

## ORIENTAL ART IN THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

THE University Museum has on exhibition a collection representing the art of the Far East, which, though not as large as certain collections elsewhere, is exceedingly choice. Indeed, apart from the British Museum, I do not know of any other museum which can boast of such exceptionally good things.

Foremost among these treasures must be placed the seated pottery figure of "the Lo-han," belonging to the T'ang period (A. D. 618-907), which is worthy of being set by the side of the companion figure in the British Museum—the finest specimen of art which has as yet come to us from the Far East.

Equally worthy of mark is the early life-size figure of a Buddha in stone (No. 7, see Fig. 171) which is not only an object of classical beauty but is interesting as a witness to the influence exerted by the Hellenistic art of Bactria, working through the Buddhistic artists of the so-called Gandhara period of India, upon the art of China in the T'ang era. Similar witness is borne by the two splendid terra-cotta figures of horses (see Fig. 166) from the T'ang tombs. The stone figures 8 and 9 (see Fig. 170) again are splendid examples of what may be termed the Indian element in Buddhistic art. They belong to a class which must have served as models for some of the early carved figures of Japan.

Among the pottery are a very interesting model of a house of the Han period (B. C. 206-A. D. 221), two metal-rimmed "hare's fur" bowls of Sung chien-yao or "chien ware," which were specially prized by the Japanese for their tea ceremony, one or two delightful specimens of Sung and Yuan "chün" ware of turquoise color with purple tinge, and above all, some exceptionally rare and beautiful examples of Ming pottery. There are for instance three great fish-bowls, one of them being the imperial yellow bowl (No. 333) in the center of the hall, with embossed dragons crawling around it, while another (No. 330) is decorated with large blue lotuses on an aubergine ground. I know of no other fish-bowl of the same size comparable with these.

The late Ming blue and purple vases and figures are, however, the "cream" of the pottery collection. No. 319, with its white cranes and blue flowers on an aubergine ground, is superb, and so

too are the three large jars and three figures which stand in a case by themselves. The two turquoise blue wall-panels, with a cart embossed on the one and a rider upon a horse on the other, are unique.

The porcelain is equally choice. The late Ming fish-bowls and tall vase (Nos. 320, 321, 326) are among the finest specimens of Ming porcelain now existing, and the blue and white vase (No. 323) in the same case, is almost equally remarkable. So, too, are the large Ming polychrome vases Nos. 327, 328.

There is a very beautiful collection of monochromes; indeed it is difficult to conceive of anything better in the way of a Chinese monochrome of the Ching period than the peach-bloom vase No. 113, or the black vase No. 144. The "Sang-de-boeuf" vases Nos. 121, 128 and the blue vase No. 139 call also for special notice. The "blue and white" too is very choice. Besides the Ming example No. 329, there are some exquisite specimens of the Kang-hsi period (Nos. 22, 34, 51, 56, etc.). Among the "powder-blue" pieces Nos. 77 and 78 are "things of delight." And there are two vases with black ground which would be the envy of the connoisseur.

Like the celadons, the famille verte or green family of the Kang-hsi period is well represented. The two great vases No. 307 are particularly noticeable, and there are two very fine vases, Nos. 310, 311 as well as a figure (No. 254) and a head-rest (No. 290) which take high rank. An extremely good example of the late Ming period in this class of decoration is No. 312.

To the Yung-chen period (A. D. 1723-36) belongs a fine vase (No. 229) and there is a large collection of "egg-shell" china plates of the so-called famille rose class. Personally I do not admire them or the color which distinguishes them and is known to the Chinese under the name of "the foreign color." They were for the most part decorated in the neighborhood of Canton under foreign influence. But for those who admire such things the collection is remarkably good.

The paintings are even better than the porcelain. The number of first-class and well-preserved paintings of the Sung period is astonishing and they give a high idea of the pictorial art of the epoch. One of them, representing a hare at the foot of a tree on which a bird is resting, is the most charming specimen of Sung painting that I have seen.

About Chinese bronzes I do not venture to speak, but I cannot

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refrain from drawing attention to the magnificent Ming screen at the end of the hall. It is hardly to be matched.

The collection of Persian ware in the Museum is quite as choice as the Chinese collection. The pottery of the thirteenth and previous centuries which is exhibited is extraordinarily good. Every piece is first class, and some of the pieces are unique. We may form some idea from them of the marvelous beauty and rich tone of the pottery that is now being recovered from the tombs of medieval Persia.

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