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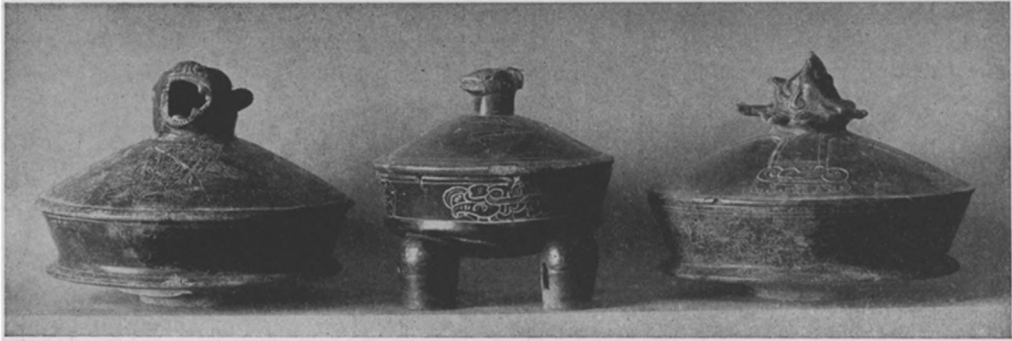


Fig. 4

of gold and gold and copper objects. Beaten masks of thin sheets of gold suggest similar Mycenæan objects. Most of the figurines were cast by the *cire perdue* method. The gold and copper bells show a variety of shapes and the figurines present a surprising ability at metal casting. As with the jades, many of the figures show the result of fire.

The skull of a peccary with a beautiful incised design and two carved shell disks show ability on other lines.

Some photographs are shown which give some idea of the buildings of this Central American culture and many of the larger stone objects still remaining in the ruins. A reproduction of the Dresden codex in this case illustrates the manuscripts found in connection with this culture.

Hanging frames show reproductions of the fresco painting on the walls of a temple in northern Yucatan. The spirited drawing of battle scenes and scenes of domestic life give still another side of this wonderful American civilization.

The exhibition will serve to show visitors ignorant of the field of American archæology that there was something in this country in pre-Columbian times worthy of the name of art.

A. M. T.

A New Chinese Marble

The first fruits of Mr. Okakura's purchases in the Orient have begun to arrive at the Museum. They are all of importance, but the only one to be put on exhibition for the next few months is a Chinese marble of the Tang Dynasty (A. D. 618–A. D. 907). It is the seated figure of a Bodhisattva on an elaborate throne. Unfortunately it has suffered at the hands of vandals, probably the Chinese Mohammedans in their raids on the Northern and Western Provinces. But in spite of the fact that it was broken in two at the waistline and lacks one arm, both hands, and one side of the nose, it has an arresting beauty that makes it comparable with the best stone carving that has come out of China.

Fig. 2 is a reproduction of a similar figure

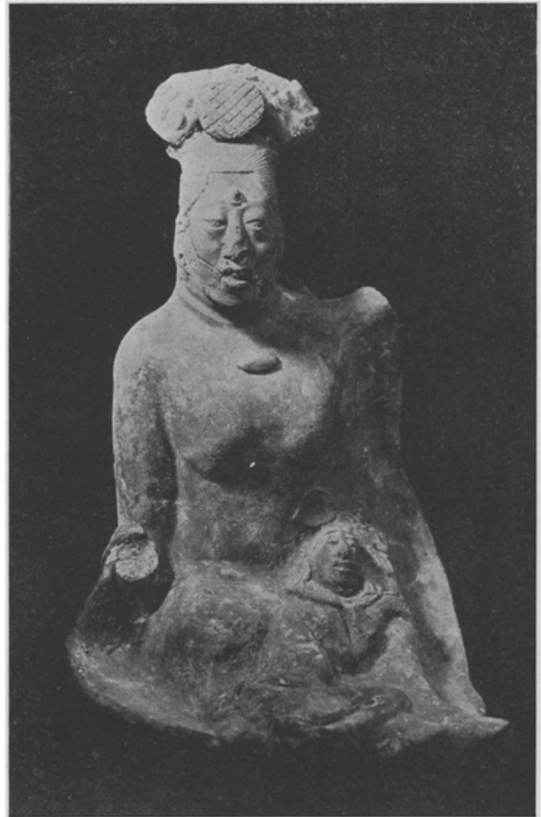


Fig. 3

privately owned in Japan — the closest parallel of which there is record.

The first impression of the detail of the head is that the sculptor adhered closely to the classical Tang tradition, with perhaps a suggestion of extra refinement and delicacy. The whorls of the elaborately dressed hair have direct relation to the shape of the skull on which they are piled, and their obvious weight seems to have flattened the coil to a springing curve of just the desirable nicety of detail.

The jewel in the forehead of a Buddha or of a Bodhisattva is according to one tradition a mole, to another a curl of hair, and to another an all-seeing eye from which rays of beneficence spread to

enlighten the world. In the earlier statues, and for the matter of that in many of the present day, it is shown in the form of a crystal or of a plain knob set in or carved abruptly on the forehead. Often a second jewel appears in the hair above. In this case, however, there is no attempt to make the two jewels into supernatural marks. They are frankly precious stones mounted in gold or other metal and bound on to the head with bands of metal or of textile. These bands or ribbons actually seem to support the jewelled studs close to the head, and in so doing confine the hair realistically in its carefully arranged folds.

From the buckle of the lower band and just back of the left ear a broken cylinder, of which I shall speak presently, slants down and outward.

Over the full bosom hangs a necklace of beads and leaflike forms that suggest the Indian gold necklaces of to-day. The front bead is larger than the rest, and from it hangs a smaller one supporting a fleur-de-lys form like that hanging from the jewelled buckle of the armet (Fig. 3).

The robe is the conventional Buddhist one of this and the succeeding periods that leaves the right shoulder and breast bare, with a scarf end brought up under the front folds to hang down in a point. The other end goes over the left shoulder and under the arm pit to the elbow, from which place (now broken) it hung clear of the figure and dropped to the lotus throne, over the edge of which a hanging piece still remains, though the end which reached nearly or quite to the top of the drum is now lost.

The right arm was made from a separate piece of marble dowelled in to the shoulder, but is missing. The upper arm evidently followed the line of the body, free from it, but still close enough to make delicate chiselling of that side impossible or unnecessary. From the elbow there was appar-

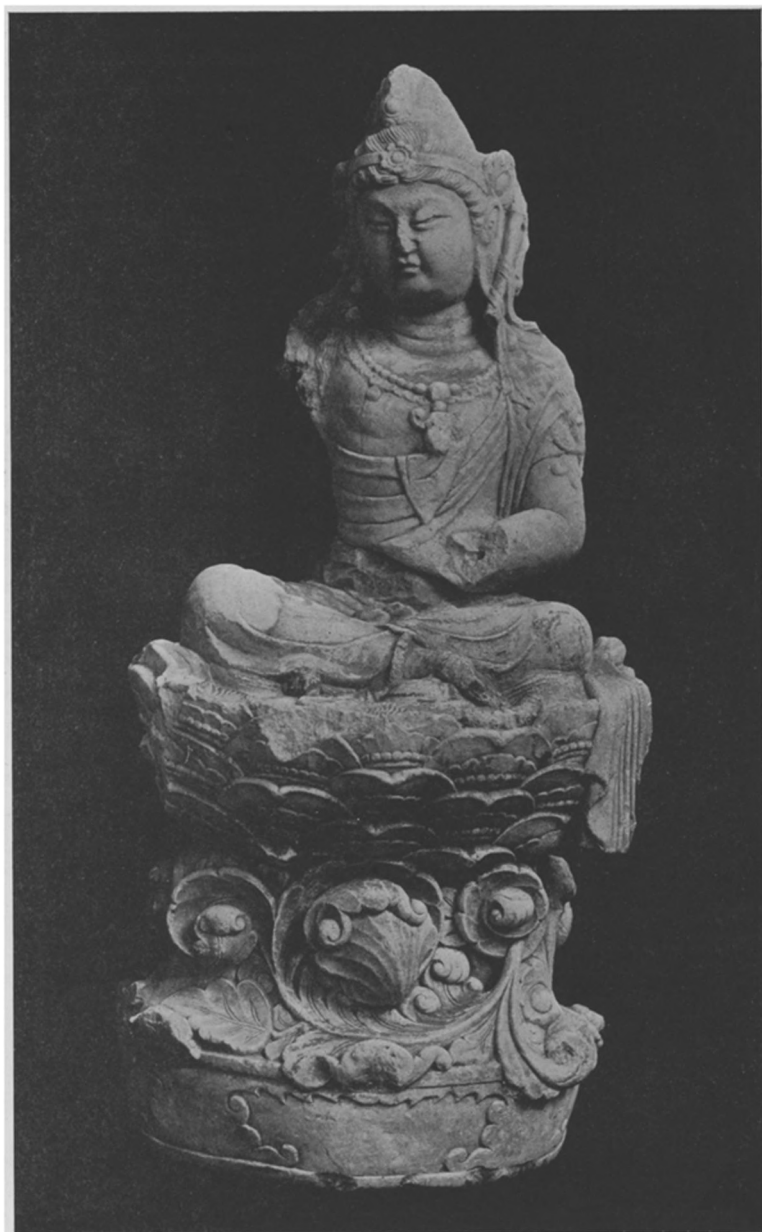


Fig. 1. Seated Bodhisattva

Tang Dynasty

ently a fall of drapery which was dowelled again to the pedestal top and continued along it to the front of the right knee, and dropped off clear of the edge, possibly down to the lowest projecting leaf above the drum, where certain scars seem to show that it joined. This would have satisfied the natural desire felt, in looking even at the reproduction for a balance to the hanging fragment on the other side.

The left hand originally came to the very front of the body, where it seems to have supported the bottom of the broken cylinder which is behind the left ear. This can hardly have been anything



Fig. 2

other than the slender stem of a lotus flower that rose behind the head or bent to one side of it. The broken halo of the fleur-de-lys pendant on the breast and the scars on the beads above can probably be attributed to the fact that the stem was not cut quite free from those points. Following still further down along the same line, the final proof of this theory is found in the scarred end of the stem, upright over the ankle.

The top of the throne is the flat top of a conventionalized lotus blossom, symbolic of purity and the law. About it the overlapping petals are decorated with beading and a subsidiary row of scallops on each. Along the upper edge is a triple row of stamens which, instead of being arranged in the prim circle to which we are accustomed, lie in a wavy horizontal line, showing their stalks as well as their bead-like tops.

Below the lotus member is a band of deep cut foliage, in form not unlike the late Roman idea of the Greek acanthus leaf. It is so deeply cut and the detail is so involved that, in the present fragmentary state of the whole, it seems to be rather a decoration of a surface than an integral part of a pedestal destined to support a heavy body. It is interesting to compare this band of ornament

with the corresponding part of the other Tang pedestal owned by the Museum. In that there are simply eight cusps with a jewelled stud in each, possibly a development of the lotus seeds in the dry pod so often used in Buddhist decoration.

The "drum" or very base of the stand, which is smaller at the bottom than at the top, is divided into four inset panels with wavy borders. The corresponding panels of the other pedestal are decorated with relief figures of Buddhist angels dancing and playing on various musical instruments. It is another piece of evidence of the comparative lateness of the new piece that the sculptor has left the work of filling these panels to the painter, of whose work nothing remains on them to-day. All color has been worn from the marble except here and there where an almost microscopic fleck of red or blue still clings.

Every detail to which we have comparable evidence in earlier sculptures bears out the first impression of the whole, that its surpassing excellence is an excellence of technique rather than spiritual expression, and that it must date from the later years of the Tang Dynasty, or — and this seems more probable in the light of our present knowledge — from the period of the Five Dynasties (A. D. 907-960), when the sculptural sense was breaking down before the force of calligraphic line.

L. W.

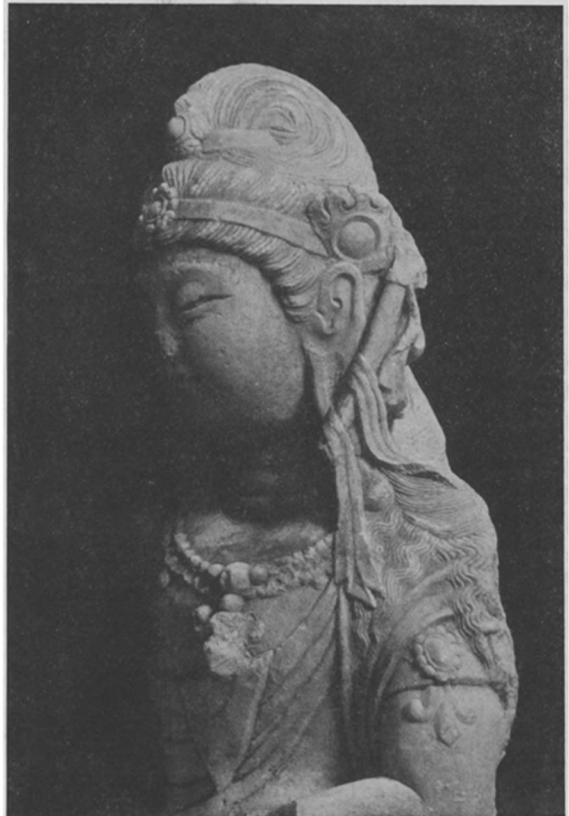


Fig. 3