

Donors' costume indicates early date.

in close touch with Indian models communicated through Central Asia. This, combined with the unmistakably preserved Indian character of the Buddha's type, is apt to create a presumption in favour of a relatively early date of this embroidery picture. But it is only on turning to the figures of the donors below, and noting certain peculiarities of style in accessory features above, that definite support for this belief is forthcoming. A look at the donors, four men kneeling on the right and four ladies on the left, both with an attendant standing behind,<sup>3</sup> is enough to prove that the dress in each case—leaving apart the monk's figure in the men's group—is in closest agreement with that worn by the donors in the two paintings of Amitābha's Paradise, Ch. xlvii. 001, liii. 001. For these a series of closely concordant indications have led us above to postulate a date that cannot be later than the eighth century, but may possibly be even somewhat earlier.<sup>4</sup> Here we find again the same small peaked and tailed caps and long belted coats of the men and, in the costume and coiffure of the ladies, the same characteristic bodices with close-fitting sleeves and the plain small top-knots of the hair. Considering the larger number of donors here represented and the uniformity of these significant features in their appearance, all the evidence must in the case of the embroidery appear even more convincing.

Affinity to paintings in accessory details.

In accessory details, too, there is a close contact between the embroiderer's work and the above-mentioned two paintings, Ch. xlvii. 001; liii. 001, proving that they must belong to the same period and were probably produced under the influence of the same pictorial school. On the sides of the canopy in all three we see the identical pair of graceful Apsaras figures floating downwards, borne by cloud scrolls and their billowing stoles, in an attitude not found elsewhere among our paintings. In the dress of the Bodhisattvas we may note as a common peculiarity the same brocade-like decoration of the edges of the lower robes. Peculiar, too, to the three pictures are the plain sage-green lotus seed-beds on which the divine figures stand or sit. There is little doubt that closer examination of the originals would reveal other common characteristics of the school.<sup>5</sup> Whatever the exact date of production may be, there seems to be no reason to doubt that this embroidery picture must rank with the oldest of our Ch'ien-fo-tung paintings. The needlework in satin stitch is of the finest, showing exceptional care, and to this the picture owes the remarkable freshness of its colour effects and the excellent preservation of all parts that remain.

Other hanging in silk embroidery.

For the second silk embroidered hanging, Ch. 00100,<sup>5a</sup> which calls for notice here, a relatively early date seems also indicated by the internal evidence of its present condition. The extant hanging is clearly a patchwork made up of pieces which must have once belonged to a larger composition, and which had suffered considerable damage, evidently through age, before they were joined up in the very irregular and mechanical fashion which Plate CV illustrates. In the centre we have four narrow strips, worked in close chain-stitch, each showing vertical rows of two small seated Buddhas and intended to make up a diaper such as we find plentifully in the painted wall-decoration of Buddhist shrines from Khotan to Tun-huang, and also in the relievo decoration of the caves of Yün-kang and Lung-mên. In each strip we find pieces sewn together which originally must have occupied a different position but belonged to the same decorative hanging. That undoubtedly was the case also with the fragmentary side-scenes found in the outer strip sewn on to the right. Here the groups, each consisting of a larger figure followed by two or three attendants

<sup>3</sup> See, for the latter figures, also the larger reproduction from Ch. 00260 in *Thousand B.*, Pl. XXXV.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 885.

<sup>5</sup> Thus, e. g., my attention is called by Mr. Andrews to the use made both in Ch. 00260 and Ch. liii. 001 of small conventional cinque-foiled rosettes for filling empty spaces and marking in the latter the centres of lotus leaves.

It must be left for others to ascertain what chronological indication, if any, can be derived from the figures of the two lions shown seated at the Buddha's feet. The attitude of the left one curiously recalls that of the T'ang sculpture at Lung-mên (seventh–eighth century), seen in Chavannes, *Mission archéologique*, Planches I, No. 306.

<sup>5a</sup> See Pl. CV.