

and advancing under an umbrella, are treated in a purely Chinese style. The preservation of these side-scenes is too imperfect to permit of a determination of their subject. But it may be noted that the style of dress is different from, and looks older than, that seen either in the donor figures or in the side-scenes of any of our paintings. The peculiar caps represented in these groups recall the head-dress seen on the donors in the relievos of Kung-hsien which seem to be of early T'ang times, if not older, and may be compared also with that shown by a relieveo of A. D. 525 in M. Chavannes' great publication.⁶

Turning now to the textile remains, which form the proper subject of our review here, we may note in the first place that their material is almost exclusively silk. Among the very few linen pieces only the painted canopy Ch. 00381 deserves, perhaps, passing mention. The absolute predominance of silk among these textile relics, otherwise so varied, is certainly significant. It clearly proves an abundant supply of this material in the Tun-huang region during the centuries preceding the walling-up of the cave. Considering that silk is not an indigenous product of Tun-huang nor to any appreciable extent manufactured in the wide regions of Kan-su, it seems reasonable to connect this abundance of silk remains with the fact that Tun-huang lay on the main, if not sole, route by which trade from the silk-growing provinces of China has passed at all times into Central Asia and to the West.

Predominance of silk material.

Leaving the different methods of ornamenting these silk materials for comment further on, I may point out here that among the textile remains of the cave there are also many specimens of undecorated silks. They had been put to use mainly in making up banners and their varied accessories, and are plentiful also among the small votive offerings to be mentioned presently.⁷ Regarding the technique of weave shown by the Ch'ien-fo-tung fabrics Mr. Andrews has furnished the following illuminating notes:

Technique of undecorated silks.

NOTES ON THE TECHNIQUE OF TEXTILE FABRICS FROM CH'EN-FO-TUNG BY F. H. ANDREWS

The textile remains from Ch'ien-fo-tung include examples of the usual hand-loom fabrics corresponding with those made at the present time, and may be classified as plain cloths, cords, ribs or repps, twills, sateens, gauzes and tapestries, with a wealth of figured or decorated materials described under the general designations of damasks, polychrome figured fabrics, and brocades. The technicalities of weaving are extremely complicated. But in the following notes descriptions have been limited to essential features and the multiplicity of names given by weavers, etc., to fancy fabrics has been avoided.

The simplest form of weaving, technically known as 'plain cloth', consists of two sets of threads at right angles to each other, interweaving alternately, one set of vertical threads, the 'warp', being stretched on the loom, while the other of horizontal threads, the 'weft', is carried by a shuttle forwards and backwards across the warp, interweaving as it goes. A large number of our specimens are of this structure, in some instances producing an amazingly fine fabric in which the silk threads employed are so thin and the weaving so close that the surface texture is almost invisible.

'Plain cloths.'

When the warp threads are thick and the weft thin, the latter bend round the former and produce a ribbed surface running lengthwise in the fabric, which is then called a 'cord', exemplified in Ch. 00118, Pl. CXI, and excellently illustrated by the grass mat, Ch. 00311, Pl. XLIX. The rich quality given to a finely woven plain silk fabric of this kind is seen in the top vandyke of each of the pendent streamers of the valance on Pl. CIX. When the cord is formed across the fabric by the weft being thicker than the warp, it is called a 'rib' or 'repp'.

'Cords' and 'Repps.'

The most valuable of all weaves from the designer's point of view is the 'twill', which enables the weaver to produce an unbroken surface of colour while retaining sufficient strength in the structure, and by the use of coloured wefts or warp to produce the most elaborate designs in polychrome. The principle of the 'twill' weave is that, instead of alternate threads of warp and

'Twill' weave.

⁶ See Chavannes, *Mission archéologique*, Planches, I, Nos. 407, 408, 414, for the relievos of the Kung-hsien cave-shrines; and *ibid.* No. 433 for the stèle of A. D. 525.

It is probably a result of the great age of this hanging that the haloed heads of some of the small seated Buddhas have become detached after the extant patchwork was pieced up; for one of these heads now missing in Ch. 00100, see

Ch. 00450. c.

It is possible that the small but exquisitely worked embroidery in chain-stitch, Ch. iv. 002, representing a standing Buddha figure (see Pl. CVI), is but a remnant of this sort from some hanging of a similar character.

⁷ Cf. for specimens, e. g., Ch. 00237, 00253-8, 00314-15, 0320-6, 00433-6, etc.