

Drawings
of mystic
poses, etc.

seem to credit with the power of saving children from illness.⁵ The text of Ch. 00214 (Plate XCVIII), apparently magical, is interspersed with sketches of monsters, while fine drawings illustrate the calendrical manuscript fragment Ch. 00164 (Plate C). A third small group is of distinct iconographic interest. It comprises drawings, mostly in the form of paper scrolls, illustrating mystic poses of hands, attitudes of arms, emblems, etc., which have their significance in Buddhist symbolism, as seen in Ch. 00143 (Plate XCVIII), 00146 (Plate XCVII), 00424. In Ch. 00209 (Plate XCVI) Chinese inscriptions explain the points of beauty as shown in the human face and body and their symbolic meaning; the same is done in Ch. 00153 (Plate XCIX) for the different fingers of either hand.

Magic
diagrams or
Maṇḍalas.

A relatively large group is represented by the drawings in which we find Buddhist magic diagrams of the kind properly designated by the term *maṇḍala*.⁶ The divinities and emblems intended are sometimes indicated merely by written names, not figures, while in others explanatory inscriptions are added to the latter. The drawings thus interpreted may prove useful hereafter to the student of a branch of Buddhist lore which, however abstruse, may yet claim a certain importance from the point of view of religious symbolism and cosmology.

Sketches for
large com-
positions.

Far more interesting for the archaeologist are some paper scrolls covered with rapid sketches which are obviously designs intended for larger compositions. They allow us to catch a glimpse as it were of the manner in which those old Tun-huang masters of the brush planned out the general ordinance and rough details for their big paintings or frescoes. The sketches of the long scroll Ch. 00144 (Plate XCV, XCVII) are particularly curious because it is possible to trace a connexion between some of them and certain scenes represented either in our Ch'ien-fo-tung paintings or in frescoes still extant in the shrines.⁷ The sketch of a horse and a camel with empty saddles, led by attendants, in Ch. 00207 (Plate XCVI) is of little artistic value.⁸ But the lines of Chinese writing over which it has been drawn upside down invest it with distinct historical interest; for, as M. Chavannes has shown in the very last contribution which reached me from his indefatigable hand,⁹ they give the name and full titles of the King of Tun-huang and his queen, whose respective mounts the horse and camel were probably intended to represent as part of a larger composition. M. Chavannes' learned notes demonstrate that the facts recorded, including the date, A.D. 966, are in perfect agreement with the information regarding this chief of the Tun-huang region furnished by the Sung Annals.

Sketch with
historical
record.

Pounces
and stencils.

That a large number of the paintings and frescoes found at the Thousand Buddhas were produced with the help of pounces or stencils could be safely concluded from a variety of indications. Nevertheless it is gratifying to note that these simple aids to artistic reproduction, intended to meet devout needs *en masse*, are actually represented among our relics. Ch. 00159 (Plate XCIV) is a completely preserved pounce of strong buff paper, showing a well-designed group of Amitābha seated between Mahāsthāma and Avalokiteśvara and two haloed disciples. The way in which only one half of this modest 'Maṇḍala' is drawn in outlines, while the other half is pricked only, illustrates the convenient method by which the perfectly symmetrical arrangement characteristic of these compositions was produced. In Ch. xli. 001-004 we have four paper pounces of the same sort, each showing a seated Buddha, but with the hands in different poses. Ch. 00425 is a paper

⁵ For other frs. of illustrated Chinese manuscripts, see Ch. 00212-213, 00218.

⁶ See Ch. 00186 (Pl. CIII), which shows one of the simplest forms; 00187, 00189, *00190, 00219, 00379, 00398, 00428; xxii. 0015; lvi, 0033. With these 'Maṇḍalas' may be noted also the astrological (?) chart, Ch. 00206.

⁷ In Ch. 00208. a, b we have fragments of a scroll with similar sketches.

⁸ For another rough paper painting with camels and horses, which may possibly represent a continuation of this sketch, see Ch. 00388.

⁹ Cf. Appendix A, v. c.