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*Frederick W. Mote, Ch'en Pao-chen, W. F. Anita Siu, "Part A: The Early Scroll Book", The Gest Library Journal 2, no. 2 (1988): 51-75, accessed January 14, 2017, [https://library.princeton.edu/eastasian/EALJ/goodman\\_howard\\_1.EALJ.v02.n02.p001.2.0.pdf](https://library.princeton.edu/eastasian/EALJ/goodman_howard_1.EALJ.v02.n02.p001.2.0.pdf)*

## Part A. The Early Scroll Book

In China as in the ancient Mediterranean world, the earliest books were handwritten on long strips of soft material that could be rolled, making convenient units for carrying about, reading, and storing. In the Mediterranean world the material was papyrus, fundamentally different from paper, although from it our word for paper is derived. In ancient China the material was silk. During Roman times papyrus gave way to parchment and vellum, treated animal skins that could more readily be cut into rectangular sheets than joined into long strips, so the papyrus roll gave way to the codex, a stack of parchment sheets fastened together at one side. In China, silk began to give way to paper in the third century A.D. (although it was never fully displaced for calligraphy or painting). Paper could be rolled as easily as silk, and the roll or "scroll book" (*chüan*) continued to be the standard format for the book for many centuries. It was not until printing from wooden blocks was introduced in the seventh or eighth century that a new material factor, the practical limits on the size of wooden blocks, imposed shape and size on pages. That is when the roll gave way to stacks of pages stitched together to form a *ts'e*, or volume. Thus the new form of the book in China came to resemble the somewhat earlier new form of the book in Europe, the codex. The implications for design of the shift from long strips to rectangular page-size units have intrigued art historians East and West. In China, before that change occurred the scroll book had achieved a long history of high artistic significance. As in the West when printing finally appeared there in the fifteenth century, the venerated traditions of the hand-copied book were slowly and reluctantly displaced; they set the standards for the early printed "imitations."

The history of that hand-written scroll book thus goes back to the *po-shu*, the books written on silk, known from literary records as having com-

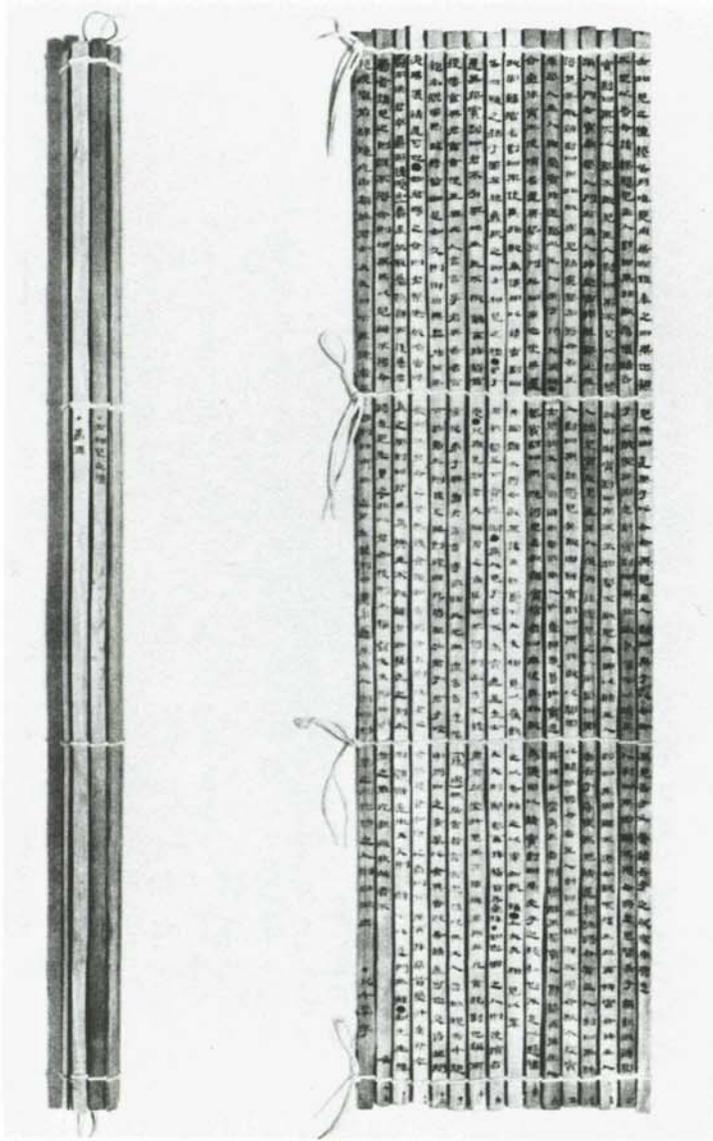
menced as early as the seventh century B.C. (although the earlier form of the book written on strips of wood or bamboo continued to be used through Han times). A few beautiful examples from pre-imperial times have been found. The most extensive finds however are from early Han, from a pair of tombs excavated at Ma-wang-tui near the Hunan city of Ch'ang-sha in 1972. Dating from about 190 B.C., they contained many objects in perfect state of preservation, including a dozen or more extensive pre-Han texts written on silk. We have no example of *po-shu* to display here.

Here we see a number of important hand-written scroll books all written on paper. Of greatest historic interest is the scroll written by So Tan, signed and dated to a date corresponding to 270 A.D. It contains the latter forty percent of the famous Taoist text, the *Lao Tzu* (or *Tao-te Ching*). It may be the earliest scroll book written in ink on paper anywhere in the world. It was preserved in the cache at Tun-huang discovered by Sir Aurel Stein in 1907. It can be compared with photographs of the Ma-wang-tui *po-shu*, or silk manuscript, of the *Tao-te Ching* written about 190 B.C. These texts, about 450 years apart, are the two earliest known versions of the famous Taoist work. Note the development of the calligraphy and the continuities of format.

With the coming of Buddhism to China during the Han period, there were many reasons for making copies of Buddhist writings, the sutras. A distinct style of standard script developed, as skilled copyists, whose names we usually do not know, standardized the copying of sutras. The style of their calligraphy is often called "*hsieh-ching-t'i*" or sutra-writing style. It has its own logic, stressing smooth uniformity, varying in artistic quality but recognizably of one genre. Here we see a number of outstanding examples of sutras, mostly from Tun-huang and dating from the sixth through the ninth centuries.

Labels no. 24-25 are by Siu. The essays and all remaining labels are by Ch'en.

## THE SCROLL BOOK



24. *Formal ceremonies at a meeting of scholars (Shih hsiang-chien chih li)*. Replica of wooden strips in clerical script.

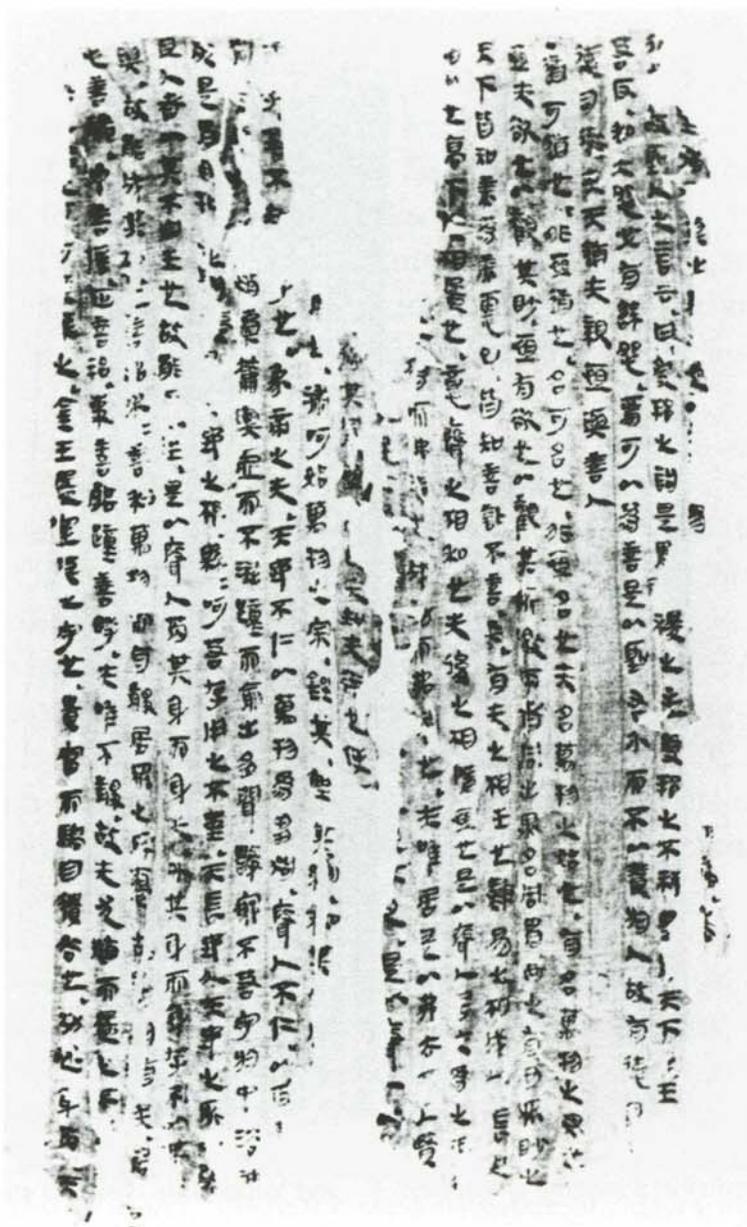
Date: early 1st c. B.C.

Dimensions: 55.5 cm long.

Source: Chung-kuo k'o-hsüeh-yüan k'ao-ku yen-chiu-so, comp., *Wu-wei Han-chien* (Peking: Wen-wu, 1964), p. 24; excavated from M5, Mo-tsui-tzu, Kansu.

Although paper had already come into use by the Han period (206 B.C.-220 A.D.), wooden and bamboo strips were still widely used as an inexpensive material for writing until the third century. Classical texts written on such strips

and bound into a set, as shown here, constituted an early form of the book. With the individual strips fastened in a fixed sequence, the text was kept in the right order. Before an inscription was executed with a brush in black pigment, the writing surface had to be polished and sometimes covered with a coating. For binding, notches were cut onto the side of the strips where they were to be fastened with hemp or leather string. On this set of wood strips is preserved a text on scholarly ritual and decorum. The brushwork is highly finished and the composition gracefully balanced. The spacious arrangement adds to our visual enjoyment.

25. *Lao-tzu*. Ink on silk in seal script.

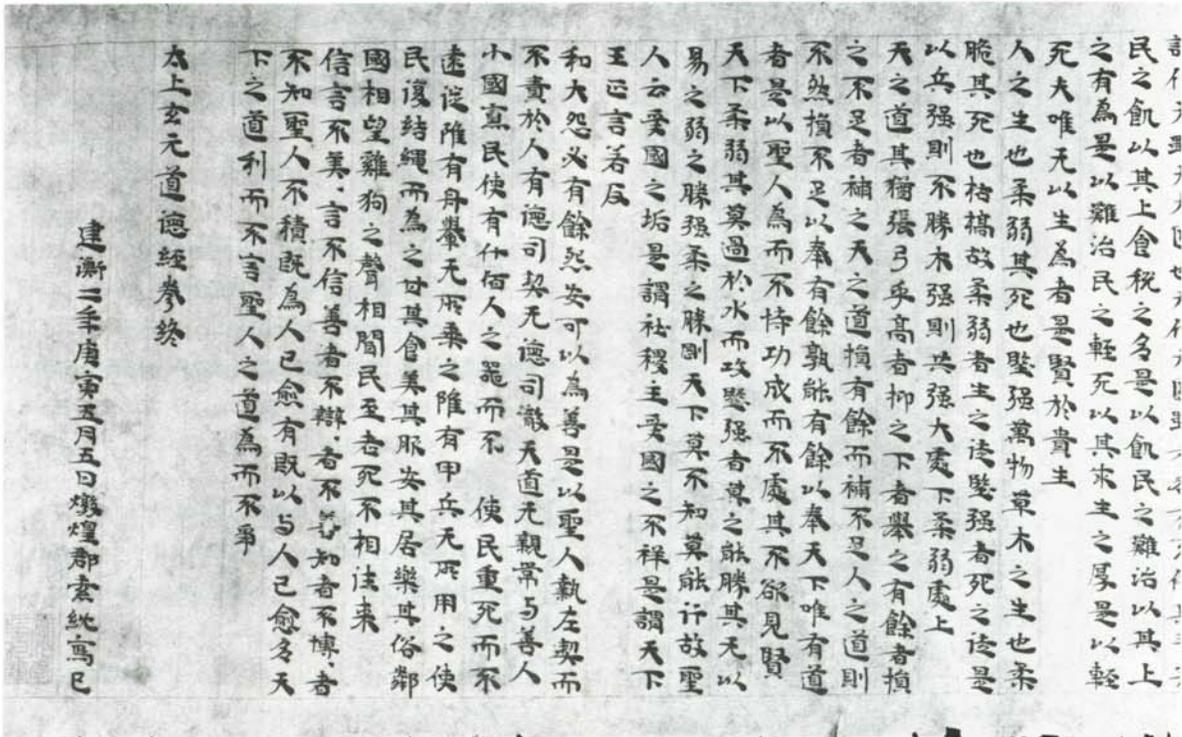
Date: early 3rd c. B.C.

Dimensions: 18 cm wide.

Source: Ma-wang-tui Han-mu po-shu cheng-li hsiao-tsu, comp., *Ma-wang-tui Han-mu po-shu Lao-tzu* (Peking: Wen-wu, 1976), fig. 1; excavated from M3, Ma-wang-tui, Ch'angsha, Hunan, in 1974-5.

Ancient texts preserved on silk manuscript were an early form of the book. Written on this partially deteriorated manuscript are two Taoist classics, the *Te-ching* and the *Tao-ching*,

and four other ancient texts dealing with moral issues and military affairs. The text is executed in small-seal script, which had already undergone a partial evolution to clerical script. The pictographic nature of the seal script here has been adjusted to quicker, more regularized writing, as seen in the pausing and thickening of rightward diagonals and the emphatic left-turning sweeps. The vertical columnar format, marked with fine ink lines, derives from bamboo strips. Found in a tomb datable to 168 B.C., this silk manuscript was probably acquired during the lifetime of the tomb's deceased and cherished as a rare and antique item.



26. *Transcription of the Tao-te ching*. Detail of handscroll in clerical script, ink on paper.

Calligrapher: So Tan (ca.250 - ca.325 A.D.).

Date: 270 A.D.

Dimensions: 30.8 cm high.

Collection: The John B. Elliott Collection on loan to The Art Museum, Princeton University (L1985.52)

Important archaeological finds in China at the turn of this century occurred during the exploration of the Sutra-storage Cave (*ts'ang-ching tung*) at Tun-huang in Kansu province. The collection in the cave consists of a great variety of historical documents that touch upon almost every aspect of Chinese culture from the third to the eleventh century. The documents include both religious and secular themes; and the media include visual and literary forms, mostly preserved on silk and

paper scrolls. A large proportion of these scrolls are manuscripts of Buddhist sutras and Confucian or Taoist classics, among which the earliest work is a copy of the *Tao-te ching* (no. 26), dated 270 A.D. and transcribed by So Tan (ca. 250-ca.325).<sup>1</sup> It is now in the John B. Elliott Collection on loan to the Art Museum, Princeton University.

So Tan was born into a literary family at Tun-huang. His uncle So Ching (239-303) was a scholar, geomancer, and talented calligrapher who specialized in the cursive-script style. In 264, So Ching and his four cousins entered the Imperial Academy (T'ai-hsüeh) in Lo-yang, then the capital of the Wei Kingdom (220-265 A.D.), and became famous as the "Five Dragons from Tun-huang." Possibly the young So Tan joined his uncles in the Imperial Academy at this time. In Lo-yang

he became interested in Taoism, which probably was introduced to him by his friends from southeast China, then the center of the religion. Probably through their connections he moved to Nanking, the capital of the Wu Kingdom (221-280), and adopted the calendar year of the Wu reign to date his works. He finished the transcription of the Princeton *Tao-te ching* in 270.<sup>2</sup> At the end of the scroll, he inscribed: "On the fifth day of the fifth month of the *keng-yin* year, the second year of the Chien-heng reign, So Tan from Tun-huang Commandery finished writing this" (*Chien-heng erh nien keng-yin wu-yüeh wu-jih Tun-huang chün So Tan hsieh i*). The extant manuscript in Princeton offers but a fragment of the original classic, attributed to Lao Tan (active ca. 5th c. B.C.). The characters are written

within 118 ink-ruled columns on fragile yellowish paper. According to Professor Jao Tsung-i, the So Tan manuscript was primarily based on an ancient version of the *Tao-te ching* with commentary by Ho-shang-kung (fl. ca. 3rd c. A.D.) and is different from another version with commentary by Wang Pi (226-249).<sup>3</sup>

The calligraphic style of the So Tan manuscript demonstrates a relationship

27. *Chien Kuan-nei hou Chi-chih piao* (*Memorial to recommend Chi-chih, Marquis of Kuan-nei*). Detail of rubbing, ink on paper.

Calligrapher: attr. Chung Yu (ca.170 - 230).

Date: original rubbing from N. Sung (960-1127).

Dimensions: 13.7 x 25.7 cm.

Source: *Shodō* 3, no. 111.



with that of the great calligrapher Chung Yu (ca. 170-230). Squat in shape, each character shows elements of clerical-script (*li-shu*), characterized by wavy horizontal strokes (*p'o*) and strongly accented flaring diagonals (*chieh*, or *na*). The stress on these flaring diagonal strokes gives each character a stable base and balances the composition. Each stroke has a smooth silhouette, which results from the steady movement of a soft brush controlled by a highly trained hand. In its overall effect, the calligraphy looks natural, relaxed, and rhythmical. These characteristics, including squat composition, emphatic diagonal strokes, relaxed brushwork, and an unembellished manner reflect the calligraphic style of Chung Yu, as seen in the "Memorial to Recommend Chi-chih, the Marquis of Kuan-nei" (Chien Kuan-nei hou Chi-chih piao) attributed to him (no. 27). It was not surprising that So Tan adopted Chung Yu's calligraphic style during his stay in Lo-yang, since Chung had been an influential statesman and calligrapher there until his death in 230.

Another example with aesthetic principles similar to those of the So Tan manuscript is a fragment discovered in Turfan in Chinese Turkestan, from *Records of the Wu Kingdom* (*Wu chih*), datable to ca. 300 A.D. (no. 28). The calligraphic style represented by the So Tan manuscript, moreover, became a convention for transcribing Buddhist sutras in the Six Dynasties Period (220-589) known as *Liu-ch'ao hsieh-ching t'i*. One of the best examples of this category is a manuscript entitled "Formula to Be Recited at the Ceremony of Receiving the Commandments" (Shih sung pi-ch'iu chieh pen), dated 406, now in the collection of the British Library (no. 29).<sup>4</sup>

Conventionally, the term *hsieh ching* has



28. *Wu-chih ts'an chüan* (Fragment from 'Records of the Wu Kingdom').

Detail of handscroll, ink on paper.

Author: Ch'en Shou (233-297).

Date: ca. 300.

Dimensions: 25.7 cm high.

Source: *Shodō* 3, no. 127.

referred only to the production of Buddhist sutras. But since it literally means a transcription either of the texts of sutras or of classics, then naturally it should also include transcriptions of Buddhist *tripitaka*, Taoist scriptures, and Confucian classics. Although the tradition of sutra transcrip-



29. *Shih sung pi-ch'iu chieh-pen* (Formula to be recited at the ceremony of receiving the commandments). Detail of handscroll, ink on paper.

Date: 406.

Dimensions: entire scroll 24.5 x 710 cm.

Collection: British Library (S. 797).

Source: Asahi Shinbunsha, *Dai'ei toshokan shūzō Tonkō Rōran kobunsho ten* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1983), p. 56, pl. 32.

tion has remained alive since Buddhism came to China in the first century A.D., there is no single persistent calligraphic style specifically designed for this category. The so-called "sutra transcription style" (*hsieh ching t'i*) is a vague term referring to the text being transcribed, rather than to a calligraphic style.

In fact, the many sutra transcriptions executed throughout the centuries can be

distinguished by different period styles, each reflecting a variety of sources and aesthetic concerns. For example, the "Six Dynasties Sutra Transcription Style" bespeaks its primary relationship with the style of Chung Yu, characterized by formal simplicity (see above concerning the So Tan manuscript). In contrast, the unique calligraphic style of the "T'ang Sutra Transcription" category clearly differs from works of the Six Dynasties. This point can be illustrated by a stylistic analysis of a scroll entitled "Mo-ho po-jo p'olo-mi-to ching" (*Mahāprajñāpāramitā*)<sup>5</sup> by an anonymous T'ang calligrapher (no. 30) from the Sutra-storage Cave at Tun-huang.

This scroll consists of only one chapter from the original sutra entitled "Pienhsüeh p'in." The characters are written within ink-ruled columns on yellowish paper. The format consists of columns of seventeen characters, except in a few cases where the number of characters ranges from eighteen to twenty-two. The calligraphy of this scroll clearly contains elements of regular script (*k'ai-shu*), characterized by sophisticated brushwork, architectonic composition, and tight, even spacing.

The horizontal and vertical brush strokes are of similar width; dots and hooks are evident; and the flaring diagonals prominent in clerical script are less pronounced. Each stroke represents the subtle and complicated modulations that result from skillful shifts of the pressing-and-lifting movement of the brush. These sophisticated strokes are compressed into a square composition to form each character. They are tightly spaced from top to bottom in each column, but an open space is left between columns. This arrangement brings to the entire composition a

sense of rectitude and regularity. (Such characteristics are also found in three other Buddhist sutra scrolls datable to the same period: “Mo-ho po-jo p’o-lo-mi fangkuang ching kung-yang p’in,” “Ta-chi-ching hsien-hu-fen shou-chi-p’in,” and “San-mi-ti-pu lun.”<sup>6</sup> (See nos. 31-33.)

The development of regular-script calligraphy reached its apex in the T’ang period, when new aesthetic formulae in this genre flourished. The great masters were Yü shih-nan (558-638), Ch’u Sui-liang (596-658), Ou-yang Hsün (557-641), and Yen Chen-ch’ing (709-785), whose influence was widespread and prolonged. A ninth-century rubbing, “An Inscription on the Stele at Hua-tu Temple” (Hua-tu-sso pei ming) by Ou-yang Hsün, which was discovered at the Sutra-storage Cave at Tun-huang,<sup>7</sup> indicates that calligraphers in the Tun-huang Buddhist scriptoria knew and adopted the formulae of these masters.

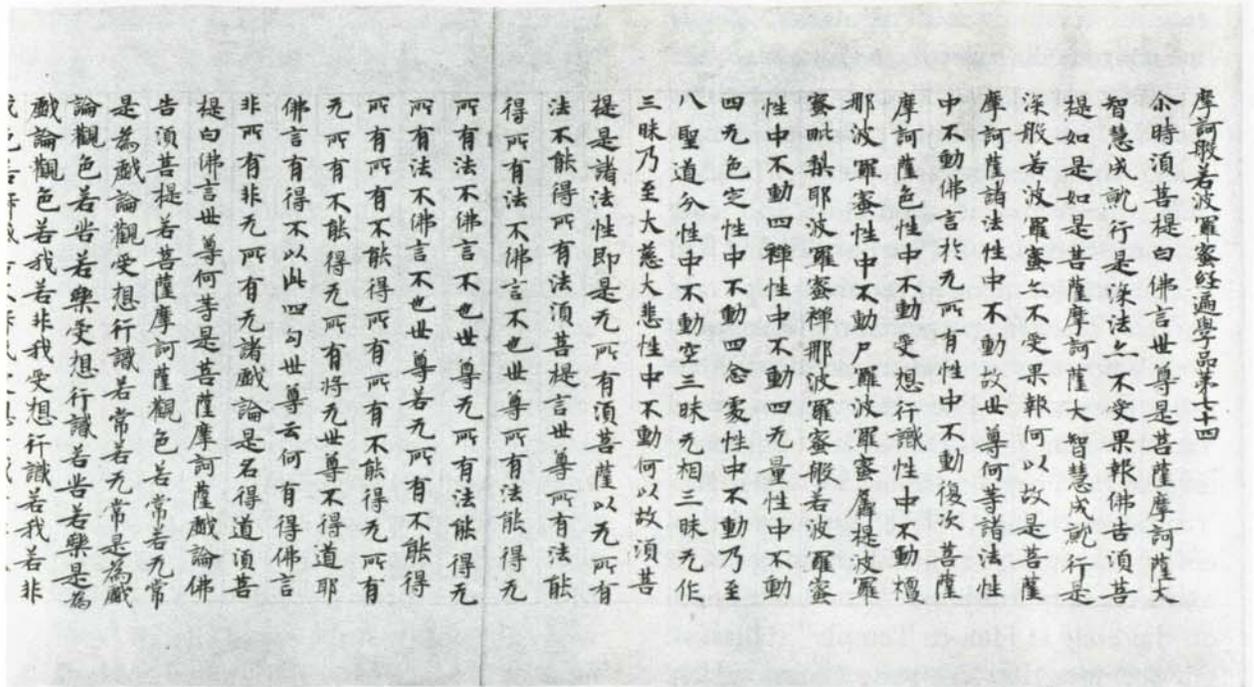
Mahāyāna Buddhism was introduced from China to Japan by Paekche monks in the mid-sixth century. Patronized by Prince Shōtoku (572-621), the new religion began to flourish nationwide. Based on Chinese models, numerous Buddhist temples were erected, statues created, and sutras transcribed. Transcription of Buddhist sutras in Japan had by the twelfth century undergone a three-stage artistic evolution. In the Nara period (645-710), sutra transcription was primarily carried out by monks. Most sutras executed in this period were written in ink on plain paper; occasionally they were transcribed in gold paste on indigo paper. In the early Heian period (794-897) these practices began to change: the sutras copied in this period were often transcribed in gold or silver ink on colored paper and were accompanied by illustrations, either preced-

ing the text as frontispieces, or paralleling the text.<sup>8</sup>

In the late Heian period (897-1185), the development of sutra transcription reached its apex, both in quality and in quantity. The transcription of sutras became a new fashion among the ruling class. Aristocrats saw sutra transcription not only as a means of expressing their religious piety, but also as a means of accumulating the personal merit needed to achieve salvation. Motivated by this conviction, some of them initiated projects to transcribe enormous numbers of sutras that were then dedicated to temples.<sup>9</sup> Most of the sutras copied in this period were physically embellished in the Japanese style known as “Decorated Sutras” (*soshoku-gyō*), with text written in gold or silver paste on colored paper and preceded by a frontispiece and a floral-decor cover on the reverse.<sup>10</sup>

The most distinctive groups of such sutra include the Jingoji Sutras (*Jingoji-kyō*) dedicated by the imperial family to the Jingo Temple in 1141,<sup>11</sup> the Chūsonji sutras (*Chūsonji-kyō*) dedicated by the Fujiwara family to Chūsonji late in the twelfth century, and the “Sutras Dedicated by the Taira Family to the Itsukushima Shrine” in 1164. The latter are known as the Heike-nō-gyō.<sup>12</sup> In terms of decoration, the Jingoji and Heike-nō-gyō sutras represent a drastic contrast in aesthetic taste. Most of the decor on the latter is colorful and innovative — an appropriate reflection of the character of the Taira family, then overwhelming the country with wealth and political success. In contrast, the decoration on the Jingoji sutras is more conservative. Its simple, refined, and elegantly restrained quality reflects an older tradition of sutra illustration.<sup>13</sup>

The Jingoji sutras clearly show formal



30. *Mo-ho po-jo p'o-lo-mi ching*  
(*Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*). Detail of  
handscroll, ink on paper.

Date: T'ang period (618-907).

Dimensions: 27.3 cm high.

Collection: The John B. Elliott Collection on  
loan to The Art Museum, Princeton  
University (L1986.104b).

affinities to T'ang models, as seen in a scroll entitled "Kompon setsu issai ubu binaya" (Ken-pen-shuo i-ch'ieh yu-pu pinayeh; Sanskrit: *Mūlasarvāstivāda nikāya vinaya sūtra*)<sup>14</sup> now in the collection of the Art Museum, Princeton University (no. 34). The scroll consists of two main parts: the text of the sutra and a frontispiece, which shows the Buddha preaching under Vulture Peak. The physical relationship between the text and the frontispiece as such is a formal adoption of the T'ang mode, as seen in the *Diamond Sutra*

(*Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*), dated 868, in the British Museum (no. 35). Both the text and the painting of the Jingoji scroll are executed in gold and silver paste on indigo paper — the same media popularly used in the T'ang period.<sup>15</sup> The text is arranged into columns defined by silver lines. In most cases, each column comprises seventeen characters, the number commonly used in most Japanese sutra scrolls. This style also can be regarded as a T'ang influence, and is represented by the Buddhist sutras found at Tun-huang.

In the text such characters as *erh* and *o* were written in archaic forms. Archaic scripts of this kind were used formulaically in T'ang sutra writings, and thus show how faithfully the Jingoji sutra preserved the T'ang model. In terms of calligraphy, the characters of the Jingoji scroll are written in refined regular-script style, neatly configured, and evenly



31. *Mo-ho po-jo p'o-lo-mi fang-kuang ching kung-yang p'in*. Detail of handscroll, ink on paper.

Date: early T'ang period (ca. early 7th c).

Dimensions: entire scroll 25.73 x 466.73 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

spaced. This is reminiscent of the T'ang sutra writings seen in nos. 30-33. The stylistic affinity between the Jingoji sutra and its T'ang sources proves that T'ang culture remained influential in Japan during the Heian period.

Esoteric Buddhism entered Japan during the Nara period (710-794) because of constant cultural contact with China. It was at that time regarded as a mystery religion (*mikkyō*), and initially gained little prominence. During Heian, however, this religion began to flourish, and eventually became one of the most influential Buddhist sects, dominating Japanese religious life throughout the period. The florescence of Esoteric Buddhism in Japan has been accredited to the "Eight Masters,"

憐愍衆生行施時  
安住調柔而脩施  
若於財施為大主  
行一切施常踊躍  
又於法施為上首  
能知甚深寂滅法  
安住甚深諸法中  
雖被極罵无恚恨  
或時聞說此經典  
唯為法住利世間  
於諸法中不秘恠  
但為經隆諸佛種  
遠離睡眠與癡恚  
不自稱讚輕毀他  
正信諸佛及法僧  
不忘一切諸恩報  
若能真說无妄言  
所作雖微獲報廣  
若人有能具斯法  
彼得菩提尚不難

決定除疑无變退  
若能如是得三昧  
凡有憍慢嫉妬心  
若能如是得三昧  
善解後妙脩多羅  
若能如是得三昧  
善能堪忍无嫉妬  
若能如是得三昧  
書寫讀誦巧廣宣  
若能如是得三昧  
不求利養及名聞  
若能如是證三昧  
除新嫉妬及蓋纏  
能滅我相得三昧  
常行誠心无欺誑  
彼證三昧无難難  
凡有所行亦不失  
彼於證法无障閼  
清淨持戒謙有思  
何況甚深微妙定

大集經賢護分授記品第十一

32. Ta-chi-ching hsien-hu-fen shou-chi-p'in.

Detail of handscroll, ink on paper.

Date: T'ang period (618-907).

Dimensions: entire scroll 25.72 x 93.35 cm.

Collection: Gest Oriental Library.

三弥部論

歸命一切智我從此語如是 是人臨欲  
死時成無記心其以何業往生 答有苦記  
心或業往惡道或無記心白業往善道體性  
記心 以是故隨行以無記心起無記業為  
業制故注生如是 是故行無偏若眠若問  
若無心死行制故往業道此二段語顯相  
應第三段語顯不失彼業自作自業 自作  
者何義 答受義故 自業者何義 答分  
義何以故 不往他故 是生何以故  
方便故 是行處 何以故 由彼故  
是不滅 何以故 受故 此顯現故 此  
世作業不滅故 由報業受生四處 此欲  
界死欲界生有處往中間有處受中間有如  
是 若欲界處若色界處第一處第三處異  
生可說 如是從欲界中間有受欲界中間  
有從欲界中間有受色界中間有 如是  
此欲界死受生中間有如是 如是第三處  
從色界中間有受色界中間有如此我等死  
受中間有如是 云何世尊聲聞從中間有  
受中間有非凡夫 云何 須陀洹從此  
生七死受天中間有住彼作斯陀舍果證是  
其從天中間有受人中間有住此作欲界  
證 是其從人中聞有受色界中間有  
是其住彼中間般涅槃地作向從從入別中  
間有於此處而般涅槃 如是聲聞過四中  
間有 有諸部說家巴斯陀舍 斯陀舍人  
中間有處至一間地處渡人中聞有如是

33. *San-mi-ti-pu lun*. Detail of handscroll,  
ink on paper.

Date: T'ang period (618-907).

Dimensions: 23.3 cm high.

Collection: The John B. Elliott Collection on  
loan to The Art Museum, Princeton  
University (L1986.61).

根本說一切有部毗奈耶卷第七 三藏法師義淨奉 翻譯  
 新入命學履第三之二 神護寺  
 今時薄伽梵在室羅伐城迦多林給孤獨園  
 時彼城中有一長者於同類族娶女為妻歡娛  
 未久便誕一息年漸長大母遂身六其父  
 於後更娶繼室于時長者告後妻曰汝頗能  
 於不親生子而存養育同共樂不吝言我能  
 承經多月婦遂有娘便生惡念我若生子當  
 以彼兒用充僕使不應令彼起傲慢心便給  
 度長惡食加以鞭杖若楚子告父曰父今知不  
 離親於我以惡衣食而見濟給數加鞭杖若  
 楚非常父報子曰我當為汝誠勸於母不使  
 更然便告妻曰賢首我於先時已相告語能  
 於不親生子而存養育同共樂不汝為言能  
 何故今時不順前語便於此子以惡衣食而  
 見濟給數加鞭杖若楚非常答言我為教詔  
 欲令勝進恐有世人恆笑於我實元異心夫  
 曰汝不順教更不得以惡衣食加諸楚毒令  
 生怨若報去更不如是不久之間便誕一子  
 遂於前子倍生惡意同前若楚子便生念我  
 父於母不能心過還後踵前若治於我今可  
 捨出家便至父所白言離親於我不垂慈念

34. *Komponsetsu issai ubu binaya*  
 (*Mūlasarvāstivāda nikāya vinaya sūtra*).  
 Detail of handscroll, gold and silver on  
 indigo paper.

Date: Late Heian period (ca. 1150).

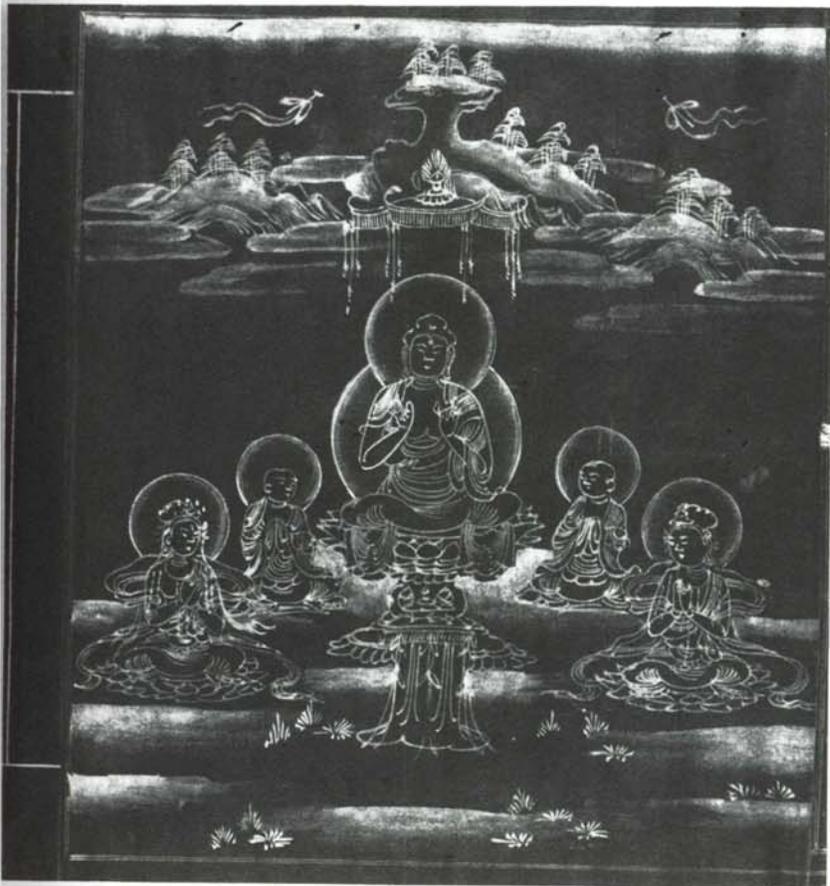
Dimensions: painting, 25.9 x 21.2 cm;  
 calligraphy, 25.9 cm high.

Collection: The Art Museum, Princeton  
 University (1959-121).

who included such important monks as Kūkai (774-835), Ennin (794-864), and Enchin (814-891). Each traveled to China and brought back large numbers of Esoteric Buddhist icons and scriptures edited in the K'ai-yüan period (714-741).<sup>16</sup>

Esoteric Buddhists believed that the only way to reach enlightenment is through the ceaseless practice of chanting Esoteric

sutras and meditating on Esoteric deities to the accompaniment of ritual gestures. Each deity was believed to hold a certain power to help followers quell emotional turmoil and reach eternal peace. The pictorial representations of these deities are based strictly on iconographic descriptions appearing in sutras. Depending on their nature, status, and power deities are represented either in merciful or in fearful appearances, and accompanied by attributes and emblems symbolizing their specific powers. They can be represented individually as independent icons, or shown hierarchically grouped in a schematic diagram called a *mandala*, which symbolizes each one's influence over a specific sphere of the Buddhist universe. Considered as pivotal vehicles to enlightenment, the Es-



oteric icons thus are important in both public and private rituals. In the Heian period, due to the popular expansion of religion, Esoteric icons were constantly copied with great accuracy and precision from earlier models. One of the most important works of this period is the “Ten Scrolls of Esoteric Icons” (*Zuzō jikan shō*) compiled by Byōdōbō Yōgen (some say by Shōjōbō Ejō) around 1135.<sup>17</sup>

The Ten Scrolls are an encyclopedic compilation of extant Esoteric icons, and became standards for copies in later periods. As preserved in later copies, the Ten Scrolls consist of ten categories of icon arranged in hierarchical order: starting with buddhas, bodhisattvas, and heavenly kings, and ending with celestial beings. Each icon is accompanied by a passage of

text that serves as an iconographic reference. It includes the sutra on which the icon is based, the original Sanskrit name of the icon, an emblematic Sanskrit character as insignia for the deity, and specific *mudra*, weapon, and vehicle by which the deity is identified.<sup>18</sup> The best example of these characteristics is a fragment showing the ninth of the Ten Scrolls copied by an Esoteric Buddhist monk, Konkōshi Ryōshō, in 1321.<sup>19</sup> The fragment, mounted as a handscroll, is now in the collection of the Art Museum, Princeton University.

The Princeton fragment is missing the scroll’s first five icons and text. It consists in total of seventeen sections of icons of heavenly kings, each accompanied on the right by its text, providing a strict formula



35. Frontispiece to *Chin-kang ching* (*Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*). Detail of handscroll, blockprint on paper.

Date: T'ang period (618-907).

Dimensions: 23.7 x 28.5 cm.

Collection: The British Library (P.2. Ch. ciii. 0014).

Source: Whitfield, *Art of Central Asia* 2, fig. 144.

for the execution of the icon. In some cases an annotation is added at the end of the text to give more iconographical references, as seen in the thirteen columns of writing immediately to the right of the Four Heavenly Kings in the middle of the fragment (no. 36). The annotation indicates that the coloration for the Four

Heavenly Kings is as follows: the King of the North (*Vaiśravaṇa*), dark blue; the King of the East (*Dhṛtarāṣṭra*), light blue; the King of the South (*Virūḍhaka*), red; and the King of the West (*Virūpākṣa*), white. It further explains that this formula was adopted from that for another set of the Four Heavenly Kings in the Great Eastern Temple (Tōdaiji), and the formulation of such color-cardinal relationships was borrowed from Chinese geomancy (*yin-yang chia*), rather than from traditional Esoteric iconography.

By the end of the ninth century, the Chinese had already applied woodblock printing technique to the reproduction of Buddhist sutras and illustrations. The most important extant works of this category are the scroll of the *Diamond Sutra*

(*Chin-kang ching*), dated 868, the "Image of Pi-sha-men t'ien" (*Vaiśravaṇa*), dated 947, and the "Image of Bodhisattva" (*Wen-shu p'u-sa*; Sanskrit: *mañjuśrī*), datable to the mid-10th century, all in the British Museum (nos. 37-38).<sup>20</sup>

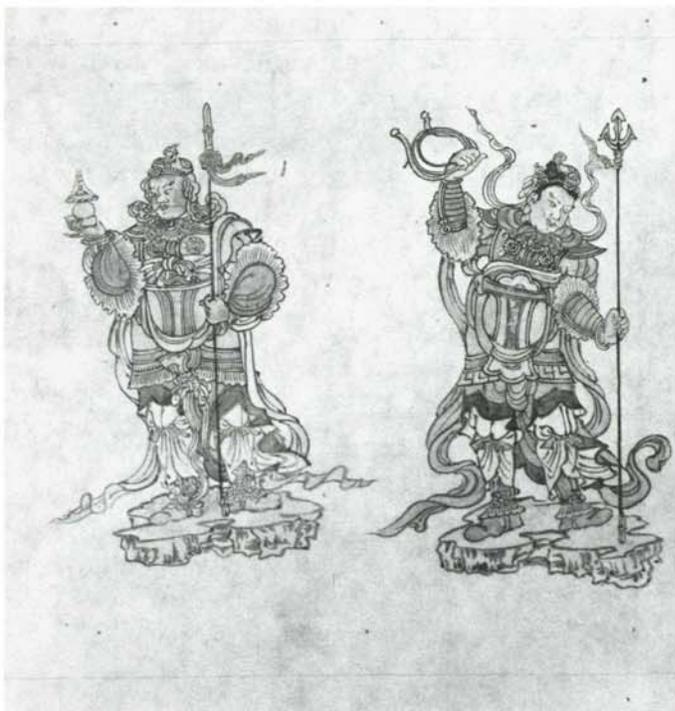
A remarkable breakthrough in the technique of woodblock printing took place in the eleventh century, when Pi Sheng, a Northern Sung (960-1127) official, invented movable type (*huo-tzu-pan yin-shua-shu*). This technological innovation can be considered the origin of modern typesetting. This efficient method of printing spurred the proliferation of books and Buddhist sutras from then on, and Buddhist scriptoria probably began to lose their importance as centers for reproducing sutras. Even so, highly developed printing techniques did not terminate the long history of sutra transcription. In fact, pious Buddhist calligraphers in later periods never ceased to transcribe sutras so as to incur blessings on special occasions. One of the best examples of this category is the *Diamond Sutra* copied by Chang Chi-chih (1186-1263), now in the John B. Elliott Collection (nos. 39a-b).<sup>21</sup>

Chang was brought up in Li-yang, Anhui, in a family famous for political and scholarly achievement, and he became a renowned calligrapher. His uncle Hsiao-hsiang (1132-1170) was a high-ranking official and esteemed calligrapher, who employed the writing style of Yen Chen-ch'ing. His father, Hsiao-po (c.s. 1163), was also a successful official. Chang Chi-chih himself passed the *chin-shih* examination and became the tutor to the crown prince. He completed this copy of the *Diamond Sutra* in memory of his father's death on the first day of the sixth lunar month of 1246 (indicated in the colophon at the end of the text, no. 39b). Written on

gridded paper, the calligraphy was originally mounted as a handscroll, then converted into an album in 1664.<sup>22</sup> The present album consists of 128 leaves;<sup>23</sup> each leaf contains four columns, each usually of ten medium-sized characters in regular-script style.

The calligraphy strongly demonstrates Chang's personal style: taut economic brushwork and open spacing. The dynamic aesthetic quality results from his synthesis of the brush techniques and compositional ideas of his predecessors, including Chung Yu, Wang Hsi-chih (321-379), Ch'u Sui-liang, Yen Chen-ch'ing, Li Yung (678-747), Sung emperor Hui-tsung (r.1100-1125), Su Shih (1036-1101), and Huang T'ing-chien (1045-1105).

The brushwork of the *Diamond Sutra* is extremely sophisticated (no. 39a). Each stroke contains internal variations in width, resulting from the shifts of pressure from the brush movements. These variations are most clearly seen in the horizontal strokes, each one of which looks thicker at its beginning on the lower left and thinner at its end on the upper right. This slightly tilting arrangement creates a sense of dynamic movement. The device originated in the "Epitaph for General Li Ssu-hsün" (*Yün-fei Chiang-chün Li Ssu-hsün pei*) by Li Yung. Another technique, in which the termination of the horizontal stroke is short and abrupt, can be traced back to Wang Hsi-chih, as seen in his "Letter on the Seventeenth Day" (*Shih-ch'i t'ieh*). But in other cases, the horizontal stroke is terminated with a sharp thin hook moving in a reverse direction. This device recalls the brush idiom of Sung emperor Hui-tsung, famous for his "slender-golden style" (*shou-chin t'i*). To balance these tilting, undulating horizontal



36. *Esoteric Buddhist icons*. Detail of handscroll fragment, ink and colors on paper.

Artist: Konkōshi Ryōshō.

Date: 1321.

Dimensions: 30 cm high.

Collection: The Art Museum, Princeton University (1958-42).

strokes, most of the vertical strokes are thin, rectilinear, and relatively even in width.

Most of the diagonal strokes extending from upper right to lower left look thin and simple in shape, but their strong force counterbalances the tilting. Here Chang is influenced by Huang T'ing-chien, particularly his "Letter to Chang Ta-t'ung" (Tseng Chang Ta-t'ung ku-wen t'i-chi). In contrast, the diagonals extending from upper left to the lower right are graceful in shape but complicated in brushwork.

They appear slender and elegant in the beginning but become thick and brisk at the end — a feature reminiscent of the brush idiom of Ch'u Sui-liang.

The configuration of the individual character is square and self-balanced, reflecting the aesthetic ideas of Yen Chen-ch'ing — those concerned with formal dignity and correctness. Yen's style was highly praised among Sung scholars, who considered calligraphy to be the imprint of the mind and the reflection of the artist's personality. Probably Chang Chi-chih adopted Yen's style through the teachings of his uncle Hsiao-hsiang.

The most notable aspect in Chang's composition is the sense of spaciousness. Although the idea of creating large spaces within small characters comes from Su Shih, Chang Chi-chih made his own interpretation. First, he often allowed space between strokes, especially in the

像法 出陀羅尼集經

東方天其像身長量一肘作身著種、天衣嚴飾

極令精妙與身相稱左手中屈垂下把刀右

手屈解向前仰手掌中著寶、上出光

南方天准前左手立同前天王法中解把刀右手

執綃稍根著地

西方天准前左手同前執銅異其右手手中而執亦索

北方天准前左手同前執銅柱地右手屈肘擊於佛塔

秘云此四天身色何東大寺大殿四天北方天紺

青東方天青色南方赤色西方天白色東寺誨

堂北方天紺色右手持塔太遠同東大寺據欲向手

栴此四天身不說陀羅尼集經又胎藏曼荼羅北方

天黃色餘天肉色依何父東大寺四天如此樣色耶

卷是依陰陽家方色也陰陽云南方火赤東木青

色也北方水色黑也西方金白色也依之為鎮四

方作四方色也、密教說水白色也此天色不依真言

但有青面北方天王陀羅尼法傳教大師之詩來

可引勘之也又西北立多聞天東北持國東南增長

天西南方廣目是一樣也但向東寺據如法輪寺也又

西北西方天東北、方天東南東方天西南增長天

是東大寺并東寺誨堂也

upper-left corner of an enclosure (such a device can be traced back to Chung Yu, in his "Memorial to Recommend Chi-chih"; see no. 27). Secondly, he usually combined two diverging strokes into a brief hook and left more open space in the character composition. And thirdly, he placed shortened and sharpened dots at a certain

distance from the character proper in order to enlarge the space between them.

As we have seen, all the versatile devices in brushwork, composition, and spacing bring to the writing of the *Diamond Sutra* the open, lively, and dynamic quality of Sung calligraphy.<sup>24</sup>



37. Pi-sha-men t'ien (*Vaiśravaṇa*). Album leaf, blockprint on paper.

Date: 947.

Dimensions: 40 x 26.5 cm.

Collection: The British Museum (Stein painting 245).

Source: Whitfield, *Art of Central Asia* 2, fig. 153.



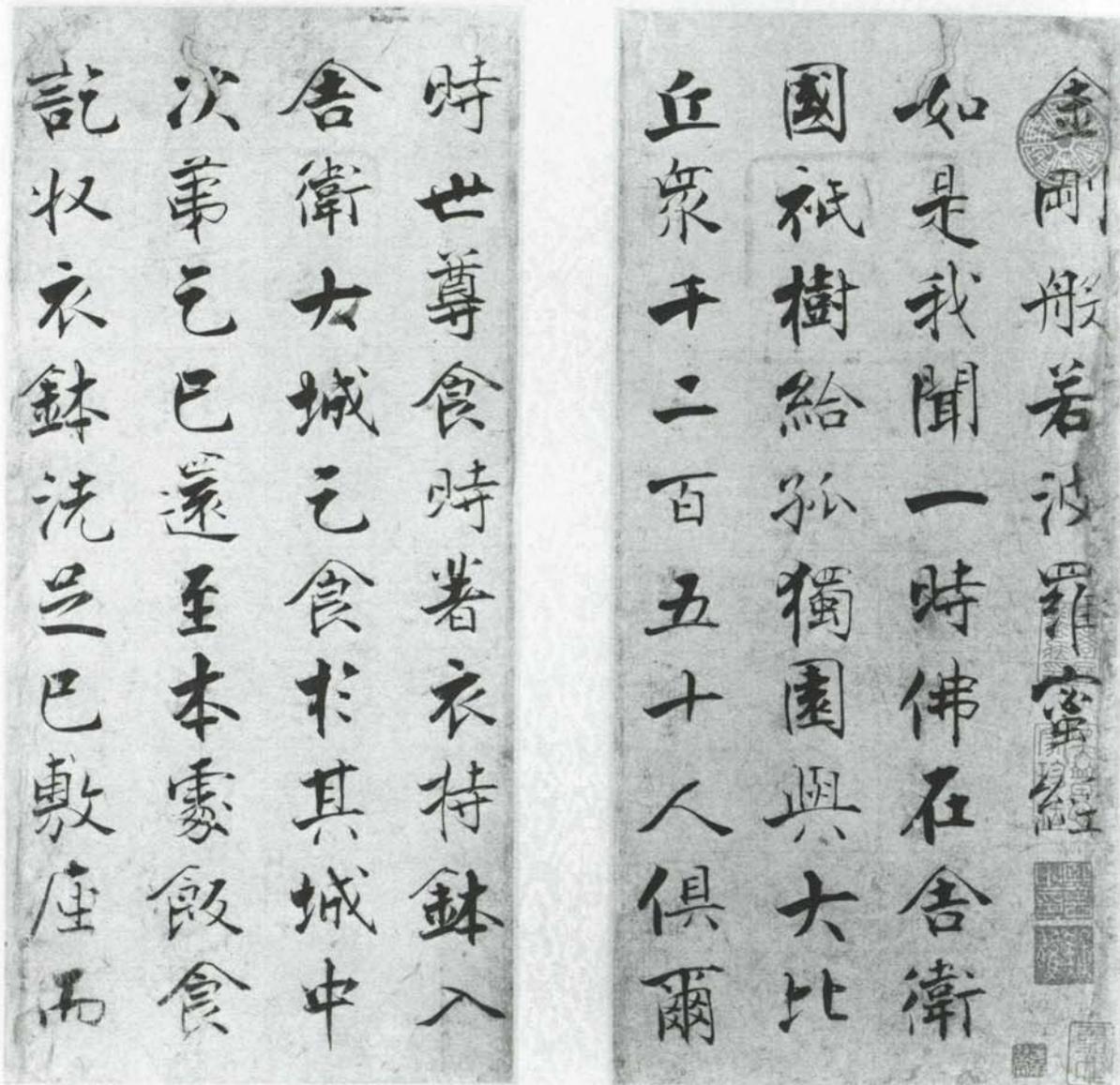
38. Wen-shu p'u-sa (*Bodhisattva mañjuśrī*). Album leaf, block print on paper.

Date: ca. mid-10th c.

Dimensions: 27.9 x 16.8 cm.

Collection: The British Museum (Stein painting 237).

Source: Whitfield, *Art of Central Asia* 2, fig. 142.



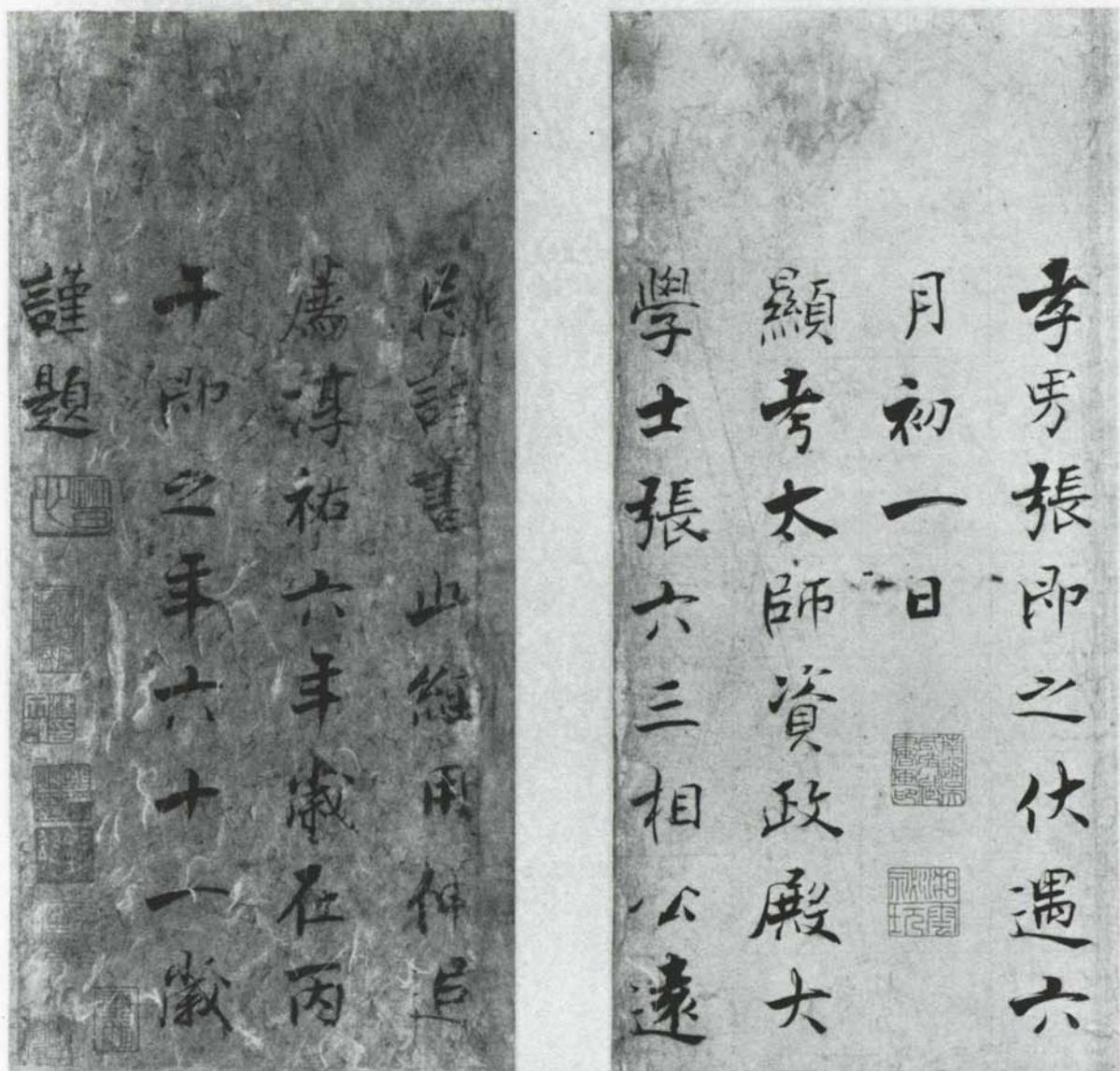
39a-b. *Chin-kang ching* (*The Diamond Sutra*). Album leaves, ink on paper.

Calligrapher: Chang Chi-chih (1186-1263).

Date: 1246.

Dimensions: each leaf, 29.3 x 13.7 cm.

Collection: The John B. Elliott Collection on loan to The Art Museum, Princeton University (L1970.177a-c).



39b.

## NOTES TO SECTION 2

## PART A

1. For further references to the So Tan Manuscript, see Jao Tsung-i, "Wu Chien-heng erh nien So Tan hsieh pen Tao-te ching ts'an chüan k'ao-cheng" [The So Tan Manuscript Fragment of the Tao-te ching, A.D. 270], *Journal of Oriental Studies* 2.1 (January 1955), pp. 1-30, English summary, pp. 68-71; Jao Tsung-i and Hibino Jōbu, "Taijō gengen dōtokukyō" [The So Tan Manuscript], in *Shodō* 3, pp. 187-188, pls. 119-120; and Frederick Mote, "The Oldest Chinese Book at Princeton," *The Gest Library Journal* 1.1 (Winter 1986), pp. 34-44.
2. Jao, "So Tan Manuscript," p. 2; also see Mote, "The Oldest Chinese Book," pp. 37-38.
3. Jao "So Tan Manuscript," pp. 13-15; see Mote, "The Oldest Chinese Book," pp. 40-41. The authentication of this scroll is primarily based on Jao Tsung-i, "So Tan Manuscript," an extensive textual study of different versions of the *Tao-te-ching*. However, the title at the end of the scroll, reading: "T'ai-shang hsüan-yüan Lao-tzu Tao-te-ching," raises a question about dating it to 270. The honorific title "T'ai-shang hsüan-yüan huang-ti" was first granted in 666 to Lao-tzu by the T'ang emperor Kao-tsung (r.649-783). (For further reference to the study of Lao-tzu see Morohashi Tetsuji, *Dai Kan Wa jiten* (Tokyo: Dai-shūkan shoten, 1958), vol. 9, pp. 145-47.
4. The manuscript (S. 797) is catalogued in Lionel Giles, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Manuscripts from Tun-huang in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1957), pp. 132-133. It is a long handscroll, measuring 24.5 x 710 cm. Both sides of the scroll are covered with characters. The text was transcribed by many hands, each in an individual calligraphic style. The section selected here is located near the end of the back of the scroll.
5. The sutra was translated from Sanskrit to Chinese by the Indian monk Kumārajīva (Chiu-mo-lo-shih; 344-413) in Ch'ang-an. For more references to the sutra see Ono Gemmyō et al., eds., *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten* [Bibliographical Dictionary of Buddhist Texts] (1935; rpt. Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1964-66), vol. 10, pp. 270-71.
6. Concerning these sutras, see Ono, *Bussho* 4, p. 123; 5, p. 258; 10, p. 274.
7. The photographic reproduction of this work was published in Roderick Whitfield, *The Art of Central Asia: The Stein Collection in the British Museum* (Tokyo and London: Kodansha Intl., 1983) 2, fig. 97.
8. The latter is exemplified by the "Illustrated Sutras of Cause and Effect Past and Present" (E-Inga-kyō). For general information on sutra transcription in Japan prior to the twelfth century, see Komatsu Shigemi, *Heikenō-gyō no kenkyū* [Study of the Illuminated Buddhist Sutras Dedicated by the Taira Family to the Itsukushima Shrine in the Last Years of the Heian Period] (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1976) 1, pp. 46-51, 74-105. For reference to E-Inga-kyō see Itō Takuji, "Shakyō yori mita Kakō Genzai Ingakyō gakan" [Research on Old Cop-

- ies of the Kakō Genzai Ingakyō Sutras: A Textual Study], *Bijutsu kenkyū* 4.149 (August, 1958), pp. 1-29; 4.150 (October, 1958), pp. 21-49.
9. See Komatsu, *Heike-nō-gyō* 1, pp. 78-79.
  10. For further reference, see Egami Yashushi, "Jinkō-in zō Shishi ginji Shingyō sōgenga no sansui hyōgen" [Landscape Depiction in the Frontispiece of Hannya Haramita Shingyō Owned by the Jinkō-in], *Bijutsu kenkyū* 3.301 (September 1975), pp. 1-15; Sudō Hirotohi, "Kodai to Ajia no kyō-e: Enryakuji zō konshi ginji Hokkekyō o meggute" [Paintings Embellishing Sutra Scrolls of Ancient East Asia, Centering on the Lotus Sutra Copied in Silver on Dark-blue Paper, Owned by the Enryaku-ji], *Bukkyō geijutsu* 172 (May 1987), pp. 48-89; and Kameda Tsutomu, "Shinkō-in zō shishi gindei Hannya shingyō no mi-kaeshi-e" [A Frontispiece Painting of the Sutra in the Shinkōin Collection], *Yamato bunka* 6 (April 1952), pp. 55-57.
  11. The Japanese imperial family dedicated about 2,317 scrolls to the Jingoji Temple in 1141. On the background of the Jingoji sutras, see Manabe Shunshō, "Konshi kinji Issai-kyō" [The Buddhist Tripitaka Written in Gold Paste on Indigo Paper], in Shōgakkan, comp., *Nihon meihō shiten* [Dictionary of Famous Art Treasures in Japan] (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1971), pp. 266-67; see also Komatsu, *Heike-nō-gyō* 1, pp. 78-79. Besides Jingoji, the imperial family also dedicated sutra scrolls to other temples, among which the most famous is Kunōji; see Shimada Shūjirō, "Kunōji-kyō" [Frontispiece Painting of the Hokkekyō Sutra in the Collection of Mr. Kinta Muto], *Yamato bunka* 10 (June 1953), pp. 43-47.
  12. The Taira family dedicated 32 scrolls to the Itsukushima shrine in 1164. For details, see Komatsu, *Heike-nō-gyō*, vol. 2.
  13. The aesthetic contrast in decorations between the Heike-nō-gyō and the Kunōji sutras was mentioned in Shimada, "Kunōji-kyō." For the background of the transcription of the Buddhist Tripitaka in the Heian period, see Komatsu, *Heike-nō-gyō* 1, pp. 74-77.
  14. The sutra was translated from Sanskrit to Chinese by the monk I-ching (635-713); see Ono, *Bussho* 3, p. 533.
  15. The application of gold and silver paste on indigo paper as media for Buddhist sutras was popular in the T'ang, as mentioned in the diary of Ennin (794-864), a Japanese monk who from 838-839 traveled in China to pay homage to famous temples. The reference was quoted in Komatsu, *Heike-nō-gyō* 1, p. 79.
  16. For the general background of the development of Esoteric Buddhism in Japan, see Ono Gemmyō, *Bukkyō no bijutsu oyobi rekishi* [The Art and History of Buddhism] (Tokyo: Bussho kenkyūkai, 1916), pp. 706-40, 971-1009; Manabe Shunshō, *Mikkyō bijutsu jisetsu* [An Introduction to the Art of Esoteric Buddhism] (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1986).
  17. See also Sawa Ryūken, *Butsuzō zuten* [Buddhist Iconography] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 1961), pp. 1-16, esp. 13-14.
  18. Matsunaga Shōdō, *Mikkyō daijiten*

- [Encyclopedia of Esoteric Buddhism] (1931; rpt. Kyoto: Mikkyō jiten henkai, 1945) 2, pp. 1327-28.
19. An inscription by the monk Konkōshi Ryōshō appears at the end of the scroll. In it he says that he copied and collated the text from a model "on the 9th day of the 4th month in the year *hsin-yu*, the 5th year of the Genkyō era [1321-1323]." "5th year" may be his mistake for "1st year," to which *hsin-yu* correctly corresponds in that cycle.
  20. For photographic reproductions of these three objects and many others, see Whitfield, *The Art of Central Asia*, 2, figs. 142-153.
  21. For further information about the history of this work, see Fu Shen, "Chin-kang po-jo p'o-lo-mi-to ching ping t'i-pa" [The Calligraphy of the *Diamond Sutra* and its Colophons], in Nakata Yūjirō and Fu Shen, eds., *Ō-Bei shūzō Chūgoku hōsho meiseki shū* [Masterpieces of Chinese Calligraphy in American and European Collections] (Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha, 1981) 2, pp. 148-151.
  22. See Pi Ting-ch'en's colophon attached to the calligraphy.
  23. The text included in this album is incomplete, with 248 characters missing; see Hsü Yüeh-shen's colophon (dated 1884) at the end of the album; see also Fu, "Chin-kang," p. 151.
  24. Chang Chi-chih's calligraphic style can hardly be related to the Buddhist scripture tradition, although he adopted many archaic scripts of the Six Dynasties.