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of its oldest forms the Dragon-Horse which is also found so often throughout Chinese art. In these, the head of the horse is turned backward, in reference to the ancient legend of Fu-Hsi, the first ruler of China, to whom the eight trigrams, symbols of mystic philosophy, were re-

collections and sometimes not duly appreciated in our Western world. To enjoy Chinese painting, as a recent critic has said, "The Westerner must forget his own mental preconceptions and must throw over his artistic education, every critical tradition, and all the æsthetic baggage that has



DETAIL FROM CHINESE PAINTING

vealed by the Dragon-Horse rising from the water of the Yellow River holding on its back a scroll engraved with the sacred signs.

Mr. Peters' gift embraces practically all the known types of tomb-jade amulets and is a valuable addition to the Museum's already unique collection of jade.

W. R. V.

CHINESE PAINTING

THE recent purchase of a Chinese painting, entitled *Ts'ing-ming-shang-ho-t'u* (A Trip up the River on the Feast of Tombs),¹ gives opportunity for a brief account of an art but poorly represented in the Museum

¹For the translation of the title and the attribution given later, we are indebted to Prof. Friedrich Hirth of Columbia College.

accumulated from the Renaissance to our own days." To judge Chinese art by Occidental standards is sure to lead to error, for the points of view of the two differ essentially.

Chinese painting is characterized by a marked graphic quality. A Chinese painter must be a good draughtsman. Beauty and expressiveness of line are achieved rather than the representation of solidity. In all periods the Chinese have revealed in their works an intuitive feeling for color, both sure and delicate. Though ignorant of the laws of chiaroscuro, they have occasionally produced works that show a mastery of the most delicate effects of light and shade. In landscape-painting they express a passionate love for nature and a power to interpret her moods that is unexcelled.

The pictorial art of China has been devel-

oped with only an occasional impulse from the West. In the first century after Christ came the most important outside stimulus in the introduction of Buddhistic motives and imagery from India. Since then religion has furnished the Chinese painter abundant inspiration, though the works which at first bespoke a fervent piety became in time formal.

The beginnings of painting in China are a matter of legend only, which places the invention of painting and writing alike in the far-away time of the Yellow Emperor, about 2700 B. C. Frequent allusions to painting are found in books by native writers from the third century B. C.

Dr. Bushell¹ has made a convenient division of the history of Chinese painting into three periods: the primitive period, up to A. D. 264; the classical period, A. D. 265-960; and the period of development and decline, A. D. 960-1643. Though since the fifteenth century no new impulse has throbbled through Chinese art, the Chinese may point with pride to a succession of great painters for a thousand years before that time.

According to Chinese manuscripts, among the motives of the primitive period the dragon and the tiger, those great symbols that picture to the Chinese mind the perpetual struggle between spirit and matter, are already employed. The dragon stands for the power of the spirit; the tiger, for material forces. Portraiture is prominent, the Confucian ancestor worship naturally fostering that branch of painting. Mural decoration appears also to be a familiar form of art. The water-color picture on a long roll of silk (Japanese *makimono*), pasted on thick paper and mounted at the ends with rollers of wood, with space left for seals or inscriptions, came into use even thus early. To Ku K'ai-chih of the fourth century, nine centuries before Giotto, is attributed a painting in the British Museum, entitled *Admonitions of the Female Historian*,² that shows a mature handling of subject and a sure mastery of technique.

¹S. W. Bushell, *Chinese Art*, London, 1904.

²For a description by Mr. Laurence Binyon, see the *Burlington Magazine* for January, 1904.

Many are the stories of the wonder-working power of these primitive artists. For example, legend says that one artist painted a dragon so wondrously that two centuries later the picture, when thrown into the water, produced a ten days' rain, thus ending a severe drought.

During the Tang Dynasty (618-905), Chinese art reached an Augustan Period, a time of great force and originality of creative work. Wu-Tao-tzū, who lived in the eighth century, stands as a worthy representative of this period of genius, "by universal consent at the head of all Chinese painters, ancient and modern."¹ His original method and swiftness of execution made him a marvel to his contemporaries. For instance, he painted a famous portrait of a general not sitting to him but dancing a sword dance before him. His masterpiece was a religious picture, Buddha entering into Nirvāna. Although this has probably not survived, a very early copy of it shows the composition, at least.

At the beginning of the last period, the period of development and decline, stands the Sung Dynasty (960-1280), when every writer was expected also to be a painter and poets illustrated their own works. "Refinement and technical perfection" are the characteristics of the age. The great name of this period is Li Lung-mien, famous especially for his religious paintings. William Anderson is responsible for the statement that there is nothing "in the religious art of Cimabue that would not appear tame and graceless by the side of the Buddhistic composition of Wu-Tao-tzū or Li Lung-mien."² Mr. Laurence Binyon of the British Museum pays tribute to the Sung period in the following words: "The Sung age was one of the few ages of the world which have had the intellectual character we call 'modern.' This is most marked in its conception of landscape. Not till the nineteenth century in Europe do we find anything like the landscape art of China in the Sung period—a disinterested love of beauty in nature for its own sake."

¹Herbert A. Giles. *An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art*, Shanghai, 1905.

²William Anderson, *Pictorial Arts of Japan*, London, 1886.

The Ming period (1368-1643) lacked creative power, though many of its pictures possess charm. Generally, the subjects represented are not grand and lofty, but the familiar scenes of everyday life, or the social life of the court.

Our painting, probably a copy of the work of a Sung artist, is painted on a roll of brown silk measuring 21 feet $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length by $11\frac{7}{8}$ inches in width. The subject is panoramic in character, exhibiting the varied scenes of village life along the banks of a Chinese river on the feast of the tombs, which occurs in April. As one unrolls the picture, one sees people buying and selling merchandise of various kinds, receiving guests, unloading boats, bearing burdens suspended from a yoke hung over the shoulders, sawing wood,

fishing, raking hay, and performing many simple, familiar acts of daily life. At one point an imposing-looking gentleman is carried in a sedan chair; at another, a woman is trundled in a wheelbarrow. Children playing and animals gamboling add to the liveliness of the scene. At the extreme left are some curious boats in festal array, representing in their shape and decoration dragons or tigers, with the heads of the animals as figure-heads, on which stand men carrying banners. The coloring is attractive with the dull green of the hills, the dainty pink and white blossoms of flowering trees, and the many-colored gowns of the myriad little people against the brown background of the silk.

W. E. H.

