

the beginning of the seventeenth century. The astonishing mastery of line and brush stroke revealed in these tiny yet perfect portraits has never been excelled in the west, while the richly illuminated borders, which oftentimes include subsidiary portraits as well, are particularly characteristic of the rich decorative sense so marked in all the paintings included in the present exhibition.

3. *An Example of
T'ang Sculpture*

AMONG the unpublished examples of Chinese sculpture in the Museum's notable collection there is included an exceedingly pleasing figure of the bodhisattva Wen-shu (Manjusri) mounted on a lion. To its artistic worth is added its importance as a closely datable document in the history of Chinese sculpture. It therefore fits peculiarly well into the scope of the Museum collections, primarily assembled to illustrate the development of man's culture; that, adventitiously, it is a thing of beauty is a matter for further satisfaction.

Thanks to Dr. Sirèn the provenance of the piece was first suggested. In this industrious author's great corpus on Chinese Sculpture this work is illustrated [Plate 502] in association with the sculpture of the cave temples of T'ien Lung Shan, near T'ai Yuan Fu, Shansi.

A comparison of the Museum's figure with the views of the T'ien Lung Shan sculpture, still in situ, is enough to convince one of the fact that it must have originally come from there. Were technical corroboration needed, it is present in the fact that the stone whereof the bod-



BODHISATTVA ON A LION
CHINESE SCULPTURE, NINTH CENTURY

hisattva is carved—a grey, coarse sandstone, somewhat friable—is the same as that found in fragments of sculpture known to come from T'ien Lung Shan.

There is no absolute date for the carving of this particular series of cave temples. Sirèn, Sekino and Omura consider the temples unquestionably T'ang (618-906). We scarcely need to worry the point. The sculpture possesses all the splendid characteristics which we are come to accept definitely as T'ang, when Chinese sculpture was at its greatest height.

The bodhisattva sits with gracious ease upon the sturdy, bandy-legged lion. The rendering of the two creatures is a superb study in contrasts: the lion, an epitome of rugged animal force, every muscle tense from distended nostrils and wrinkled brow to sinewed legs and paws with every tendon standing out; and the deity, essence of grace and charm and benignance, soft contours of relaxed muscles beneath soft drapery, one hand resting easily on the knee, the other—now so unfortunately missing—supporting the chin, the legs disposed in the position so happily called in buddhist art the “pose of royal ease”; it would be difficult to discover a composition of contrasts so ably conceived, so adequately rendered.

A full study of the use of colour in Chinese sculpture is yet to be made. When it is undertaken the evidences available on the present piece will contribute not a little. The hair, as is customary, was blue, though only the most meagre traces of this remain; the flesh was red-

dish-ochre; the scarf about the shoulders, which falls thence to the waist was blue, while the robe over the knees was red; on the jewelry there are traces of gilding, Much of the lion's body and parts of the figure itself are smoked and discoloured, perhaps only from the incense burned before it, but possibly due to a conflagration in the temple.

9. *Shadow Puppets*
from Java

PLATE X shows a Javanese puppet, made of leather, representing the hero Ardjuna. He was, in the Javanese legend borrowed from an old Indian epic, one of five princes, sons of Pandu, who waged a desperate war with the sons of Dresterata, the brother of Pandu, for the recovery of the kingdom which the latter, known as the Kurawa, had usurped. Ardjuna was one of the most redoubtable champions of the dispossessed Pandawa. There is something knightly (in the sense of our romantic conception of the heroes of European chivalry) about the character of Ardjuna. He is gentle and compassionate when the stern necessities of war do not constrain him to ruthlessness, and his prowess in the boudoir is hardly less notable than in the stricken field.

The peculiar form of bodily features and costume of these silhouettes is characteristic of this department of the Javanese theatre. There are other types of Javanese marionette, including figures modelled in the round, of which latter the Museum has now a few, and will shortly acquire a number more; but the kind of puppet shown in the photograph is particularly favoured for representations of the classical legends.