

## CHAPTER XXIV

### TEXTILE REMAINS AND MANUSCRIPTS FROM CH'EN-FO-TUNG

#### SECTION I.—DECORATED TEXTILE RELICS: THEIR MATERIAL, USE, AND TECHNIQUE

AMONG the art remains recovered from the walled-up chapel of the Thousand Buddhas by far the most important, both in number and interest, after paintings, drawings, and prints, are the decorated textiles. Almost all in silk, they offer a wealth of novel materials for the study of the history of ornament and technique as developed in Chinese textile art. Their interest is greatly increased by the fact that they also throw light on its relations with the textile products of Central Asia and the Near East. In view of the importance they may claim it seems desirable to supplement the detailed accounts of individual objects, which Mr. Andrews and Miss Lorimer have furnished in the Descriptive List, by a brief general synopsis of these fabrics with regard to their material, their original use, and the methods and styles of their decoration. It is a task which can be undertaken here only with obvious limitations as regards knowledge, scope, and space, and I should hesitate to attempt it were it not for the hope that, cursory as my review must be, it may help to draw the attention of competent experts to the varied materials contained in this portion of the collection and to facilitate their use for future researches.

Number  
and interest  
of decorated  
textiles.

But before proceeding to this review it will be convenient to single out for separate notice two relics, which, if their technique classes them as textiles, yet in artistic character attach themselves most closely to the paintings discussed in the preceding chapter. I mean, in the first place, the large hanging in silk embroidery, Ch. 00260 (Plate CIV), showing Śākyamuni on the Vulture Peak, to which on account of its subject reference has been made above.<sup>1</sup> Both by its size—the perfectly preserved central figure is practically life-size—and by the remarkably careful execution, it is one of the most impressive of the pictorial remains recovered. We have had occasion to prove that the fine, if hieratically stiff, figure of the Buddha in every detail of its pose and dress reproduces a specific type, fixed originally by some Indian sculptural representation of Śākyamuni on Gṛdhra-kūṭa, and preserved with equal fidelity also in the statues which the paintings Ch. xxii. 0023 and Ch. 0059 are intended to show us.<sup>2</sup> To the evidence for this interesting iconographic fact it is unnecessary to recur here in detail. The only difference is that in our embroidery picture we see the Buddha standing between a pair of richly-dressed Bodhisattvas and two monkish disciples. While the former are almost completely preserved, the figures of the latter, having fallen along the line of folding while the hanging was stored away and crushed for long centuries, are perished except for remains of the finely drawn heads. The aged appearance of the shaven disciple on the right points to Kāśyapa being intended.

Embroidery  
picture of  
Śākyamuni  
on Gṛdhra-  
kūṭa.

Though the features of the Bodhisattvas' heads betoken the influence of Chinese style, a certain simplicity and stiffness in the design of these attendant figures clearly point to their being still

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 851, 878.

<sup>2</sup> See Pl. LXX and *Thousand B.*, Pl. XIII, respectively.  
Cf. above, pp. 878 sq.