representations of the Gandhāra relievos, it is usual for our banners to display the different scenes, whatever their choice may be, in chronological order.³⁸ That this order usually descends from the top towards the bottom is a natural consequence of the shape of the banners and the manner in which they were suspended. But we have evidence that this rule was not strictly observed in all cases.³⁹ It is probable that the chronological sequence was ordinarily followed also where a group of banners was meant to illustrate a longer series of scenes.⁴⁰ But, of course, there is nothing definitely to indicate whether an arrangement of such banners from right to left or left to right was intended.⁴¹

Order of scenes.

When we come to analyse the range of the scenes represented in our banners we meet with an interesting fact at the outset. In a rough total of seventy-three panels, complete or partly preserved, on these banners, among them ten with scenes as yet unidentified, there are only four to be found the subjects of which fall outside the limits as it were of Gautama Buddha's secular life, as marked by the Conception on the one side and the Attainment of Bodhi on the other. The exceptions are the

Scenes from Gautama's secular life prevail.

³⁵ Reproduced in colour, *Thousand B.*, Pl. XII.

³⁶ For Ch. lv. 0012, see Pl. LXXV; for Ch. lv. 0011, *Desert Cathay*, ii. Pl. VI.

³⁷ For Ch. 0071, see *Thousand B.*, Pl. XII; for Ch. 0030, below, Pl. LXXVI.

Ch. xlix. 005, of inferior workmanship, may possibly have belonged to the same group as Ch. xxvi. a. 003, 004; xxvii. 001 (see the representation of soldiers in scale armour; also the flower device in seraglio scene). But the *indicia* are not quite certain.

³⁸ Cf. Foucher, *L'art du Gandhāra*, i. pp. 267 sq.

³⁹ For undoubted exceptions, see Ch. lv. 009, Pl. LXXIV, where the panel representing three out of the 'Four Encounters' is inserted between the scenes of the Dīpaṅkara Jātaka and Māyā's Dream, and Ch. xxvii. 001, Pl. LXXVII, where the Announcement of the Illumination appears above the Austerities and the Bath in the Nairāñjanā. Here the

order is clearly determined by artistic considerations. For possible exceptions Ch. xlvi. 004 and xlix. 006, *Thousand B.*, Pl. XII may be compared. The Gandhāra relievo with vertically arranged scenes, *L'art du Gandhāra*, i. p. 268, fig. 74, furnishes a corresponding instance.

⁴⁰ Such a regular sequence is certainly observed in the groups Ch. 0039 > xxii. 008 > 0035 > xx. 008; xxvi. a. 004 > xxvi. a. 003 > xxvii. 001; lv. 009 > lv. 0010; lv. 0011 > lv. 0012. In other groups there may be slight deviations.

⁴¹ The analogy of the vertical lines of Chinese characters in our old documents and manuscripts would suggest the order from right to left as the usual one. But, no doubt, the place of exhibition had a determinant influence, as was certainly the case with the horizontally ranged relievo panels in Gandhāra sanctuaries (cf. Foucher, *L'art du Gandhāra*, i. p. 268) and those of Yün-kang (cf. Chavannes, *Mission archéologique*, Planches, I, Nos. 204-14; i. p. 305).