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FIGURE 1. *The Lord of the Northern Dipper.*



LEFT HAND GROUP

- 1·Chen Wu: Lord of the Northern Dipper
- 2·Attendant to Chen Wu in Tantri form
- 3·Tortoise & Snake: Symbols of Chen Wu
- 4 } The Spirits of
- 5 } the Seven Stars
- 6 } of the
- 7 } Northern Dipper
- 8 }
- 9 }
- 10 }

CENTRAL GROUP

- 11·Probably T'ien Huang: Emperor of Heaven
- 12·Huang Ti : The Yellow Emperor
- 13·Hou T'u : Empress of Earth
- 14·Movable Altar with coral offering
- 15·Attendant : Bearer of Altar
- 16·Attendant : Bearer of Altar
- 17·Attendant : Bearer of Banner
- 18·Attendant : Bearer of Banner
- 19·Empress'Attendant: Bearer of Banner
- 20·Empress'Attendant: Bearer of Banner

RIGHT HAND GROUP

- 21·Chia stem - Wood element - Jupiter
- 22·Ping stem - Fire element - Mars
- 23·Wu stem - Earth element - Saturn
- 24·Kêng stem - Metal element - Venus
- 25·Jên stem - Water element - Mercury
- 26·Probably Yih stem - Wood element
- 27·Probably Ting stem - Fire element
- 28·Probably Chi stem - Earth element
- 29·Probably Hsin stem - Metal element
- 30·Probably Kuei stem - Water element

FIGURE 2. Key to the Taoist Fresco, Lord of the Northern Dipper.



FIGURE 3. *The Lord of the Northern Dipper Fresco.*
From a Temple in Southern Shansi. Date about Thirteenth century A.D.

THE LORD OF THE NORTHERN DIPPER

THE procession of this fresco is led by the personage after whom the painting is named, that is Chên Wu, the Lord of the Northern Dipper. It is an arbitrary application of the name to the fresco, yet a suitable one, for the whole composition is framed on the mythological and astrological ideas which centre in the star group of Ursa Major, known to the Chinese for some three thousand years as the Northern Dipper. It is a great procession, swinging along with rhythm and freedom of action, and yet with co-ordination and quiet dignity, under the energetic leadership of Chên Wu, the Lord of the Northern Dipper (*Fig. 1*). He is not the most important person in the group, for the three large-sized Rulers in the centre are the great personages of the procession, nevertheless he dominates the painting, and his vigour and determination are evident in every line of his person.

The composition divides itself readily into three parts. The first, or left-hand group, contains Chên Wu, his six-handed attendant in Tantra form, and the Spirits of the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper. The second, or central group, is the most important, for it contains Three Rulers, accompanied by their attendants, and preceded by an altar carried by two damsels, on which rests a vessel containing the symbol of the Sacred Coral. The third, or right-hand group, is that of ten personages who represent the Ten Celestial Stems, five of whom are the Five Planetary Deities, and the other five their respective counterparts, thus making five pairs of the Five Elements, wood, fire, earth, metal, and water, which constitute the Ten Stems of the Chinese cyclical system of time.

As in the case of the Buddhist Paradise fresco, the procession appears as a vision in the heavens, floating on the clouds, with a background of the dark-blue of night.

The theme of the painting being Taoist there is nothing of purely Buddhistic symbolism to be found in it, except that which had been appropriated by Taoism, and so became common to

both religions. This applies to the Tantric attendant to Chên Wu, the Altar with its Sacred Coral, the banners of the Empress of Earth, and the Five Planetary Deities (*cp. Fig. 2*). The painting is typically Chinese in character, done in the generally accepted Wu Tao-tzu style). It is in a good state of preservation, there have been no restorations except where the joins of the plaster sections have been re-touched, and the colours have retained their brilliancy and freshness, though mellowed by the passing of the centuries. As to its size, this fresco is 33 feet 6.5 inches in length, and 10 feet 4 inches high.

The costumes of the civil officials in general appear to be as follows:

(1) a full-length white under-garment; (2) a full-length robe, the upper part and lower part of which may be of different colours; (3) a highly decorated apron, usually red in colour, which seems to hang from under the waist girdle; (4) an embroidered or decorated upper robe or mantle with wide, long-flowing sleeves, which sometimes reaches only to the knee; (5) a waist girdle, probably of leather, which may be plain in front, but which often carries rectangular or circular plaques of a decorative nature; (6) a stole, usually wide at the shoulder, which is sometimes festooned over and around the arms and body, in a manner similar to the stoles of Bodhisattvas; (7) what appear to be protective napkins or cuff-protectors on the upper-robe sleeve ends; (8) a highly ornamented cap, held in place by a hat-pin, and thongs; (9) a Long-life Lock (*ch'ang-ming-so*) suspended as a pectoral by thong around the neck; (10) sometimes an official baton or sceptre; (11) the official tablet (*kuei, hu*) held in both hands; (12) shoes, which in most cases are hidden by the long robes; and (13) all are supplied with transparent haloes.

The caps are particularly interesting for no two of them are alike, and yet they are identical in their general characteristics. Each is built up on a circular band, and is studded with gems and decorated with gilt bosses and plaques. It is held on the head by a hat-pin which is thrust horizontally from the right side through the knob of hair under the cap, and then extends on the other side. In



FIGURE 4

The Left-hand Group of the Northern Dipper Fresco.

addition a pair of thongs are attached to the rim at a point forward from the ears, which allows the thongs to be tied under the chin. Some of these thongs were tied and others were hanging loose. There was another tie for the cap which must have been of ceremonial significance. It is a long thong, probably some ten feet or more in length, which passed loosely over the front rim of the cap, then over the hat-pin which protruded on either side, and down over the shoulders and the sides of the body, finally being looped up over the arms. Where this cord passed behind the ear, it threaded a barrel-shaped cylinder, probably of amber, or possibly ivory, which was evidently intended to protect the ear from cutting by the cord. The Empress and Emperors of this fresco carry similar long head-dress thongs and ear-protectors, but the latter are more decorative than those of the Presidents of the Seven Stars. The Ten Stems do not carry ear-protectors, nor do the attendants of this fresco.

The Long-life Lock (*ch'ang-ming-so*) as the name implies is a symbol and amulet of longevity and is suspended on the breast by a thong. It is carried by most of the figures on both Taoist frescoes. It is found on Sung paintings (*Bulletin, Museum of Fine Arts; Boston, October 1937, p. 65: 9*), on wooden temple figures of Chin and early Yüan in the Museum collections, and on illustrations of Yüan Dynasty books (*Hsiao Ching; A.D. 1308, reprint by Ch'ên Hang, Peking, 1938*). It was very popular during the Ming Dynasty, while it is commonly worn by children today, as a charm protecting from dangers.

The tablet carried by civil officials and by royalty is a symbol of official rank and goes back to very early days. It is a narrow strip of ivory or jade, slightly tapering to one end, the corners of which are slightly rounded or pointed. It is this smaller end which is always held uppermost. Ceremonially the object should be held in both hands, which should be covered. There are two names for the object, that of *kuei*, which possibly refers to the jade or stone types which seem to be mainly for ceremonial use; and that of *hu* which is commonly applied to ivory, wooden, or bamboo tablets. These tablets were held before

the breast by courtiers at audiences, even down to the Ming Dynasty. They are said to have been used for taking notes, either those of matters to be reported to the Emperor, or to record the words of the Emperor. Such tablets, with the records still on them, were kept as heirlooms in the families of those officials who had used them (*cp. Shosoin; Harada, p. 21*).

The sceptre or baton carried by each of the Emperors is fastened in the girdle under the left arm, and appears to be from two to three feet long. The handle is studded with gems, and the object itself obviously was of ceremonial significance only. Besides the Emperors only three other figures appear to carry such sceptres, and they are among the Presidents of the Heavens, which follow immediately after the Lord of the Southern Dipper, in the second Taoist fresco.

A. Left-Hand Group

1. Chên Wu, the Lord of the Northern Dipper. This short, stout, and competent-looking warrior who leads the procession is known by many names. His most imposing name is the First Ruler of the Sombre Heavens (*Hsüan T'ien Shang Ti*). Other names are the True Warrior (*Chên Wu*), the Protector of Goodness and True Master of the North Pole (*Pei-chi Yu-shêng Chên-chün*), the Sombre King (*Hsüan Wang*), and the Sombre Warrior (*Hsüan Wu*). In the year 1012 the use of the character *hsüan*, in the name of an ancestor of the Emperor Chên Tsung, necessitated the taboo of that character in ordinary use, and so the name Hsüan Wu was changed to Chên Wu. There are other names he is known by, and in the Ming Dynasty (A.D. 1416) a temple in his honour was built at Peking, where he was worshipped under the title of Veritable Saintly and Helpful Master of the Pole Star. Later generations called him True Master (*Chên Chün*), placing at the feet of his image a tortoise and serpent.

His origin is wrapt in a fog of myth and legend. He is said to have been an incarnation of the Taoist god who was the First Principle (*Yüan-shih T'ien-tsun*), and that a patriarch of the Third Heaven descended to earth and taught him the wonderful doctrine, bestowing on him a magic sword. On a high peak of Mount T'ai-ho he practised for forty-two years the exercises which brought

him the ability to float in the air, and to perform feats which made him invincible. The First Principle hearing of this invited him to ascend to the celestial regions. This was in the time of Shou, the last King of the Shang Dynasty (1123 B.C.), when the demon-kings were ravishing the universe. So Hsüan T'ien was despatched to earth at the head of the twelve great chiefs of the celestial legions. He came with dishevelled hair, bare-footed, girdled with a gold cuirass, clothed in a black mantle, carrying his magic sword, and hoisting a dark banner on which was a plotting of the Northern Dipper. He joined battle with the king of the demons at the Grotto of Darkness (*Tung-yin*), and capturing him and his demon hordes he threw them into the Feng-tu abyss, the entrance to the nether regions in Ssu-ch'uan. In the conflict two of the marshals of the demon-king were transformed into a grey tortoise and a huge serpent in order to deceive Hsüan T'ien, but all to no avail,—and since then the tortoise and snake have been associated with the Lord of the Northern Dipper (*Fig. 1*). In the official History of the Sung Dynasty (*Sung-shih*, bk. 463, p. 9) there is a curious entry recording the appearance of Hsüan T'ien Shang Ti, in a vision to the Emperor Hui Tsung (A.D. 1101-1126) of the Sung Dynasty. The Emperor who was an artist and a scholar, became a zealous adherent of Taoism, and was greatly influenced by the Taoist Lin Ling-su.

As the story goes, the Emperor one day told Lin that he would like to see Chên Wu's sacred person. "To obtain this favour," said Lin, "Your Majesty must summon to the palace along with me the Master of Heaven" (*T'ien Shih*—the pontiff of Taoism). This was consequently done, and

at the moment when these two were performing their rites at midnight, the sky darkened. Lightning suddenly rent the skies, the thunder rolled, and in a blaze of light there dropped at the threshold of the palace a grey tortoise and a serpent. The Emperor prostrated himself, then offered incense and prayed "I desire to see Chên Wu, if he but deign to reveal himself." The thunder crashed—the tortoise and serpent vanished—and a huge foot appeared on the threshold. The Emperor made a second prostration, and offered incense, begging Chên Wu to condescend to show himself more manifestly. That moment he saw standing before him the huge figure of a man some ten feet high; his face was stern and striking; his hair was unbound; under his

black mantle which had sleeves sweeping to the ground, he wore a breastplate of gold and a belt set with jewels; his hand brandished a sword; his feet were bare, and round his head there shone a halo of light, while the ends of his sash floated in the breeze. He remained long enough for the Emperor to sketch him and then vanished [*cp. Chinese Superstitions; Doré, vol. 1x, pp. 20-26*].

The description of Chên Wu as given in the Sung History is a picture of Chên Wu of the Toronto fresco. The armour of this Sombre Warrior is particularly interesting, because it is identical with that of the warriors of the ninth-century Tun-huang paintings, with additional interest from the fact that his arm-guards and greaves are surfaced in a very naturalistic manner to simulate shagreen.

His coat-of-mail is of the diaper-design of three-armed stars, yellow in colour, and it is trimmed with green and gem-studded decoration. The under-tunic is white, the over-mantle is black with a green-lined red border, while the long floating stole is green. At the knees are what appear to be red trousers with black edging, fastened below the knee with a decorative garter. The greaves and arm-guards are of similar design and colour, and are of blue shagreen, decorated in applique with discs and gems. At the ankles are petalled ruffs, but his feet are bare. Behind his head is a transparent halo, he is bareheaded and his hair is flowing wildly, he wears a yellow-plaquet belt at the hip, and a plain grey belt at the waist, while his R. hand grasps a drawn straight-edged sword, with the index finger hooked over the cross-bar of the guard (*Fig. 1*).

2. The attendant to Chên Wu is probably a Tantric form of Vaiśravaṇa (*To Wên*), the Guardian of the North, and the double-halberd he carries, with the long streamer attached to it, is probably the "Banner of Victory." He is a fierce-looking warrior, with three faces and six arms. His hair flares out fan-shape like the hairs of a thick brush, and flames of fire curl up from the ends. He is in full mail-armour, and carries an object of symbolic significance in each of his six hands. His upper right hand holds on the tip of his forefinger a whirling wheel (*cakra*) from which flames ascend; his central right hand holds a drawn sword pointed upwards; and the lower right hand holds a double-headed halberd resting across the right shoulder. His upper left hand holds a carpenter's square, one arm of which is graduated into ten inches to form a carpenter's foot-rule; the central left hand holds a coiled lasso; and the lower



FIGURE 5

Altar of the Coral Symbol.

left hand holds a seal with a pair of lucky characters carved on it. This character (*fu*) is one of the twelve ornaments on the robes of an Emperor.

This Tantra attendant has a fiery red face with wide-open mouth and fanged teeth. Over his forehead is an ornament with two up-turned horns, and on each side of the head, where the ears should be, is a smaller red-faced demon head. His hair flares out, and from the ends are curling flames of fire. His coat-of-mail appears to be of leather elaborately decorated with applique designs, and with oblong armour plates on the shoulders. He has a sporran-like monster-mask at the waist, with a red belt above it, and another yellow-plaque belt below it. All six arms have ruffs of feathers at the elbow, with arm-guards of oblong plates. His leg-greave has a shagreen decoration, and blue ruff is at the ankle. He wears shoes with white heel-cap, red toe-cap, a red tie under the instep, and a decorative shield over the instep. His robe under the coat-of-mail is blue, his under-tunic is white, while his knees are swathed in white drapery which is fastened with knee-garters. His stole, which is green with a yellow lining, is festooned about his body. A streamer is attached to the head of his halberd, which makes it appear to be a "Banner of Victory" of Vaiśravaṇa. His straight-edged sword, held vertically in his centre R. hand, is hardly noticeable by the edge of the fresco. The tip of his halberd, which is two-pronged, is also not discernible.

3. The tortoise and snake are emblems associated with Chên Wu. As pointed out above they are said to have been transformations of two marshals who in conflict with Chên Wu changed themselves into a grey tortoise and a huge snake respectively, but were finally conquered, and so are usually depicted at or under the foot of Chên Wu.

4-10. The Spirits of the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper. Each has his distinctive Chinese name (*Chinese Reader's Manual; Meyers, Shanghai, 1924, p. 352*), and a particular function in the affairs of men. In the star group of The Northern Dipper the fourth, fifth, and sixth stars, counting from the star nearest to Polaris, are the stars which govern respectively long life, happiness, and plenty. Their depictions in the fresco are dressed in the full flowing robes of Chinese civil officials of ancient times, and they all have transparent head haloes and carry official tablets, but there is no distinguishing feature by which any one of them might be associated with a particular star.

These seven figures all have the same light-coloured complexion of face, and they do not carry a sceptre or baton, in which respects they differ from the nine figures at the head of the procession of the Southern Dipper fresco. The mantles of this group are all dark in colour, characteristic of the northern regions, but some have coloured edgings. Their robes and stoles are of different colours, but otherwise their costumes are similar in kind and design.

B. Central Group

This group includes three important personages; two are Emperors and one is an Empress. They are preceded by two damsels carrying an altar upon which rests a platter containing a Sacred Coral tree. This altar and its offering are in honour of this important trio of dignitaries. Immediately following the altar and preceding the Emperors are two beautifully-gowned girls, each carrying a banner with streamers, sometimes spoken of as a ceremonial umbrella. Then come the Emperors followed by the Empress of Earth. The Empress is attended by two girls bearing banners of a rectangular shape, depicting a sea in which is an island, and on the island is set a palace which radiates rays of light, while the red sun and white moon are seen in the sky on either side.

The three regal figures are obviously a trinity, but it is difficult to determine which they are except in the case of the Empress. She has in her head-dress a disc on which are three broken lines, which is the Fu Hsi Eight Diagram (*Pa Kua*) symbol for earth (*k'un*), so she may with certainty be accepted as the Empress of Earth (*Hou T'u*). The other two, by process of reasoning, and comparison with other mythological personages, have been accepted tentatively as the Emperor of Heaven (*T'ien Huang*) in the case of one, and in the case of the other as the Yellow Emperor (*Huang Ti*). Additional evidence of the probability of these designations is afforded by a Sung painting which bears a cartouche in which is written the caption "Portraits of the Emperor of Heaven, Empress of Earth (*T'u*), and Earthly (*Ti*) Emperor" (*T'ien Huang, Hou T'u, Ti Huang Hsiang*). This painting depicts two Emperors and one Empress in a setting, dress, and style identical with those of the fresco (*Pageant of Chinese Painting; Otsuka*

Kogeisha, Tokyo, 1936, Pl. 211). The Japanese caption by the side of this painting states it to be a drawing of "heavenly spirits and earthly deities," made in the style of Wu Tao-tzu, and at the bottom attributes it to an unknown Sung painter, and calls it "Painting of the Emperor of Heaven and the Empress of Earth."

Although Chinese mythology speaks of thirteen Heavenly Emperors (*T'ien Huang*), all brothers, yet in paintings one figure is usually given as symbolic of the group. In the same manner there were eleven Earthly Emperors (*Ti Huang*), and nine Human Emperors (*Yên Huang*). The one who stands out above all others as the founder of the Chinese polity and civilization, is the Yellow Emperor (*Huang Ti*). Amongst many inventions and institutions, he is credited with correcting the calendar, and with introducing the cyclical system. As the cycle is intimately involved in the lay-out of the fresco compositions, it is but reasonable to expect that the author of the cycle would be included in the group of imperial personages. So in this group we assume the three regal individuals to be T'ien Huang, Huang Ti, and Hou T'u (*cp. History of the Three Emperors in Ancient China; Ku Chieh-kang and Yang Hsien-kuei, Harvard-Yenching, 1936*).

II. T'ien Huang, the Emperor of Heaven. The head of the family of fabulous sovereigns, who succeeded P'an Ku the first created being, and who began the process of developing the universe out of chaos.

He wears a white under-tunic, a long robe of pea-green colour, and an over-mantle of blue with a floral border, fastened under the R. arm in kimona-style. Over this is a green stole with yellow lining. Over the front of the robe, hanging down from a red belt at the waist, is a red apron-like garment, down the centre of which are two streamers of a decorative sash, with a ring and knot fastening in the middle. The sleeves of his mantle are wide and voluminous, reaching below the knees, and over the sleeve ends there are the usual green cuff-protectors. The mantle and robe together are decorated with the Twelve Ornaments (*See Bulletin 14*).

In the Book of History (*bk. iv, Yi and Chi, chap. 1: 4. Cp. Legge's translation*), the Emperor Shun (2317-2208 B.C.) made this statement to his Minister Yü, "I wish to see the emblematic figures of the ancients,—the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the dragons, and the pheasants, which are depicted



此圖は天神地祇を畫がいたもの、衣服の描法は極めて流暢で、而も古厚の趣があり、その作風は吳道子に淵源し、唐の元和の年號ある普照寺の畫像と酷だ相似たる所がある。

FIGURE 6

Sung Painting of T'ien Huang, Hou T'u, and Huang Ti.



FIGURE 7

Key to Sung Painting of the Three Rulers.

SUNG PAINTING OF THE THREE RULERS

This painting by an unknown artist is accepted in Japan as of the Sung period (*Pageant of Chinese Painting; Otsuka Kogeisha, Tokyo, 1936*), but no year date is suggested. The cartouche in the upper left-hand corner gives the names of the Three Rulers as T'ien Huang, Huang Ti, and Hou T'u. The latter is wearing the robes of an Empress, and behind her are two banners, one is the Empress's banner with the phoenix emblems, and on the other is depicted a sea, an island with a palace on it, the sun (*jih*) and moon (*yüeh*) in the sky, as well as star groups, including the Northern and Southern Dippers. The other two rulers are wearing royal robes, with mortar-board caps on which are depicted sun and moon, and which are adorned with fringes of gems. At least two of the rulers wear the barrel-shaped ear-protectors with long cords, and they all carry the tablet. Their robes are identical with those of regal figures of the two Taoist frescoes. They are accompanied by two officials, at least two damsel attendants, and by a fierce-looking Tantra warrior carrying a ceremonial umbrella-banner. The background is dark sky with floating clouds.

EXPLANATION OF THE KEY

1. T'ien Huang—the Emperor of Heaven.
2. Huang Ti—the Yellow Emperor.
3. Hou T'u—the Empress of Earth, with two damsel attendants.
4. The Two Banners of Hou T'u.
5. The Two Civil Officials.
6. Tantra Warrior, bearing Ceremonial Banner.
7. Cartouche giving Caption of the Painting.



FIGURE 8

T'ien Huang and Huang Ti of the Northern Dipper.

(on the upper mantle); the libation-cups, the pond-weed, the fire, the rice, the axe, the talisman, which are embroidered (on the lower robe)."

The ceremonial robes of the Emperor had all these twelve figures depicted or embroidered on them, emblematic of various attributes, but now for the most part unknown. The highest nobles were restricted from the use of the first three—the sun, moon, and stars—and the other ranks of officials in descending order were decreasingly restricted as to the number of emblems they could use. There were five sets of official robes, one set to each of five grades, and the main difference was in the number of emblems allowed to the particular grade. The first numbers were of the highest rank, gradually decreasing in grade to the twelfth, the talisman, which was the lowest in the scale and the lowest on the garments.

On the robe of the Emperor of Heaven two talisman emblems are seen at the bottom, one on each side, just above the shoes. On the mantle the stars are seen near the shoulder, but the sun and moon are not discernible. The mountains, dragons, and pheasants are clearly seen, and also the flames of fire, and the tiger of one of the libation cups. The latter are usually depicted with a tiger on or inside one, and a monkey on or inside the other. In the case of both the frescoes the cups themselves are not drawn, but only the tiger and the monkey. It is not clear what these two animals are intended to signify, but they may possibly refer to two kinds of libation wine, one associated with the strength and ferocity of the tiger, and the other associated with the cleverness and agility of the monkey. The other emblems—rice, pond-weed, and axe—are not seen on the mantle, but they are probably on the robe below, hidden in the folds of drapery.

The cap of the Emperor is similar to that of the civil officials of the fresco, except that it has a mortar-board top, with a tie passing over it and down the sides of the body to the ground. The top of the mortar-board has a depiction of a red sun at one end and a white moon at the other; and twelve strings of beads, ten in each string and probably of five colours, hang down from the board, front and back.

The cap is held on the head by a cap-pin thrust through the sides, and by leather thongs which are tied under the chin. A long cord also passes over the front of the cap, over the ends of the pin and down behind the ears to the sides of the body, where it is looped over the arms. Behind the ears it passes through a barrel-shaped object which protects the ear from abrasion by the cord. On his breast he wears a pectoral of "Long-life Lock" design, green in colour, like that of the civil officials, and also carries the usual green tablet, but the hands are not covered.

Under his left arm may be seen the head of a sceptre, square in shape and of open-work, for the red of the belt may be seen through it, and its top is surmounted by a round green jade knob.

His shoes have red up-turned tips, and under the tips a small piece of decoration is seen, but most of the shoes is hidden under the robes.

12. Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor. He is said to have invented wheeled vehicles, armour, ships, pottery, etc., and to have regulated the sacrificial and religious ceremonies. He applied the science of astronomy to chronological reckoning, and introduced a calendar and the cycle, while he is credited with originating most of the institutions which form the background of Chinese social, political, and religious life. He is usually worshipped as the God of Architecture.

This Emperor is in robes identical with the previous one, the difference being only in the colours of the robes and in small details. The red apron of this Emperor has a wide fringe at the bottom, and his stole is red lined with green. As to the Twelve Ornaments, his robe has at the bottom the talisman and axe emblems, and on his mantle the other emblems such as are seen on the robes of the previous Emperor, with the addition possibly of the sun. His sceptre under his left arm is not square at the head, but round, and its whole length would appear to be about two feet. Both Emperors are full-bearded.

13. Hou T'u, the Empress of Earth. She is depicted in female form because the earth is *yin* or female, in apposition to heaven which is *yang* or male. Hou T'u is known as the Spirit of the Earth (*T'u Shên*), the patron deity of the soil (*Shê*), the Spirit of Humanity (*Jên Shên*), the Mother of the Earth (*Hou T'u Niang Niang*), and many other names. Sacrifices to Earth were officially begun in 113 B.C. when the Emperor Wu Ti offered sacrifices to Hou T'u in the very area from which these frescoes came, the region of the Fên River. Doubtless sacrifices to Earth were made long before this, for they had to do with agriculture, and seasonal harvests.

This Empress wears a white inner garment; a robe of light colour, with wide green fringe at the bottom; a white mantle with brown edging and floral border in which phoenixes are prominent, and with green lining to the border. She has the usual cuff-protectors, and the wide full sleeves of her mantle have an edging of blue feathers. She wears a red frontal drape similar to an apron, with sash ties down the front, and carries the official tablet in both hands, which are covered with white drapery. Her stole is of pea-green colour with dark-green centre, and lined with a lighter green. Her head-dress is built up of green, gold, and red, with bird forms, and in the centre is a round white disc with the Pa-kua emblem of the three broken lines—*k'un*, which



FIGURE 9

The Empress of Earth of the Northern Dipper.

represents "earth." A jewelled pin is thrust through the head-dress, around which a cord is passed to come behind the ears through ear-protectors, falling down by the sides of the body, and then is looped over the arms. In addition leather thongs are attached in front of the ears for the purpose of tying under the chin, but the ends are allowed to hang loose. The shoes are hidden under drapery at the bottom of the robe, but what is seen shows that the up-turned toes were of bird or fowl-head design. Across the breast there is a lunar-shaped pectoral of gold and jade, which may be part of an ornamental system similar to that of the Bodhisattvas of the Maitreya fresco.

14. The Movable Altar with Coral Offering. The altar itself is well made of wood which is stained green, and the surface appears to be inlaid with white marble. The altar-frontal is placed cross-wise over the centre of the altar, in the manner shown in the Tun-huang paintings. The platter on the altar is mottled, and may well be intended to represent the mottled and glazed pottery so characteristic of the T'ang period. The Naga-tree or sacred coral is symbolic of the "Treasures of the Nagas," and is here significant of the honour being done to the royal personages.

The altar-frontal is bright red, with small floral sprays, checkered in regular order by a delicate blue linear floral design. The frontal is rectangular in shape, and has a border of varied green medallion design on a polychrome background.

15. A female attendant, bearer of the altar.

This young damsel wears a white under-tunic, and a plain white over-robe with blue border, which is crossed over and fastened under the L. arm. Her hair is parted in the middle, and is probably arranged in a double coil behind. The two rosette-shaped ornaments in the hair are the ends of decorative hair-pins, with jade tips. Her hands by which she holds the altar, are covered with the sleeve ends of her robe.

16. A female attendant, bearer of the altar.

This other altar-bearer is also probably a young girl, for her hair is arranged in a style similar to that of her companion.

Her robe is doubtless the same shape, but it is seen from the back. It is light green in colour, with a decorative polychrome border, and has panels of red and green hanging from the side. She wears a yellow belt at the waist, which has a white kerchief inserted under it behind, from which hang down two ends of a white sash which is tied in a bow at the centre.

17. A female attendant, a beautiful well-dressed maid who carries a ceremonial umbrella, or canopied banner, with streamers.

She wears a white under-tunic, a green robe with decorative border, and a white over-mantle with floral border. She has two waist girdles, a red one above, and a green one with square plaques below. Her stole is white, and underneath it is a sort of green and gold corslet which may be the upper part of a system of ornaments which in the case of the Bodhisattvas is suspended over the front of the robes. Connected with this decorative harness are dark-coloured streamers which flow down from the shoulder. At her wrists are green cuff-protectors, and round the wide sleeve of the mantle, or probably at the elbow, there is a pointed fringe of feather decoration. Over the front of her robe she wears a red apron-like garment, with wide green fringe at the bottom. She carries, on a decorated staff, a ceremonial umbrella, the dominant colours of which are white, red, and green.

18. A female attendant, bearer of canopied banner similar to the latter.

She is robed like her companion, but the colours are different. Her robe is white, with a red apron or flap in front, and her over-mantle is also white, with a floral border lined with green. She wears a red corslet, elaborately decorated with green ornaments, which is fastened across the breast and under the L. arm; and from the shoulder there hang down slender streamers of a drab colour lined with light green.

19. Female attendant to the Empress, bearer of a "Paradise" banner. Without much exaggeration this banner could be considered as suggesting a small "Paradise of Kuan-yin"—the palace which radiates rays of light representing Kuan-yin who must be supposed to be within her palace, and Kuan-yin's peculiar symbols, the sun and the moon, which are placed in the heavens on either side of the palace. On the other hand since this is a Taoist fresco, the banner probably gives a picture of a Taoist heaven or retreat, the "Island of the Blest" usually associated with Lao-tzu.

On banners with similar pictures from Tun-huang, the sun sometimes has a red bird—the three-legged solar crow—with-in its circle; and the moon has a hare standing under a tree, and pounding a pestle in a mortar. In the Sung Dynasty painting of the Three Emperors, there is a banner behind the figure of the Empress of Earth, which has the same picture as



FIGURE 10

The Five Planetary Deities of the Northern Dipper.

this, but since it is a painting on silk more detail is given. In the two circles there are written the characters for sun (*jih*) and moon (*yüeh*) respectively; and in the sky below them are depicted the star groups of the Southern Dipper and the Northern Dipper, and above the palace two groups of the "Three Stars."

The attendant wears a white under-tunic, green over-mantle with dark border, simple ring bracelets, and the usual green cuff-protectors. The banner she carries is rectangular in form with clipped corners, and the staff is continuous through the centre to the top of the banner. The pole is white, decorated with green circles. On the banner is depicted a sea, in which is an island, on which stands a palace. From this palace emanate white rays which radiate fan-shape into the heavens. In the sky to the right is the red sun, and to the left the white moon.

20. Female attendant to the Empress, carrying a banner similar to the latter.

This bearer of the second banner is robed like her companion, and carries a similar banner, but her robes are of different colours. She wears a white robe with a pink border, and her mantle is green. Under a yellow-plaquetted belt a white kerchief is tucked in at the back, and from it hang down two red and one drab-coloured sash streamers, with bows in the centre. Her hair is arranged with parting in a double coil, and her two hair-pins have bright red jewels at the top, instead of the usual green jade tips.

C. *Right-Hand Group*

These ten figures represent the Ten Celestial Stems of the Chinese cycle. Five of them are in the character of the Five Planetary Deities (*cp. Figs. 11 and 12*), and the other five are their counterparts according to the Five Elements, and these wear the robes of civil officials. The five elements are wood, fire, earth, metal, water, and in the Cycle of the Stems there are two of each, so that each pair would include a planetary deity and a civil official. It is not entirely certain which official should be associated with what particular planet, but since the elements have their distinctive colours, the complexion of the officials may be somewhat of a guide to their associations (*Fig. 13*). All the ten have transparent haloes, but only the five officials carry tablets. These latter are dressed in a similar manner to the leading group of the Seven Stars, except that they have no ties to their caps, and do not carry thongs

with ear protectors, though they also wear "Lock" pectorals, and cuff-protectors.

In a banner now in the British Museum, which was obtained by Sir Aurel Stein from Tun-huang, and which is dated A.D. 897, a depiction of Buddha on a chariot is given, accompanied by the Five Planetary Deities. The cartouche in the upper left-hand corner gives the date and the subject of the painting. The figures there given are identical with the Five Planetary Deities of this fresco, and it is remarkable that there should be such close similarity of costumes, attributes, forms, and details, with a period of some 350 years intervening (*Figs. 11 and 12; cp. Fig. 10*).

21. The planetary deity Jupiter, who is the *chia* stem, the first of the ten, whose element is wood, and whose colour is green. He carries a platter of peaches, and holds a peach branch with one peach on it in his right hand. He ordinarily would have a boar's head in his head-dress, but this is missing (*cp. Figs. 12 and 10*).

He wears a white under-tunic, a bronze-coloured robe with plain yellow border, a green over-mantle, and a stole of green with dark centre and yellow lining. Over his robe in front is a red apron with white decorative band down the centre, and he has green cuff-protectors at the wrists. He wears a green belt, and also an upper breast belt of red. His shoe has a red up-turned point at the toe. His complexion is pink, and he has a long thin beard. His tiara-like cap is held on by a hat-pin, and there are no cap ties or thongs. He holds in his L. hand a plate of peaches, and in his R. hand one peach (*cp. Fig. 12*).

22. The planetary deity Mars, who is the *ping* stem, the third of the ten, whose element is fire, and whose colour is red. He carries an uplifted sword, fire comes from his uplifted left index finger, and in his head-dress is a conventionalized horse-head.

In his R. hand he carries a straight-edged sword pointing upward, with index finger over the cross-bar of the guard. His L. hand is lifted up and from the pointed index finger flames of fire curl upwards. He wears a cap, with hat-pin, and a stylized horse-head is in its centre (*cp. Fig. 12*). He wears a white under-tunic, a dark green robe, a red over-mantle lined with blue, a long red stole, and a green belt. His arm-guards have oblong plates overlapping upwards, and probably his leg-greaves would be similar, but they are not visible.

23. The planetary deity Saturn, who is the *wu* stem, the fifth of the



Banner from Tun-huang, Dated A.D. 897 (Br. Mus.)
The Five Planetary Deities

FIGURE 11

*Banner from Tun-huang. Now in the British Museum.
Buddha and the Five Planetary Deities. Date A.D. 897.*



FIGURE 12
Key to the Banner of the Five Planetary Deities.

THE BANNER OF THE FIVE PLANETARY DEITIES

This small polychrome painting on silk, a little over two feet in height, was obtained from Tun-huang by Sir Aurel Stein, and is now in the British Museum (*Serindia*, Pl. LXXI; ch. LIV: 007, p. 1059).

In a cartouche in the upper left-hand corner, is an inscription in Chinese, which gives the date as the fourth year of the period Ch'ien Ning, which is A.D. 897, and states that the Buddha seated on the chariot is attended by the Five Planetary Deities.

EXPLANATION OF THE KEY

1. Buddha Tejahprabha, seated on a chariot drawn by an ox, with altar, banners, and canopy, and rays of blue, green, and crimson radiating from his person.
2. Jupiter. As a bearded official, bearing in his hands a platter of fruit, and with a boar's head depicted over his head-dress (*cp. Fig. 10*).
3. Mars. A demonic figure with fiery hair and grotesque features. He is four-armed, and carries in R. hand arrow and sword, and in L. hand a trident. Above his head is a small blue horse-head (*cp. Fig. 10*).
4. Saturn. In the guise of an Indian pilgrim, carrying a ringed staff, such as Ti-tsang carries, and with the outline of a small ox-head above and behind his hair-knob (*cp. Fig. 10*).
5. Venus. In female form, playing upon a large lute with a very long plectrum expanding at the striking end in shape of fan. A similar plectrum, 8 inches long and made of crimson ivory, is among the T'ang objects of the Shosoin collection (*Shosoin Gomotsu Zuroku*, vol. I, Pl. 44). Above the head-dress of this figure is the form of a phoenix or other bird (*cp. Fig. 10*).
6. Mercury. In female form, with right hand holding a writing brush, and left hand carrying a writing tablet. In the centre of the large head-dress is the figure of a monkey (*cp. Fig. 10*).
7. The cartouche, with caption and date, equivalent to A.D. 897.



FIGURE 13

The Five Associates of the Celestial Stems.

ten, whose element is earth, and whose colour is yellow. He carries a pilgrim's staff, is shod with sandals, a small book-like object is in his right hand, and an ox-head is in the front of his head-dress. His mantle is lined with white fur having dark spots, suggestive of ermine.

He is depicted as an aged pilgrim (*cp. Fig. 10: 4*). In his L. hand he holds a gnarled staff. He wears sandals, which are probably made of straw. His under-tunic is white, his robe is brown with a blue border, and a cape of grey, lined with white fur and extending over the head like a "wind hood" (*fêng mao*), seems to take the place of a mantle. There are two green streamers down the front of his robe, and he wears green cuff-protectors. An ox-head design is in the centre of his head-dress.

24. The planetary deity Venus, who is the *kêng* stem, the seventh of the ten, whose element is metal, and whose colour is white. She is in female form and carries a lute, covered with a cloth which has a star-pattern design, while in her head-dress there is a bird or fowl. She is thus the Goddess of Music, as well as of Spring, which conception may be due to western influences.

She is dressed as a female, with an elaborate bird-design head ornament, and carries a lute, wrapped in a red cloth with stellar designs of "Three Star" groups (*Fig. 10; cp. Fig. 12: 5*). She wears a white under-tunic, a white robe with blue decorative border, a red apron in front, and a feathered fringe decorates the sleeves. Her hands are covered by drapery.

25. The planetary deity Mercury, who is the *jên* stem, the ninth of the ten, whose element is water, and whose colour is black. She is in female form, and carries a writing-brush in her right hand and a paper writing scroll in her left, while in her head-dress there is the figure of a monkey. In China, as in the West, Mercury is the messenger of the gods, and this might well be due to influence from the West.

She wears the customary white under-tunic, a black robe which is bordered with red, a white mantle with a ruff at the elbow, green cuff-protectors, and simple bracelets (*Fig. 10; cp. Fig. 12: 6*).

26. Civil official, probably representing the *yih* or second stem of the ten, whose element is wood, for he is the associate of Jupiter.

He wears a white tunic, a tan-coloured robe edged with blue, a red mantle, and a pea-green stole with dark-green centre. He carries a tablet, wears a "Long-life Lock" pectoral, green cuff-protectors, and a pink belt.

27. Civil official, probably representing the *ting* or fourth stem, whose element is fire, and who is associated with Mars, which is why his face is dark.

His mantle is blue, with yellow border lined with white, and his stole, green with a yellow lining, is draped round his waist. He wears a red apron, a red belt, his cap is mostly white, and his face is dark brown in colour.

28. Civil official, probably representing the *chi* stem, the sixth of the ten, whose element is earth, and who is associated with Saturn.

He wears a white mantle bordered with black, a red stole, and a red belt. His complexion is a dark tan colour.

29. Civil official, probably representing the *hsin* or eighth stem, whose element is metal, and whose associate is Venus.

His mantle is black bordered with pink; his stole is green with a dark centre, and he wears a red apron and a red belt. His shoes have a large red upturned point at the toe.

30. Civil official, probably representing the *kuei* or tenth stem of the cycle, whose element is water, and whose associate is Mercury.

He wears a green robe, and a yellow mantle with a dark floral border. His belt is green, and a white kerchief is tucked under it behind, over which a white sash, with bow in the centre, hangs down to the ground.

W. C. W.