

art in the Far East are many and often intricate. It is hence particularly fortunate that a considerable number of these paintings, on account of their explanatory inscriptions or for other reasons, have been made the subject of expert investigations by MM. Petrucci and Chavannes. But the results, which were to be published partly in M. Petrucci's Appendix and partly in their joint volume in the *Mémoires concernant l'Asie Orientale*, are not at present accessible to me.<sup>1</sup> These considerations will explain the brevity of the general observations to be offered here, and will help to excuse also if points of interest are passed over or perhaps wrongly interpreted. On the other hand, I hope that the very careful and detailed description which Miss Lorimer has given of each individual picture will facilitate further study by specially qualified experts, like those in Japan, who may not be in a position to examine the originals.

The importance which the conception of a heaven of bliss, the 'Western Paradise' or *Sukhāvātī*,<sup>2</sup> presided over by the Buddha Amitābha has acquired in Northern Buddhism, and especially in that of China and Japan, is a fact too well known to require specially to be emphasized or attested.<sup>1a</sup> Nor are we concerned here with its origin and development. It is obvious how attractive for the Chinese mind, so intensely attached at all periods to the comforts and sensible enjoyment of the realities of life, must have been the idea of a Paradise where the souls of believers in the Law may be reborn, free from all taint, in the buds of its lotus-lake to enjoy thereafter for aeons, or in popular belief for ever, blissful rest and pleasures in the company of a host of celestial beings.<sup>1b</sup> The representations of Amitābha's Paradise of the West which abound in Japanese Buddhist painting are believed to be all derived, directly or indirectly, from a Chinese original introduced in the eighth century and still extant in the Tāima-ji temple.<sup>2</sup> M. Petrucci has also pointed out that this early prototype exhibits the very arrangement, characteristic, as we shall see, of the great majority of our paintings of Amitābha's Paradise, showing the *Sukhāvātī* scene in the middle, and on either side of it, in marginal bands, a succession of small scenes illustrating episodes of the legend of Ajātaśatru and Bimbisāra connected with Śākyamuni's life. The same arrangement is also found equally well defined in certain of the Ch'ien-fo-tung wall-paintings.<sup>3</sup>

'Western  
Paradise'  
of Buddha  
Amitābha.

It is clear that this identical rule of composition points to the scheme having been fully established long before any of these representations were produced, and its conformity in all details with the text of the *Amitāyurdhyāna-sūtra*, upon which all the scenes evidently are based,<sup>4</sup> supports the same conclusion. That the preceding development of the scheme took place at least partly in Central-Asian Buddhist art suggests itself *a priori* as probable. But if we are not as yet in a position actually to trace it in that region,<sup>5</sup> there is instead an important piece of literary evidence which M. Petrucci quotes from the *Li tai ming hua chi*. According to this text a *Sukhāvātī* fresco was painted in the eastern capital of the Sui dynasty by the Khotanese painter Wei-ch'ih Po-chih-na, who had been drawn to the Imperial court in the period A. D. 605-17.<sup>6</sup>

Central-  
Asian  
development  
of scheme.

<sup>1</sup> [But see now Petrucci, *Essai sur les Maṇḍalas*, in Appendix E, III.]

<sup>1a</sup> Cf. e.g. Grünwedel, *Mythologie des Buddhismus*, pp. 115 sqq.; Eitel, *Handbook of Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 6 sq.; Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 233 sqq.

<sup>1b</sup> For an interesting and vivid presentation of Chinese popular notions on the subject, cf. the legend quoted from Schott's translation (1846) by Grünwedel, *Mythologie des Buddhismus*, pp. 116 sqq.; Yule, *Marco Polo*, i. p. 460.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Petrucci, *Annales du Musée Guimet*, xli. p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 930. <sup>4</sup> See below, p. 886, note 15.

<sup>5</sup> All *Sukhāvātī* representations that have so far been clearly identified among Turkestan wall-paintings (cf. Grün-

wedel, *Altbuddh. Kultstätten*, Index, s.v. *Sukhāvātī* for references) seem all to belong to Turfan shrines of the Uigur period, the decorations of which manifestly reflect strong local influence of contemporary Chinese Buddhist art.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Petrucci, *Annales du Musée Guimet*, xli. p. 126. Regarding the *Li tai ming hua chi*, a history of Chinese art, composed in the ninth century by Chang Yen-yüan, cf. Hirth, *Fremde Einflüsse in der chines. Kunst*, p. 35. It is Professor Hirth's special merit to have first drawn attention to the significant part played in the history of Chinese art by Wei-ch'ih Po-chih-na and his still more famous son, Wei-ch'ih I-sêng; cf. *Fremde Einflüsse*, pp. 34-47; *Scraps from a Collector's Notebook*, pp. 64, 70 sqq. For the name