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Pictorial Stones from Chinese Tombs

Author(s): Elinor Pearlstein

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# Pictorial Stones from Chinese Tombs

*Formerly, when the Master [Confucius] was staying in Sung, he saw that Hwan, the minister of War, had been for three years having a stone coffin made for himself without its being finished and said, "What extravagance! It would be better that when dead he should quickly decay away."*<sup>1</sup>

Current archaeology is progressively revealing that aristocratic tombs in ancient China were not only furnished but constructed as lifelike dwellings for the deceased. Through the early imperial age (Ch'in through T'ang dynasties, third century BC-ninth century AD), ceramic burial models of earthly necessities and luxuries, ranging from miniature farmyards to retinues of court ladies, were interred to provide for the well-being of the soul (*p'o*) in a familiar underground environment.<sup>2</sup> Since the early twentieth century, the artistic and historical significance of these models (*ming-ch'i*, "spirit articles") has been recognized.<sup>3</sup> However, the appearance of their environment — the architecture, furniture, and interior decoration of tomb chambers — remained the well-kept secret of tomb robbers before the widespread introduction of government-supervised, scientifically controlled excavations in 1949. The relatively portable *ming-ch'i* had been pilfered and delivered to the art market relatively intact, but the more cumbersome clay and stone architectural and coffin members were already dismantled or broken beyond recognition when they surfaced in museums and private collections during the first half of this century.

Among these architectural fragments were pictorial stones (*hua-hsiang-shih*) or stone-carved pictures (*shih-k'e-hua*) — slabs carved and engraved with figurative images and decorative patterns. Chinese and Western collectors alike reproduced the surface designs in rubbings or ink squeezes<sup>4</sup> and studied them as examples of early pictorial art, which has not survived in the more fragile mediums of silk, paper, and wood.

To reconstruct these fragments into their original forms, however, scholars had few clues besides literary allusions. Classical texts abound in records of mourning rites and advance preparations for elaborate burials, but accounts of tomb interiors are metaphoric rather than precise. While they offer terse analogies between tombs and living quarters,<sup>5</sup> almost no above-ground structures survive to explicate these analogies: architecture in traditional China was "deliberately ephemeral."<sup>6</sup> Important buildings — religious or secular, public or private — shared the basic plan of a pavilion with wooden structural members, raised on a stamped earth foundation faced with brick or stone and covered with a tile roof. Between the foundation

and roof, walls of plastered clay served merely as screens and partitions. Great Chinese architects were carpenters rather than stonemasons — masters of the same techniques of joinery that applied to fine wood furniture — and the timber frameworks that they designed were adaptable to many uses but were not built to endure more than one or two generations. Consequently, even the grandest edifices of ancient China must be reconstructed from their tops and bottoms: from foundations, pillar bases, and fragments of roof tile. Pillars, crossbeams, and walls have almost invariably disintegrated. Stone, like brick, was restricted to defensive ramparts, bridges, foreign-inspired pagodas, and above-ground mortuary shrines that bore little structural resemblance to architecture for the living.

Many of the pictorial stones that have found their way from tombs to museums were initially exhibited as fragments whose original purposes and contexts were unknown. Except for a few post-and-lintel structures identified as doorways, they were vaguely labeled "tomb panels" or "mortuary stones." Three such tomb panels, all very different in design, were already in the collection of the Cleveland Museum when in 1982 Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Lange donated five slabs whose common border design identified them as parts of a single unit (see Figure 3).<sup>7</sup> The stream of recent archaeological finds, which has begun to clarify the structure and evolution of early Chinese tombs and their stone components, indicates that all but the earliest of our stones (Figure 1)<sup>8</sup> were structures modeled after architecture and furniture used by the living and built primarily of wood. The evidence provided by these finds is explored here for clues toward reconstructing the original forms and settings of the pictorial stones now in the Cleveland collection.

Pictorial stone carving in China has been, in varying proportions, both a plastic and a graphic art. Its technical and stylistic development in the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) accompanied the rise of tomb decoration in other mediums, including stamped tiles and carved and painted bricks. Stones from tomb chambers and mortuary shrines reveal that by the end of Han virtually all the techniques of later Chinese stone carving were already in use.<sup>9</sup> Han images are alternatively bold or refined, partially depending on the nature of the stone and the tools used to work it. Whereas porous sandstone lends itself only to broad sculptural treatment with a knife or chisel, dense limestone can be polished to make smooth tablets for carving flat relief or engraving linear designs. Engraving, which allows the burin or stylus to imitate movements of the paint-brush, had the greatest potential as pictorial art. By the T'ang Dynasty

Front cover: *Green Dragon of the East* (Detail of Figure 3).  
Back cover: *White Tiger of the West* (Detail of Figure 3).

Figure 1. *Relief from a Tomb Chamber*. Sandstone, 120 x 49.5 x 5 cm. China, Eastern Han Dynasty, first-second century AD. John L. Severance Fund. CMA 62.280

(618-907), styles in stone engraving closely followed those in painting.<sup>10</sup>

#### Han Door-Leaf (CMA 62.280)

The sculptural type of carving is represented by a rough sandstone panel of bold and ingenuous design – hieratic animals silhouetted against a background of diagonal striations (Figure 1). The two uppermost creatures resemble the Red Bird of the South and the Green Dragon of the East – two of the four directional symbols of ancient Chinese cosmology, metaphysics, and folklore.<sup>11</sup> But the lowest register, containing two crane- or stork-like birds lifting a fish, does not carry out the orthodox directional symbolism. Instead, this assemblage may symbolize water, earth, and sky.<sup>12</sup> Whatever its meaning, the anatomical combination of semi-frontal bird legs with rigidly profiled heads, wings, and tails is archaic and purely conceptual; only where a front paw, rear leg, and tailfeather straddle the framed border is there any reference beyond the two-dimensional plane.

Figure 2. *Pair of Doors from a Tomb Chamber*. Brownish-gray stone, 131.5 x 64 cm. (left), 132 x 62.5 cm. (right). China, Eastern Han Dynasty, first-second century AD. von der Heydt Collection, Rietberg Museum, Zurich.

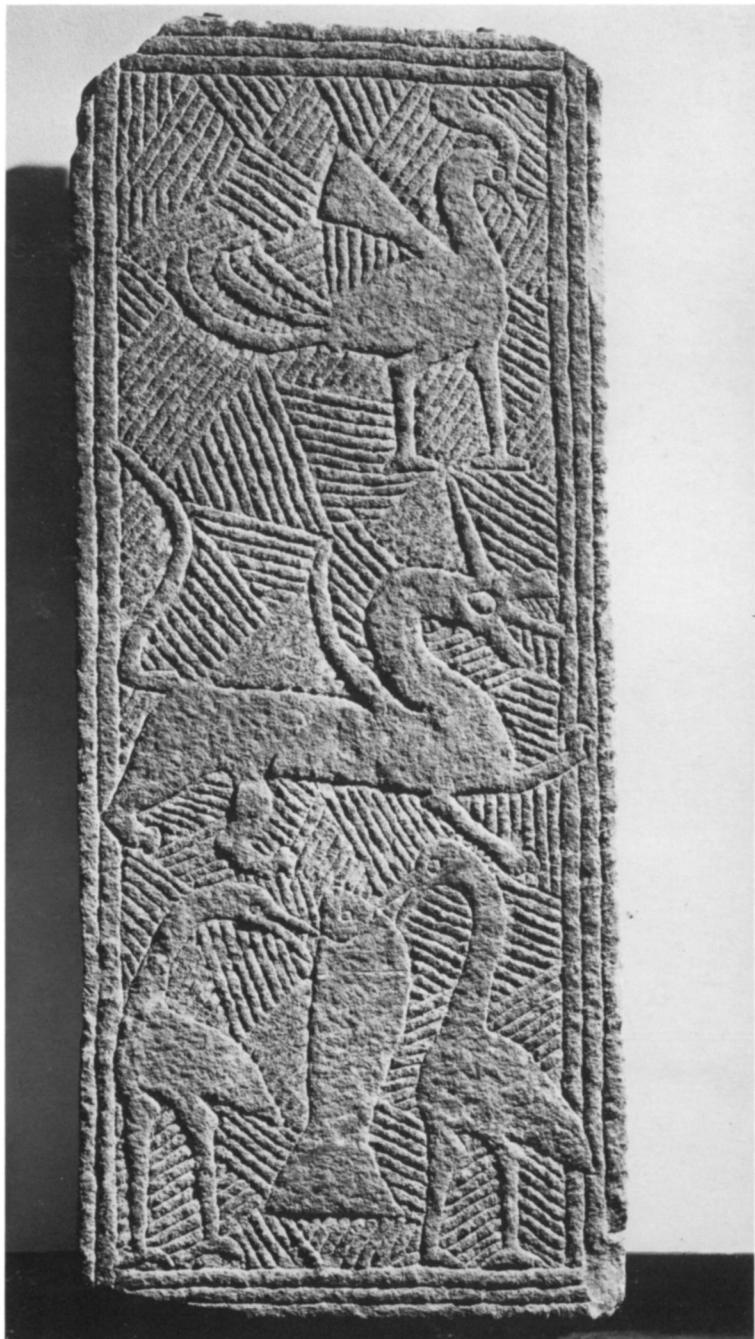
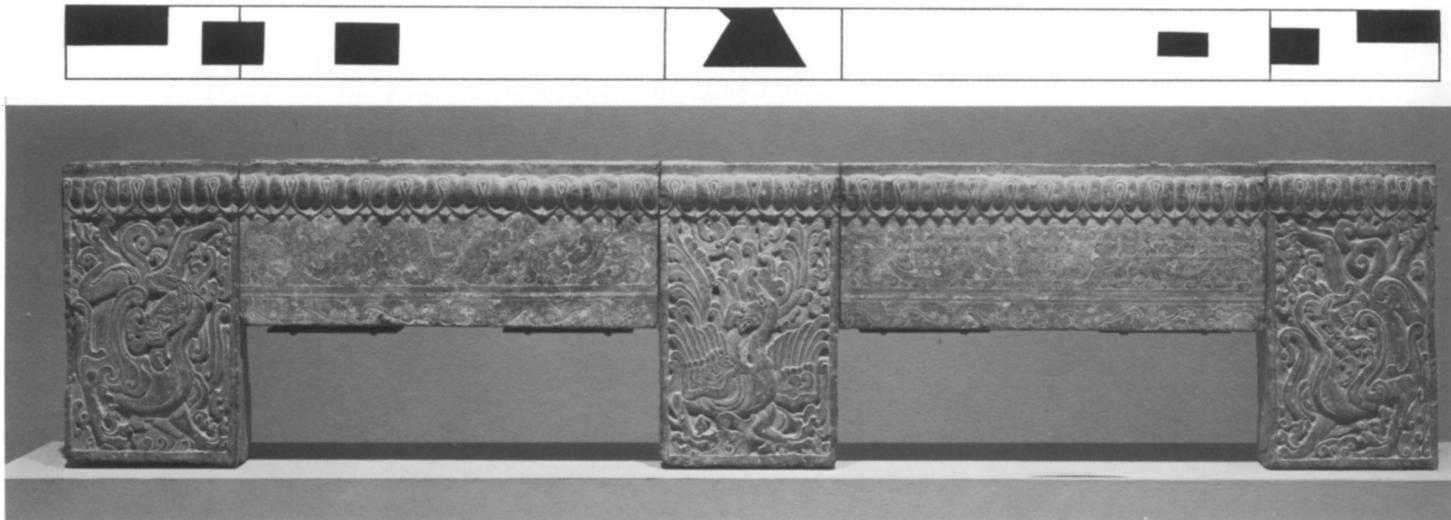


Figure 3. *Side of a Coffin Platform (Kuan-ch'uang)*. Limestone, 45.7 x 212 x 10.8 cm. China, Six Dynasties period or Sui Dynasty, sixth century AD. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Lange. CMA 82.260  
Above: Drawing of mortise holes cut into top surface.



That this panel was probably the left half of a double-leaf tomb door is suggested by several pairs of slabs symmetrically decorated with fabulous animals. Some examples, of unauthenticated provenance, are in Western collections (Figure 2);<sup>13</sup> others have been discovered in various Eastern Han (AD 9-220) tomb structures in north-central and western China. Both brick-chambered underground tombs in Honan (in the central plain) and burial caves cut directly into the riverside cliffs in Ssueh'uan (in the west) contain similar sandstone reliefs on door leaves as well as on pillars and crossbeams.<sup>14</sup> In both areas, chamber doors are characteristically cut with small tenons which fit into mortise jambs in floor and ceiling; in the Cleveland panel, such projections may have been broken diagonally from the top and bottom left-hand corners.

Although similarly carved and aligned beasts occur in reliefs from both Honan and Ssueh'uan, current evidence suggests that the Cleveland panel comes from Ssueh'uan. Its combination of stiff figure contours and patchwork striae is most prevalent in the Hsin-chin region of Ssueh'uan. Here, doors were used to seal the mouths of cave-tombs, some of which are inscribed with first- and second-century dates.<sup>15</sup> The striae may border unstriated figures, as in the Cleveland panel, or run indiscriminately across them, as in the Rietberg doors. Either way, this pattern imparts a simple vitality to otherwise severe and static forms. The style is strong, decorative, and most unlike the vigorously realistic pictorial art produced contemporaneously in this region.<sup>16</sup>

#### The Coffin in Context

Two other stones in this collection can be identified as coffin structures. In describing such tomb furniture, the Chinese have traditionally distinguished an inner coffin, or *kuan*, which contains the body, from an outer coffin or *kuo*, which encases the *kuan*. The distinction is based not on the coffin's shape or material but on its position in the burial chamber. In most aristocratic tombs of the Bronze Age (late Shang and Chou dynasties, ca. twelfth-third centuries BC), several inner and outer coffins were nested one inside the other in a vertical pit that was entered from above at ground level. The Western Han (206 BC-AD 9) saw the advent of horizontal pit tombs – a tunnel sloped down from ground level to a door that opened onto one or more underground chambers. In these, the burial chamber itself, lined with brick or stone, often served as the outer coffin. The largest and most elaborate of these horizontal pit tombs simulated palatial spaces, with the burial chamber at the far (usually north) end corresponding to the private living quarters in the back of a residential compound.<sup>17</sup> Noteworthy for our investigation, in the horizontal pit tombs of middle and late Han the inner coffin (*kuan*) came to be elevated within the burial chamber. It might be placed on a framework of wood, a platform of layered bricks, or a flat piece of stone. By the late fifth century AD, this stone dais sometimes took the form of a discrete piece of furniture: a low, bed-like platform (*ch'uang*) raised on rectangular feet.

### Six Dynasties Coffin Platform (CMA 82.260)

That the Lange gift of two horizontal and three vertical stones might be reconstructed as one long side of such a coffin platform (Figure 3) became apparent once they were examined side-by-side in the Museum. Fine semicircular grooves indicated that the feet were originally integral with the horizontal stones and had at some point been sliced off with a rotary saw, presumably to make the platform more portable for the art market. Allowing for a small loss of stone (about 5 mm.) from cutting and filing each section, the stones could be aligned to restore a continuous band of pendant, bi-segmental lotus petals along the upper edge, a symmetrical arrangement of relief animals on the vertical stones, and a more or less regular pattern of square mortise holes cut into the top surface (Figure 3, above).<sup>18</sup> Their reassembled form – two horizontal panels and three squarish foot-projections – resembles several single slabs in Western collections, including the Rietberg Museum, Zurich; the Avery Brundage Collection, San Francisco; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (Figure 4).<sup>19</sup> Through the late 1950s and 1960s, each was conjecturally identified as part of a coffin platform, but without archaeological evidence for its original intact appearance.

Scattered tomb finds of the Six Dynasties period in northern China are now beginning to clarify the complete structure, identified as a *kuan-ch'uang*, or (inner) coffin-bed. It was customarily a rectangular structure with two long and two short sides, raised on two or three feet carved in one piece with each long side. The earliest example, and the only one yet published in situ, was excavated from the tomb of Ssu-ma Chin-lung and

his wife (d. 474 and 484, respectively) in Ta-t'ung, Shansi. Despite prior looting of the tomb, its stone platform survived intact in the western half of the burial chamber. The long front side, cut with three projecting feet, is carved in low relief with a monster mask and several Chinese mythological creatures as well as "strong men" in Central Asian style – a cultural mixture that pervades other objects in the tomb. Fragments of a wood railing and an "umbrella-like canopy" were found on top of the platform, but their random placement, combined with obvious evidence of a break-in, made it impossible for archaeologists to determine their original positions.<sup>20</sup>

Two coffin platforms found recently in Loyang and in Hsi-hsiang in Honan offer additional and somewhat different clues to reconstruction. In each platform, the back and short sides were fitted with low, rectangular stones carved to simulate a screen-like arrangement of framed and hinged panels (Figure 5). This structure resembles the formal sitting couch (*ch'uang* or *kang*) that survives in classic wood furniture of the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties (fourteenth-nineteenth centuries). To date, rubbings have been published only of the Hsi-hsiang platform, whose engraved linear designs of dragons, phoenixes, and Buddhist motifs are stylistically datable to the late fifth or the sixth century.<sup>21</sup>

Although the origin of these stone coffin platforms is as yet unknown, at least one early archaeological find suggests a possible prototype in domestic furniture. This is a lacquered wood bed frame, elevated on six feet and fitted with low, upright metal railings, excavated from a Warring States (fourth century BC) tomb in Hsin-yang, Honan (Figure 6).<sup>22</sup> It was discovered in

Figure 4. Side of a Coffin Platform (*Kuan-ch'uang*). Limestone, 49.2 x 210.2 cm. China, Six Dynasties period, first half sixth century AD. Courtesy of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada.



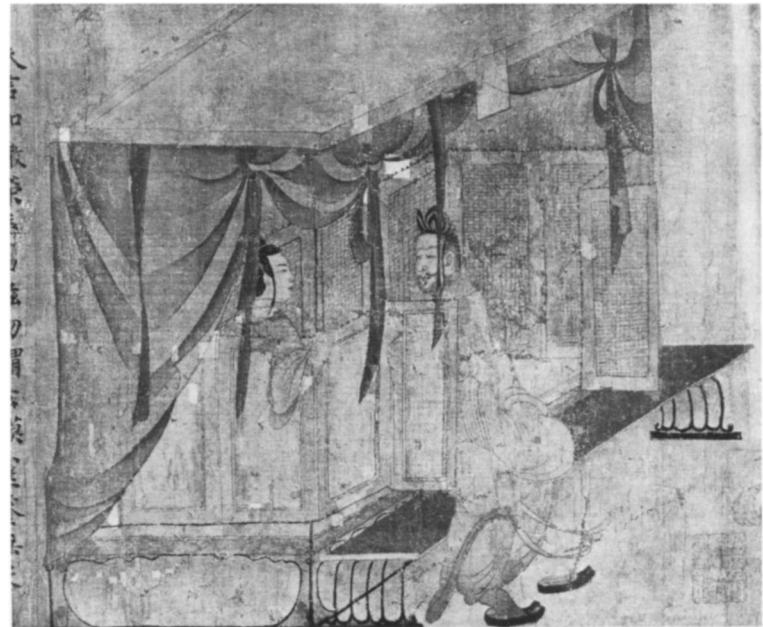
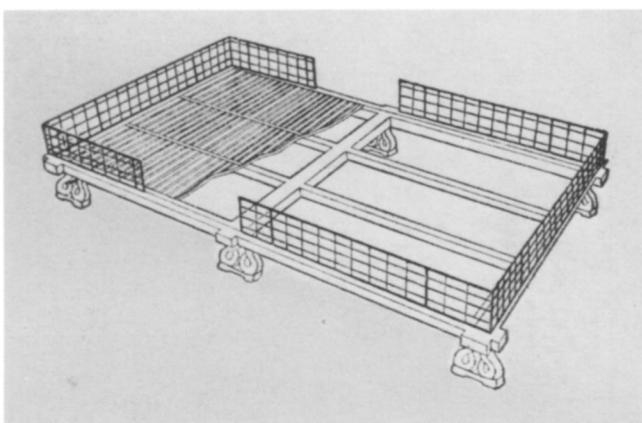
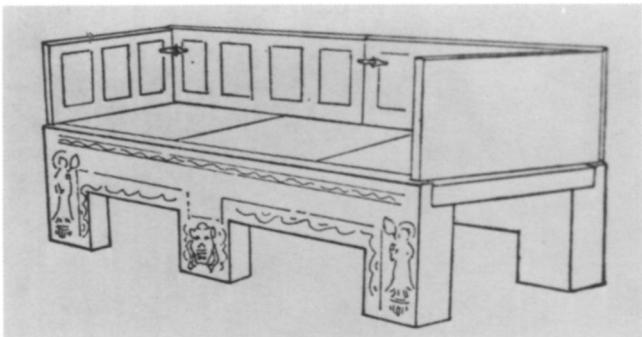


Figure 8. *Feet of a Coffin Platform*: Green Dragon of the East (above), Red Bird of the South (right), White Tiger of the West (far right). Details of Figure 3 (CMA 82.260). See also covers.

LEFT TOP

Figure 5. *Reconstruction of Coffin Platform (Kuan-ch'uang)*. After original excavated in Loyang, Honan province. Stone with wood side panels, front and back stones each 49.5 x 239 x 14 cm. China, Northern Wei Dynasty (AD 386-534). Kuan-lin Hall, Loyang.

LEFT CENTER

Figure 6. *Drawing of Bed Frame (Ch'uang)*. After original excavated in Hsin-yang, Honan province. Lacquered wood with metal railings, l. 212 cm. China, Eastern Chou Dynasty, Warring States period, fourth century BC.

LEFT BOTTOM

Figure 7. *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Ladies of the Palace*. Fifth scene from the handscroll, ink and color on silk, 24.8 x 349.3 cm. Attributed to Ku K'ai-chih, ca. AD 344-ca. 406, Chinese, Eastern Chin Dynasty. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum, London.



a side compartment, distinct from the burial chamber, together with a flat roof and four corner posts which appear to have formed a canopy. Another variation of such a canopied, or testeried, bed (*cha-tzu-ch'uang*) is recognizable by the early Six Dynasties period. In the famous *Admonitions* scroll attributed to Ku K'ai-chih (ca. 344-ca. 406), it is shown as a veritable alcove — a box-like platform enclosed by low screens and by a tent-like canopy hung with curtains (Figure 7).<sup>23</sup>

Collectively, this evidence suggests several possibilities for the original form of the Lange coffin platform. The square mortise holes cut along the entire top surface may have been used to support upright stone sides (possibly carved to imitate hinged screens), or some type of canopy, or a combination of both. Whether it was intended to simulate either a three-sided couch or a testeried bed remains open to question. Just as the domestic bed frame could be converted from one form to the other by the addition or removal of posts and canopy<sup>24</sup> so also perhaps could its mortuary copy.

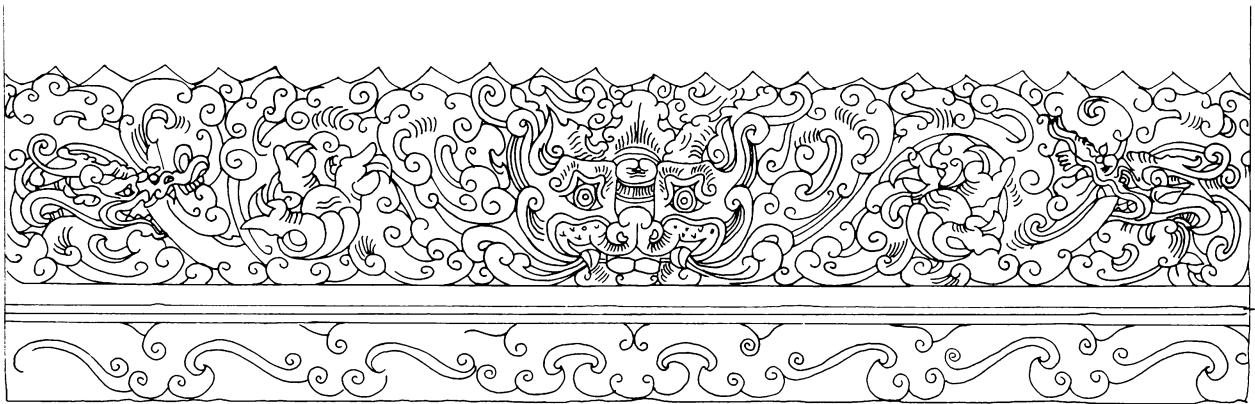
Questions of reconstruction aside, the Lange piece thus far

appears unique in its decorative organization. The upper border of rounded lotus petals and pinched leaf tips — a Buddhist modification of the Classical egg-and-dart pattern<sup>25</sup> — relates it to the examples in San Francisco, Boston, and Toronto. But only on the Lange stones do the three feet divide the horizontal panels into two friezes. The feet are deeply undercut, while the horizontal panels are engraved with the background slightly chiseled away. Each foot depicts one of the four symbolic directional animals: the Red Bird of the South in the center is flanked by the Green Dragon of the East and the White Tiger of the West (Figure 8). All three creatures are carved in flat, stiffly curved bands of relief that resemble cut and layered slabs of clay. They share a common anatomical formula, with wings, leg tufts, and horns abstracted to flame-like shapes terminating in spirals and raised curls. The dragon and lean tiger mirror each other in their downturned heads, recurved necks and trunks, splayed legs, and spiraled tails that merge with background scrollwork. Around the phoenix this background is all but filled by a profusion of upswept tailfeathers.



Figure 9. *Horizontal Panel of a Coffin Platform*. Detail of Figure 3 (CMA 82.260).

Figure 10. Drawing after Figure 9.



On each horizontal panel a lighter geometric pattern camouflages a monster mask confronted at either end by dragon heads in profile. The goggle-eyed, buck-toothed, curly-horned monster brandishes a pair of triple-taloned claws with sharply tapered nails, but its shoulders have disappeared in a maze of curving bands and curlicues that emanate from its mouth and pass through the dragons' gaping jaws (Figures 9–10). However “disembodied,” this monster belongs to a bevy of fierce and truculent creatures that guarded the Six Dynasties spirit world. Comparable images cast in bronze (Figure 11),<sup>26</sup> carved in stone (Figure 12),<sup>27</sup> and painted on tomb walls<sup>28</sup> range from bodiless masks reminiscent of the Bronze Age ogre known as *t’ao-t’ieh* to whole gesticulating demons or hunched and motionless caryatid monsters. Combined with dragons and other protective animals of the four directions, such monsters were conjured to avert evil from the living and dead in both secular and Buddhist contexts.<sup>29</sup>

Granting stylistic inconsistencies within the stones (the right-hand horizontal panel is far more fluent and accomplished than the left), their decoration as a whole suggests a sixth-century origin in northern China. Motifs well documented in the art of the late Northern Dynasties (386–581) include, first, the high relief lotus petal border, which is most conspicuous in pedestals of Buddhist sculpture of this period,<sup>30</sup> and second, the “descending” dragon and tiger with stiffly curving trunks embellished with curving bands and spirals, seen in both stone engraving and wall painting from tombs and cave temples. The monster and dragon head panels are less coherent, but their very dissolution of animal forms into abstract patterns is characteristic of northern sixth-century design, as may be seen on the sloping sides of an epitaph cover from Loyang dated to 529 (Figure 13).<sup>31</sup>

What is not comparable with other Six Dynasties art is an almost compulsive exaggeration of this decorative vocabulary in the Lange stones. The degree of embellishment appears un-

Figure 12. *Squatting Caryatid Monster*. Limestone, 75 x 63.5 cm. China, (Northern) Hsiang-t'ang Shan, Hopei-Honan provinces, Northern Ch'i Dynasty, late sixth century AD. The Fanny Tewksbury King Collection. CMA 57.360



Figure 11. *Monster Mask (P'u shou): Holder for a Door Ring*. Gilt bronze, 13.7 x 20 cm. China, reportedly Honan province, late Six Dynasties period, sixth century AD. Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund. CMA 30.731



precedented, and this, together with the uneven quality of carving, may indicate a provincial adaptation of well-known patterns. However, archaeologically documented materials are still too scanty, random, and regionally diverse to allow style and quality to serve as firm criteria for dating any mortuary stone-carving of the Six Dynasties period. Pending future discoveries, a northern provenance and sixth-century date seem most reasonable for this intriguing but heterodox work.

#### T'ang Sarcophagus Panel (CMA 75.63)

A third slab in the Museum collection (Figures 14-15)<sup>32</sup> can be identified as one wall panel of a different and better documented type of tomb furniture — a T'ang Dynasty coffin constructed in stone after the form of a one-story pavilion of wood, plastered clay, and tile. In living architecture these very materials made for impermanence and we have no older examples than three or four eighth- and ninth-century halls. The earliest among these is a small Buddhist chapel in far northern Shansi (Figure 16), whose supplementary brick insulation (under the windows) may account for its endurance.<sup>33</sup> To visualize the more typical and vulnerable buildings of central China, we must turn to their close

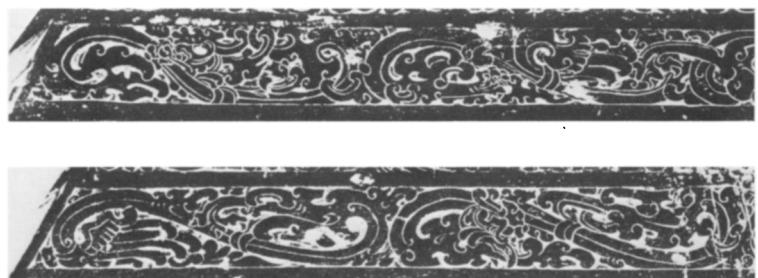
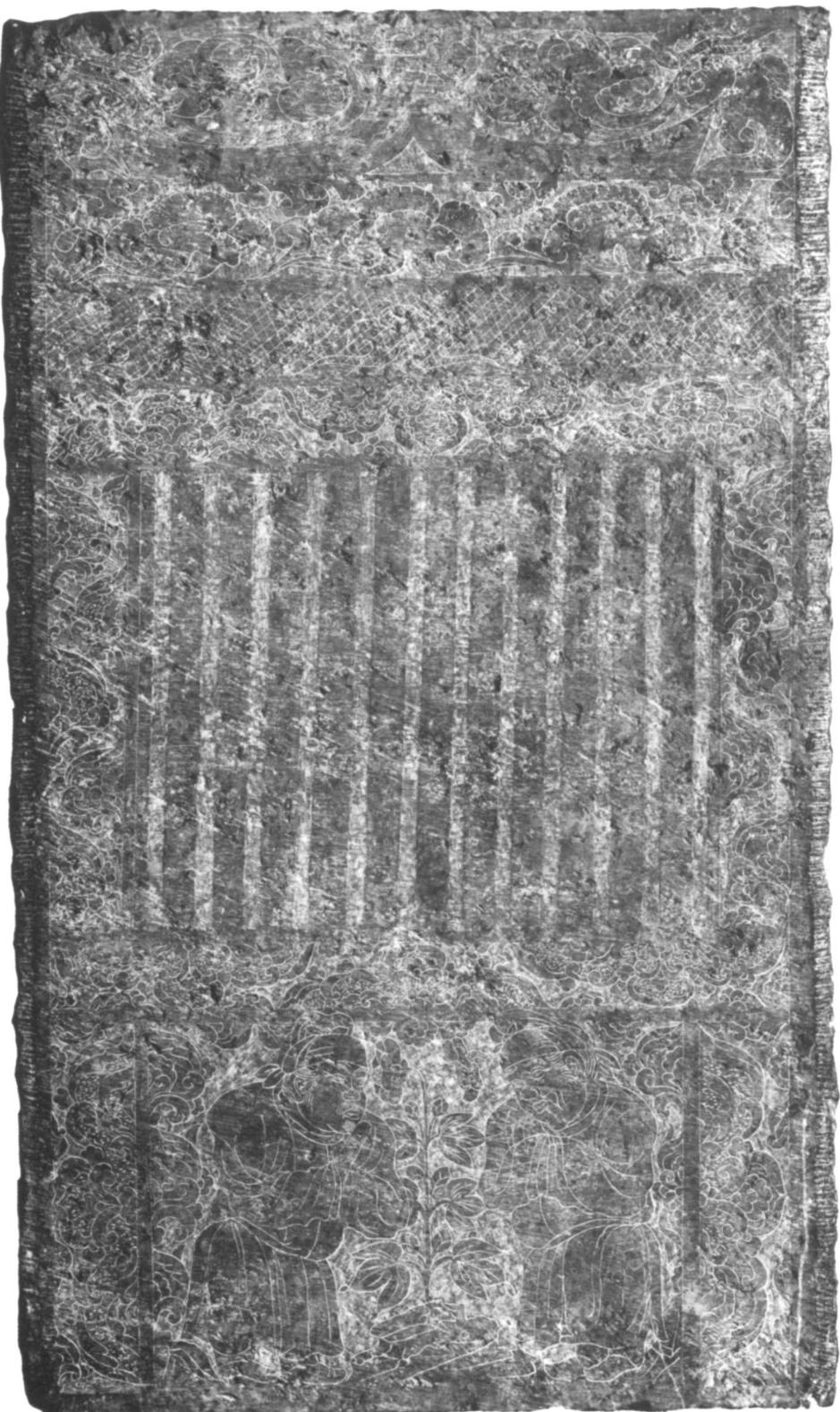


Figure 13. *Dragon and Phoenix*, details from epitaph cover of Erh-chu Hsi, dated AD 529. Ink rubbings from original stone in Shensi Provincial Museum, Sian.



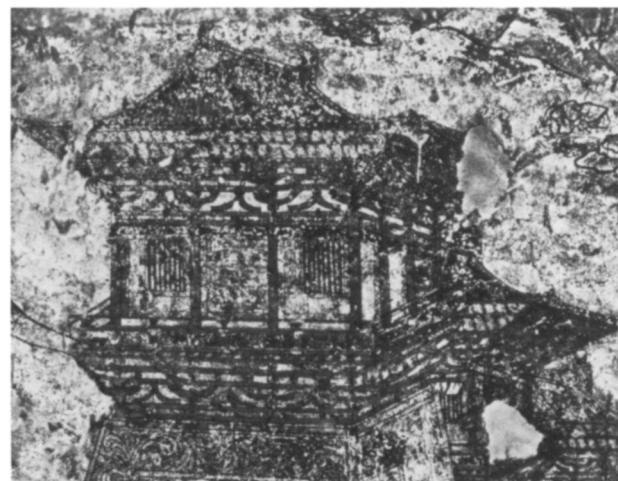
Figures 14 and 15.  
*Sarcophagus Panel*.  
Limestone, 119 x  
69 x 10 cm.  
China,  
T'ang Dynasty,  
early eighth  
century AD.  
John L. Severance  
Fund. CMA 75.63



Figure 16. Main Hall of Nan-ch'an Ssu (Southern Meditational Monastery), Wu-t'ai Shan, Shansi province.  
Wood, brick, plaster, and tile, 882 x 1175 x 967 cm.,  
constructed before AD 782, restored 1974-75.



Figure 17. Detail of *Towers (Chieh)*, painting on west wall of entrance passageway, tomb of Crown Prince I-te (682-701), Ch'ien-ling cemetery, Ch'ien-hsien, Shensi province. Ink and color on plaster, dated AD 706. Shensi Provincial Museum, Sian.



counterparts in Nara, Japan, or to contemporary artistic depictions — paintings and stone engravings that show façades intact (Figure 17) or in cutaway view (Figure 18). Together, they illustrate the standard wood framework of pillars, crossbeams, and a complex system of bearing blocks and bracket arms that distributed the weight of massive tile roofs. As shown below, the Cleveland panel also imitates this mode of construction.

Vestiges of tile-roofed pavilions can be traced back to the Western Chou Dynasty (1045-771 BC),<sup>34</sup> but the early history of tomb furniture in this form is still obscure. At least one Eastern Han stone building with a roof-shaped lid has been identified as an inner coffin (*kuan*), but no comparable structures are known to me from the Six Dynasties period.<sup>35</sup> Beginning in the early seventh century, however, the development of the house-shaped stone coffin can be followed in a series of dated tombs unearthed in or near Sian, site of the great Sui (581-618) and T'ang capital, Ch'angan.<sup>36</sup>

The earliest example of a comparable sarcophagus belongs to Li Ching-hsün, a young Sui princess who died in 608 and was buried on the grounds of a Taoist nunnery. Excavators who unearthed her plain, single chamber tomb between 1956 and 1958 found a limestone encasement of rectangular panels assembled as an outer coffin (*kuo*) around a limestone house (*kuan*) that contained her skeleton (Figure 19). Each coffin was inscribed *K'ai che yin ssu* (Open this and die) — an admonition that has proven uncannily effective, for among all the tombs mentioned in this article, only Li Ching-hsün's was discovered intact. Both coffins proved to be veritable treasure chests,

crammed with more than two hundred burial gifts of gold, jade, and ceramic materials.

The child's inner coffin, designed as a pavilion three bays long and one bay deep, is remarkable for its meticulous assembly and decoration (Figure 20). The floor and hip-and-gable roof are each carved of one stone. The walls are built of six stones connected by iron pins: two right-angle "corner" stones abut at each end to form the outer bays; between them, two rectangular panels form the front and back walls of the central bay (see Figure 19). Into the long west wall the sculptor had cut a mock wooden framework. Square pillars, bearing blocks, and bracket arms are cut in high relief; curved struts between the pillars and a pair of vertical lattice windows flanking the central doorway are engraved in the flat stone (Figure 21). To these architectural details are added images of male and female attendants (engraved amid scrollwork) and dragons and phoenixes under the window sills. The wealth of this exterior decoration may have been matched by the coffin's interior. All four walls had been whitewashed and painted with figures, buildings, and flowers, but only faint traces of pigment survive.<sup>37</sup>

Li Ching-hsün's stone house is displayed in the Shensi Provincial Museum, next to a related seventh-century coffin. In 632, Li Shou, a cousin of the T'ang founder, Li Yüan, was laid to rest in a wood coffin placed *inside* a stone house (Figure 22) approximately twice as large as the princess's. Li Shou's house, forming his outer coffin (sarcophagus), is assembled from twenty-eight slabs and designed as a three-by-one bay building. Though details of its construction have not yet been made

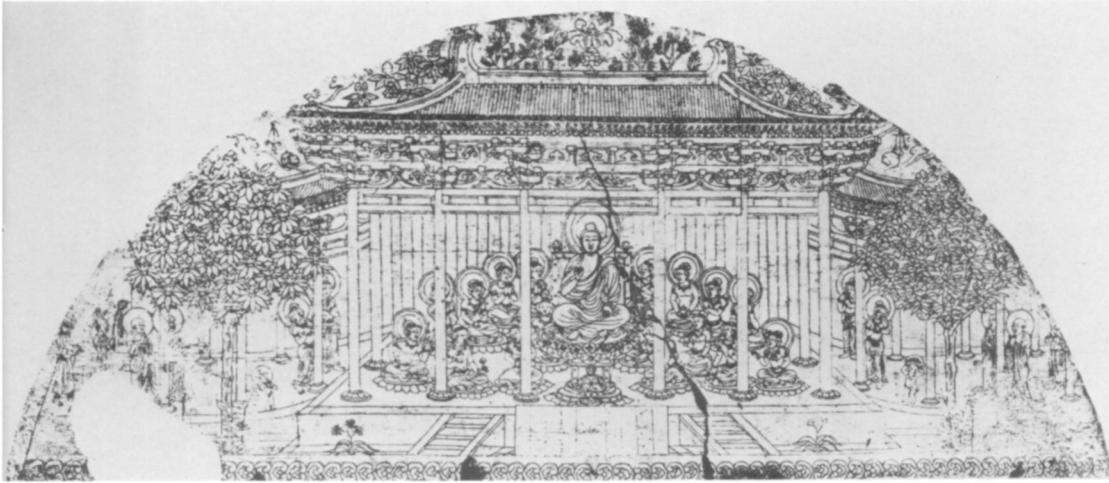


Figure 18.  
*Buddha Preaching in Temple Hall*,  
from tympanum over west doorway of Ta-yen T'a (Great Wild Goose Pagoda), Sian, Shensi province. Photo reverse of ink rubbing of the design engraved in black marble. China, Tang Dynasty, AD 701-704.

Figure 19. Groundplan of inner and outer coffins (shaded), tomb of Li Ching-hsun (600-608), P'an-chia village, Sian, Shensi province. Outer coffin measures 161 x 263 x 110 cm. China, Sui Dynasty, dated AD 608.

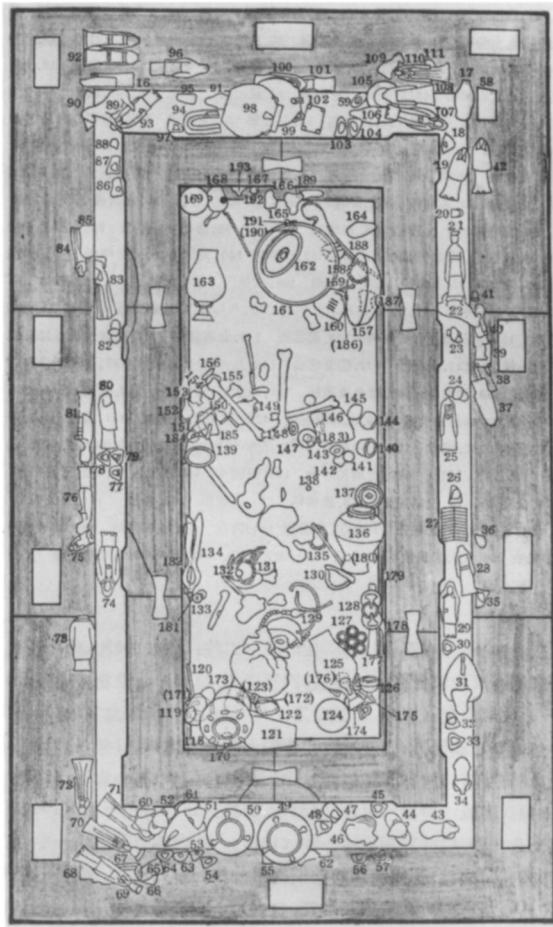
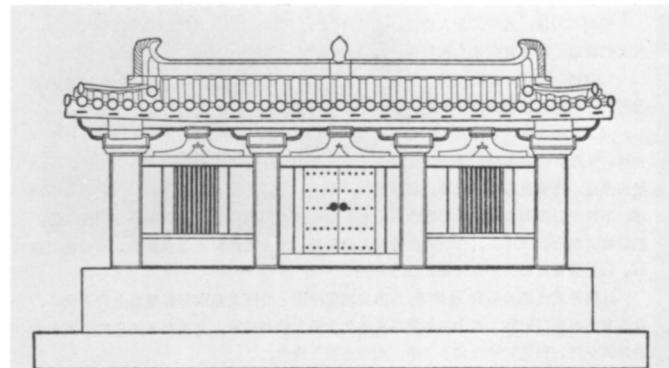


Figure 20. *Inner Coffin of Li Ching-hsun*. Limestone with carved, engraved, and painted decoration, 122 x 192 x 89 cm. China, Sui Dynasty, dated AD 608. Shensi Provincial Museum, Sian.



Figure 21. Elevation, inner coffin of Li Ching-hsun. Drawing after Figure 20.



available, it is apparent that the pillars are not square convexities cut into wall panels but separate stones erected between them, and that these walls somehow locked into place without mortar.<sup>38</sup> The front-and-center bay is cut with two separate door leaves that had been left ajar by tomb robbers, and the mock tile roof is assembled from four slabs laid crosswise from front to back.

The decoration of Li Shou's house is purely pictorial, devoid of those architectural details seen in Li Ching-hsün's. The exterior walls are carved with mythical animals, Buddhist angels, and uniformed officials – all cut in smooth, low-relief silhouettes that were originally painted and gilded. The foundation plinth is engraved with the twelve animals of the zodiac, each enclosed in a cartouche that simulates the type of ornamental cut-out already seen in Ku K'ai-chih's platform bed (Figure 7). This bold and somewhat rugged exterior contrasts markedly with the interior, lightly engraved with orderly registers of female dancers and musicians (Figure 23).

Li Shou's sarcophagus was discovered at the north end of a long and elaborately painted tomb. Entered from the south at ground level, the tomb consists of a sloping entrance passageway and a level connecting passageway (dug with side niches for burial goods) that leads straight to the double-leaf stone door of the burial chamber. This chamber juts to the west to contain the sarcophagus, clearing the south-to-north axis from beginning to end. Most of the tomb interior is faced with brick and painted with wall murals depicting a variety of genre activities. One wall of the burial chamber includes scenes of court entertainment, featuring female musicians who closely resemble those engraved inside the sarcophagus.<sup>39</sup>

In its pillar-and-panel assembly, its combination of low relief and engraved surface designs, and its position as an outer coffin in a painted multi-chambered tomb, Li Shou's stone house anticipates a group of early eighth-century sarcophagi clearly related to the Cleveland panel in their decorative style and technique. All belong to junior members of the T'ang imperial family, apparent victims of a purge by Empress Wu (625-705). The only woman in history to occupy the throne of China, she had seized power from her husband, the infirm Emperor Kao-tsung (r. 628-683), and deposed and imprisoned their weak son and rightful heir, Chung-tsung, within weeks of his accession in 684. Following Empress Wu's overthrow and demise in 705, Chung-tsung returned to power and ordered lavish funerals for his unfortunate young relatives, who had been summarily buried under his mother's regime.<sup>40</sup>

The artistic legacy of Chung-tsung's act of reparation was

revealed between 1960 and 1972, when three of the seventeen "satellite tombs" surrounding the still unopened mound of Kao-tsung and Empress Wu were excavated in Ch'ien-ling, the imperial cemetery northwest of Sian. They belong to Princess Yung-t'ai (684-701), Crown Prince I-te (682-701), and Prince Chang-huai (654-684). All three were joint burials. Yung-t'ai and I-te were each interred along with their consorts. Chang-huai's tomb was reopened and partially redecorated in 711 when he was posthumously named crown prince and joined by his then-deceased widow. A fourth and similar sarcophagus was found in the tomb of Wei Chiung (677-692), a cousin of Chung-tsung, who was reburied in 708 in a separate family cemetery near Sian.<sup>41</sup>

Although varying in scale and complexity according to ranks of the deceased, all four tombs share a similar south-to-north ground plan that expands upon the seventh-century burial of Li Shou. Following the entrance passageway, the connecting passageway is lined with three or four pairs of side niches for storing burial gifts and leads through to an inner passageway to the first of a pair of domed chambers connected by a corridor. The burial chamber at the far north end consistently deviates from the main axis in a western bulge that contains the sarcophagus, whose doorway façade faces east (Figure 24).<sup>42</sup>

It is now clear that this double-chamber tomb – the most complex of several T'ang layouts identified in the Sian area by Chinese archaeologists<sup>43</sup> – was built and decorated to simulate a palatial precinct. As first described by Mary Fong, the major tomb divisions can be equated with the components of an upper-class courtyard house: a forecourt with guest rooms (entrance passageways and side niches), followed by a reception hall (antechamber), inner courtyard (inter-chamber corridor), and private living quarters (burial chamber) in the rear of the complex.<sup>44</sup>

Each of these four tombs is justly famous for its wall murals, which originally covered the entire interior and reinforced the visual impression of approaching and traversing a royal household. Except for the dragon and tiger painted just inside the east and west entrance walls, the pictorial scheme is completely mundane, portraying scenes of contemporary court life. Royal pageantry and leisure are most fully conveyed in the entrance passageways of the tombs of Chang-huai and I-te, which between them depict hunting expeditions and polo games set in hilly landscapes and honor guards stationed at the gate towers of the palace.

In contrast with these expansive outdoor vistas, the views "inside the palace" are close and direct, consisting of large-scale

Figure 23. *Female Orchestra*, ink rubbing from interior of the sarcophagus of Li Shou.

Figure 22. *Sarcophagus (Outer Coffin) of Li Shou (577-631)*. Limestone with carved, engraved, and gilt decoration, 220 x 355 x 185 cm. China, T'ang Dynasty, dated AD 632. Shensi Provincial Museum, Sian.



figures engaged in quiet activities. Elements of setting are restricted to corridor garden scenes, viewed as if through an open colonnade. The crossbeams and brackets of this painted colonnade also line both chambers, whose otherwise plain white-washed walls appear as plaster panels between these illusory pillars. Against this neutral ground, the figures are outlined in smooth, sustained curves and filled with color. Some show sketchy underdrawing, but final contours are firm, tightly enclosing rounded volumes. This neatly descriptive and effectively three-dimensional style is shared by statuesque court ladies whose proportions and facial features express idealized elegance and by servants and foreigners, usually caricatured with wide eyes, rounded noses, protruding chins, and facial hair (Figures 25-27).

How was the sarcophagus constructed and how did it fit into this coherent scheme of interior decoration? The four outer coffins of 706-708 share a common design. Each is constructed as a one-story, three-by-two bay house, elevated on a foundation of brick or stone and covered with a lid carved to resemble a hip-and-gable tile roof. The number of foundation and roof slabs vary, but the four walls follow a standard assembly of twenty stones: ten square-sectioned pillars alternating with ten rectangular panels.<sup>45</sup> Plans and elevations for the sarcophagi of Princess Yung-t'ai and Wei Chiung (Figure 28) show that these pillars and panels were fitted together with tongue-and-groove



Figure 24. Cutaway view of antechamber, inter-chamber corridor, and burial chamber, Tomb of Princess Yung-t'ai (684-701), Ch'ien-ling cemetery, Ch'ien-hsien, Shensi province. Dated AD 706.

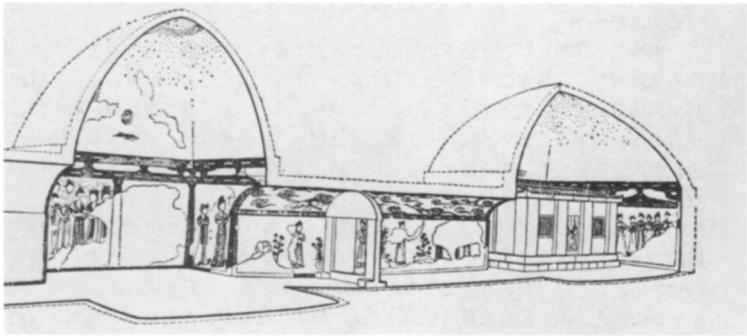




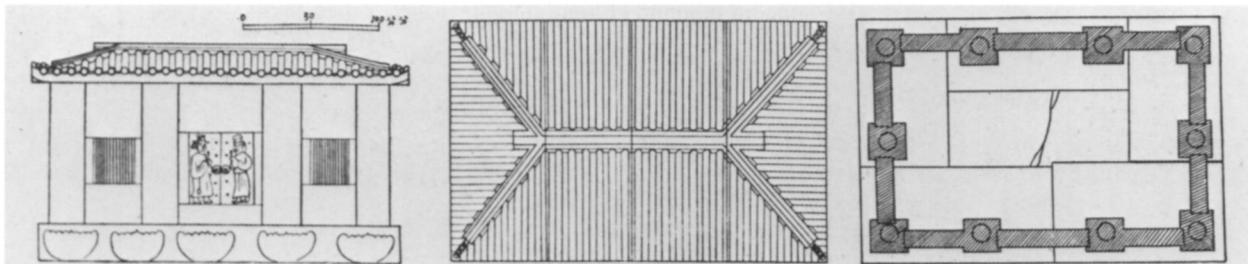
Figure 25. *Procession of Court Ladies*, painting on east wall of antechamber, Tomb of Princess Yung-t'ai. Ink and color on plaster, 186 x 419 cm.

Figure 26. *Court Attendants*, painting on west wall, third compartment of connecting passageway, tomb of Crown Prince I-te. Ink and color on plaster, dated AD 706.



Figure 27. Detail of *Court Attendant*, painting on east wall of entrance passageway, tomb of Prince Chang-huai (654-684), Ch'ien-ling cemetery, Ch'ien-hsien, Shensi province. Ink and color on plaster, dated AD 706.

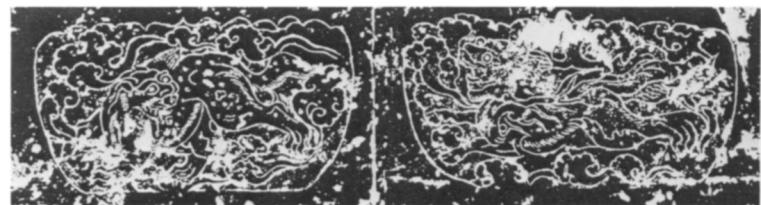
Figure 28. *Outer Coffin of Wei Chiung* (677-692). Above: drawings of elevation, roof, and groundplan.  
 Below: rubbings from foundation stones. China, T'ang Dynasty, dated AD 708.



joints that supported them upright without mortar. Drawings of Wei Chiung's house further show that the pillars were stabilized by hemispherical rivets that fitted into concavities carved in the foundation stones and that the vertical surfaces of these stones were carved with animals enclosed in cartouches (Figure 28, below). (The scale, proportions, and designs of these foundation stones resemble a fourth panel in the Cleveland collection, discussed below.)

Unfortunately, publication of the surface decoration of these four sarcophagi has been piecemeal and incomplete. Excavation reports indicate that the houses of Yung-t'ai, I-te, and Wei Chiung were each decorated inside and out, except for the rear wall which backed up against the west side of the chamber. But for all four we have descriptions of only the front (east) façade, which consists of a central "doorway" panel guarded by male or female attendants and two flanking "window" panels. To date, only one window panel (from Chang-huai's sarcophagus) has been illustrated; it shows flying horses above the lattice and lions below.<sup>46</sup>

All other panels published to date are decorated with full-length attendants, some of whom resemble those in the wall paintings. The connection between knife-on-stone and brush-on-plaster is clearest in the tomb of Princess Yung-t'ai, whose sarcophagus has been illustrated in full except for the pair of east windows. The remaining panels, inside and out, are each carved with a jewel-like floral border which frames court ladies depicted singly or in pairs. Paired figures along the exterior side walls virtually mirror each other in stance and gesture (Figure 29); single figures along the interior turn toward the central bay of the front (Figure 30) and back walls. In their subtle symmetry and interplay, these compositions in stone resemble a pair of processions painted along Yung-t'ai's antechamber that number among the finest murals at Ch'ien-ling (Figure 25). Despite differences in scale, some carved figures resemble the paintings



so closely that they must have been enlarged or reduced from a common cartoon.<sup>47</sup>

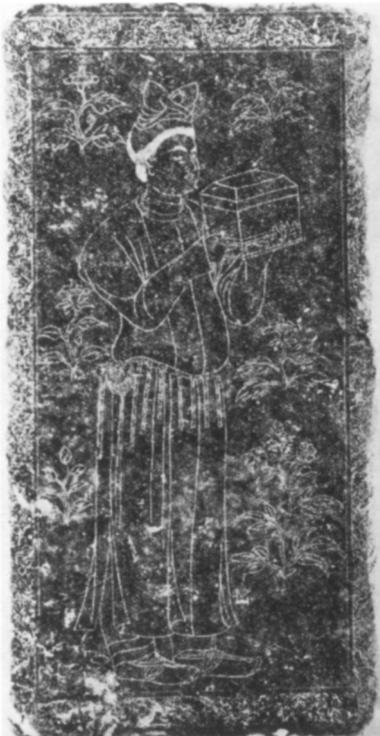
The stone figures are delineated in fine, gently curving lines in two distinctive techniques. All figures and border designs along the exterior float in low relief above a slightly chiseled background, whereas those along the interior are engraved into an otherwise smooth surface. This distinction is consistent throughout Yung-t'ai's house except for her "front door" panel which combines both techniques.<sup>48</sup> The same distinction is apparent on the Cleveland sarcophagus panel. The side with a central lattice window combines low-relief silhouettes with engraved details (Figure 14), while the reverse is simply engraved (Figure 15). However, this distinction is clear only at close range because a white watercolor has been added to the "background" of both sides (chiseled or not) to clarify the compositions for gallery viewers.

Assuming that it was once assembled in a complete sarcophagus, this panel was probably positioned to the left or right of the front (eastern) door. The organization of Yung-t'ai's house suggests the right side, so that the interior figures (Figure 15) would have faced this central door (cf. Figure 30). On the exterior (Figures 14 and 31), the inverted V-strut capped with a bearing block (Figure 32) is a realistic detail familiar from Li Ching-hsun's house (Figure 21) and from gateway pavilions



Figure 29.  
*Court Ladies*,  
ink rubbings  
from exterior of  
the sarcophagus  
of Princess  
Yung-t'ai.  
Left:  
east panel of  
south wall.  
Right:  
east panel of  
north wall.

Figure 30. *Court Ladies*, ink rubbings from interior east wall of the sarcophagus of Princess Yung-t'ai.



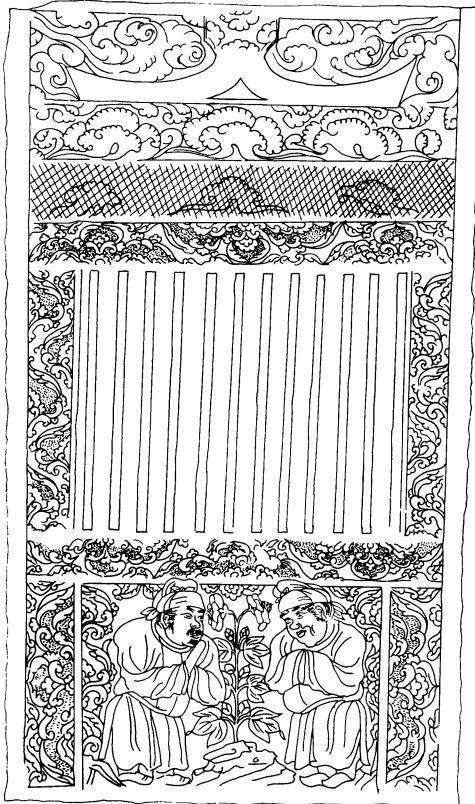


Figure 31. *Sarcophagus Panel: Dwarfs beneath Window*. Drawing after Figure 14 (CMA 75.63).

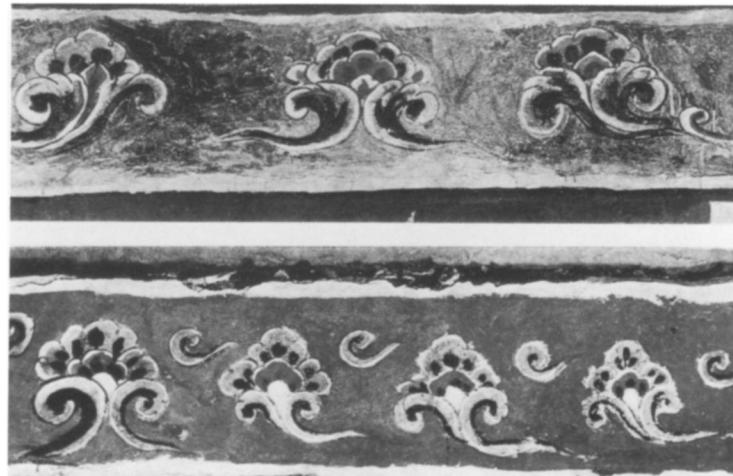


Figure 33. *Floral Motifs*, paintings bordering domed ceiling of burial chamber, tomb of Crown Prince I-te. Ink and color on plaster, dated AD 706.

Figure 32. Architectural decoration on upper third of *Sarcophagus Panel*. Detail of Figure 14 (CMA 75.63).



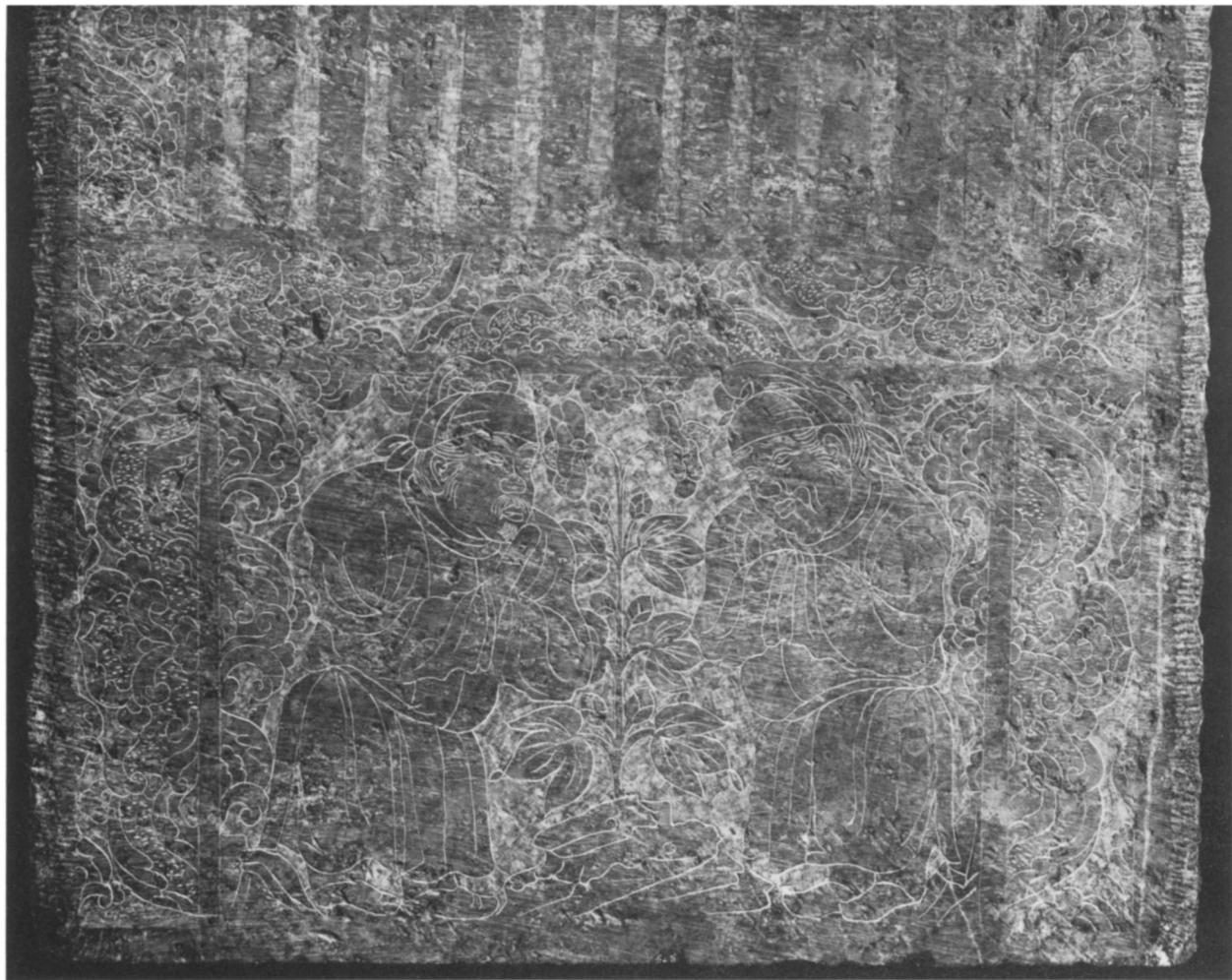


Figure 34. Dwarfs beneath a window sill on lower third of *Sarcophagus Panel*. Detail of Figure 14 (CMA 75.63).

painted in the entranceway of I-te's tomb (Figure 17). The two registers of notched clouds below this bracket also may reflect actual architectural decoration of the time. Comparable designs either painted or cut in sheet metal appliqués frequently embellished the crossbeams of early eighth-century buildings as we can reconstruct them from tomb painting, from images of temples in Sian (Figure 18), and from their counterparts in Nara, Japan.<sup>49</sup> In I-te's burial chamber, these cloud patterns take the form of cutaway flowers (Figure 33).

On this stone, a similar fusion of geometric and floral design lines the window sill and beams (Figure 34). Variations on this jewel-like border, combining the foliate head of a peony with symmetrically curled and piled tendrils resembling the Classical half-palmette, are pervasive in eighth-century decorative arts. Shown at its most refined in silver work, this versatile motif was also exploited by potters, painters, and stonemasons, who dissected and distributed its parts to fill any space.<sup>50</sup> In the Ch'ien-ling tombs of 706, it could double and harden as a

medallion, or curl gently in a more vegetal fashion (Figure 35). The Cleveland border seems to amalgamate the geometric and organic styles that respectively frame the coffin panels of Yung-t'ai and I-te (see Figure 36). Whereas stippling is realistically confined to the flower pistils in I-te's softer and more florid version, here it simply fills the interspaces. This more decorative formula also appears, with far less precision, on an epitaph from Sian dated to 729.<sup>51</sup>

The two figures enframed by this lush border (Figure 34) represent dwarfs or pygmies, who numbered among the human gifts required by the T'ang emperor. To satisfy imperial passions for the exotic and extraordinary, "little people" were annually imported from the Near East, the Southeast Asian island kingdoms, and the frontiers of the Chinese empire.<sup>52</sup> As in Europe, dwarfs were recruited primarily as court entertainers. Such is their probable role in an antechamber mural of Chang-huai's tomb (Figure 37).<sup>53</sup>

In T'ang stonecarving, dwarfs are known to me in only one

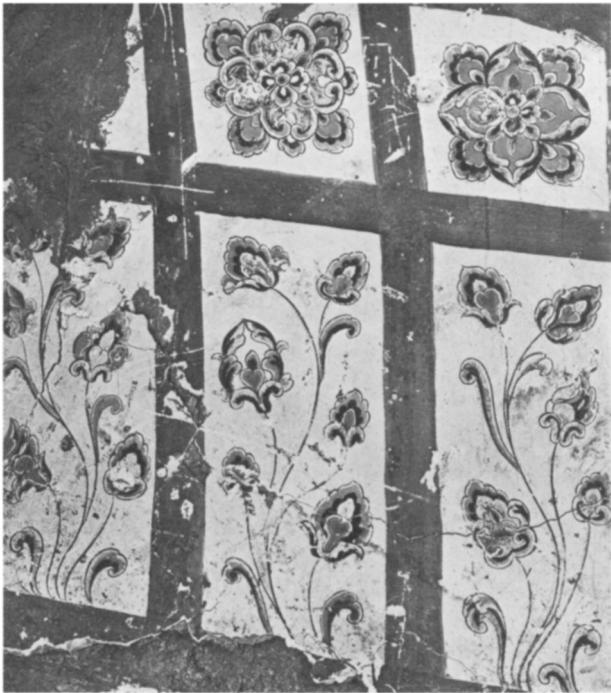


Figure 35. *Floral scrolls and Medallions*, detail of painting on vaulted ceiling of west wall, third compartment of connecting passageway, tomb of Crown Prince I-te. Ink and color on plaster.

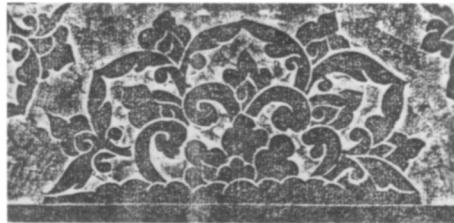


Figure 36. Above: *Floral Medallion*, detail of ink rubbing from exterior of the sarcophagus of Princess Yung-t'ai (cf. Figure 29). Below: *Peony Scroll*, detail of ink rubbing from exterior of the sarcophagus of Crown Prince I-te (from doorway panel on east wall). Both dated AD 706.

Figure 37. *Court Ladies with Dwarf*, detail of painting on south wall of antechamber, tomb of Prince Chang-huai. Ink and color on plaster.



Figure 38. *Court Attendants*, ink rubbings from pair of stone doors in corridor between antechamber and burial chamber, tomb of Princess Yung-t'ai.



Figure 39. *Sarcophagus Panel: Court Lady and Archer.*  
Drawing after Figure 15 (CMA 75.63).

fragment – part of a window panel from a sarcophagus of unknown origin and cursory execution, dated by secondhand evidence to 718.<sup>54</sup> Our dwarfs, by contrast, are sure and stocky versions of a standard figure type – the ever-deferential subject bowing with hands clasped together or around a ritual tablet (*hu*) traditionally held in the presence of the emperor.<sup>55</sup> This respectful image, with or without tablet, is ubiquitous in stone carving and wall painting from the Sian tombs. Paired, these figures serve as guards on chamber doors (Figure 38); clustered, they represent civil officials in wall murals depicting the approach to the palace (Figure 26).

Our dwarfs show the “foreign” features already seen in those images (cf. Figure 27): deep-set eyes with long upper lids, blunt pug noses, and coarse brow and temple hairs. One dwarf has a moustache and beard, the other a double-curved dimple that had been a facial convention since the mid-seventh century.<sup>56</sup> Both wear the garb of minor officials: an ankle-length tunic with round collar and long sleeves, belted at the waist; soft (felt or leather) boots; and a turban-like kerchief, the so-called *po-t'ou* or head wrapper. The *po-t'ou* later developed into a stiff and formal hat, but in the early eighth century it retained its origins as a temporary wrap – a squarish silk scarf covering the hair bun. Customarily, the front corners were pulled back from the

forehead and tied at the nape; the back corners were pulled under them and tied at the crown of the head. Under the *po-t'ou*, the bun was shaped by a *chin-tzu* – a snood-like device of silk, rattan, leather, or wood. Two styles of the *po-t'ou chin-tzu* worn by figures in the Sian tomb murals of 706 appear side-by-side here: the *hu*-clasping dwarf sports the “low and flat” style and his partner the more innovative “split and forward-bending” style.<sup>57</sup>

Between them, the flowering shrub that divides and blooms behind a slab-like rock may be as imaginary as its pattern of growth. Possibly it is based on the *fu-sang* hibiscus, which traditionally bestowed hope of immortality.<sup>58</sup> It is, in any case, more symbol than landscape, outlined with the same tight control as the figures and decorative borders around it.

In contrast with the exquisite precision of this surface, the reverse is engraved in a sketchier, more expansive, and somewhat weaker manner (Figures 15 and 39). The court lady and archer depicted here might personify the cosmopolitan sophistication which is conveyed by literary and artistic images of the elite in early eighth-century China. Their ample proportions, their foreign-inspired attire, and their idealized facial features – almond-slit eyes, crescent eyebrows, long-bridged noses, and small, full lips – characterize innumerable tomb figurines manufactured during the “high T'ang” (713–742) era. Ceramic members of the burial retinue of General Hsien-yu Ting-hui, buried in Ch'angan in 723, offer close, dated parallels to both figures (Figure 40).

Like his ceramic counterpart in the general's tomb, the stone-engraved archer wears the “split and forward bending” *po-t'ou* already seen on one dwarf. His long, double-lapel coat, of probable Iranian origin,<sup>59</sup> is worn over trousers and boots and secured with a waist belt that carries a “dew drop pouch” (*cheng-lu nang*).<sup>60</sup> Among T'ang figure types well defined in wall painting, clay sculpture, and stone carving, this outfit is common to archers, hunters, stable grooms, and women dressed as men.

The archer's female companion is a substantial beauty, whose full face is further rounded by a pageboy-like coiffure loosely puffed at the sides and gathered in a curving forehead lock (*woto chi*).<sup>61</sup> Her high-waisted, floor-length skirt and her blouse with low-cut neckline, long tubular sleeves, and patterned cuffs resemble a variety of two-piece garments inspired by Persian and Central Asian styles. Here, however, it is ambiguous which style is depicted – whether her V-neck cape is wrapped around her shoulders like a stole (cf. Figure 40) or looped across her chest and trails down the back like a scarf.<sup>62</sup> Nor is it clear how her left shoulder and forearm sleeve connect with each other.

Figure 40. *Court Lady and Stable Groom*, burial figurines from tomb of General Hsien-yu Ting-hui, Nan-ho ts'un, Sian, Shensi province. Earthenware with three-color lead glaze, H. 43 cm. (lady) and 42.7 cm. (groom). China, T'ang Dynasty, dated 723.

More unusual, in any case, are her shoes, shaped like a pair of mandarin ducks (*yüan-yang*), which peep out from below the hem of her gently flaring skirt. This imaginative variation of the upturned-toe shoes customarily worn at court is unknown to me in art. In literature, however, mandarin duck shoes are mentioned as early as the Han Dynasty, and are described in a poem by Lung-hu Chu (766-837).<sup>63</sup> Here, as in silver, textiles, and other T'ang decorative arts, the ducks may symbolize wedded bliss.<sup>64</sup>

Surrounding the heads of the lady and archer, the real and illusory combination of a bird in flight with floating cloudscrolls and a floral spray recalls those symbolic elements of setting seen on Yung-t'ai's sarcophagus (cf. Figures 29 and 30). Below, however, the artist has attempted to situate both figures on grassy, rocky land and to show its recession behind and between them. This more realistic approach to landscape is unique among the stone panels discovered thus far. Its suggestion of depth by overlapping planes somewhat resembles the grass-edged hills of Chang-huai's entranceway.<sup>65</sup> But the clear perspective of that mural contrasts markedly with these disconnected slopes and boulders. Even more perplexing is the space between the Cleveland figures' sleeves, where an amorphous shape enclosing thick grasses and a cloudscroll spills into the lady's shoulder. Such ambiguity in composition, so at variance with the precision of the reverse, is the most problematic feature of this panel. It leads one to ask how the two sides might be reconciled — and whether in fact they were carved at the same time.

One possibility is that the two sides were carved some years apart during the first half of the eighth century — the exterior being earlier and generally contemporary with the four Sian tombs of 706-711. Several historical circumstances might explain such a hiatus. The exterior might have been carved in anticipation of an important funeral and the interior engraved just before interment. The advance preparation of tomb furnishings in general and stone coffin-structures in particular is substantiated by mourning rites of great antiquity and importance.<sup>66</sup> Or the interior engraving may have been added to a sarcophagus originally carved only on the exterior, perhaps during a second burial in the same tomb. The latter possibility, however, seems impractical and unwieldly for a structure already assembled in the close, dark quarters of a funerary chamber.<sup>67</sup>

Alternatively, the interior engraving may have been added in modern times to the blank surface of a stone originally carved only on the exterior. The possibility of partial forgery — executed after discovery of the stone and before its publication in 1939 — cannot be completely dismissed at this time. Given the artist's



**Figure 41. Section of a Coffin Foundation or Epitaph Stone.** Limestone, 33 x 140.3 x 17.8 cm.  
China, T'ang Dynasty, late seventh-early eighth century AD. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Severance A. Millikin. CMA 59.184.



integration of historically accurate and sometimes obscure details of clothing in a seemingly original yet confusing composition, however, this seems highly unlikely.

It seems most plausible that the two sides were carved at the same time by different artists — the exterior by a master working from well-established patterns and the interior by a more innovative but less skilled hand. This suggestion is consistent with T'ang workshop procedures as we infer them from the wall murals at Ch'ien-ling, which show a great range in quality and invention within each tomb. If the two sides were carved simultaneously, a date in the 720s or 730s seems most fully borne out by the proportions and coiffure of the court lady. Ceramic figurines excavated from Sian tombs indicate that her broad-shouldered figure and puffed hairdo seem to have been the predominant fashion in that era.<sup>68</sup>

The dating of this panel cannot yet be resolved by a chronology of stone carving, since no relevant inscribed material postdates 708. Only one sarcophagus, dated to 740, has been published from the remainder of T'ang, and its perfunctory quality precludes direct comparison.<sup>69</sup> Until now, artistic standards have been defined exclusively by a sequence of imperial tombs furnished under extraordinary circumstances in a very brief timespan. It is hoped that future excavations will extend this sequence beyond the first decade of the eighth century and establish the historical position of this Cleveland panel.<sup>70</sup>

#### T'ang Coffin Foundation or Epitaph Stone (CMA 59.184)

T'ang tomb finds in the vicinity of Sian have also shed light on the dating and context of the Museum's fourth stone — a horizontal slab chiseled in low relief with a row of three cartouches, each enclosing an animal dashing amid stylized flowers and cloudscrolls (Figure 41).<sup>71</sup> That background pattern is yet

another variation on the florid decorative repertoire already seen above, which was common to painters (Figure 35), metal-workers, and stonemasons at the turn of the eighth century.

The scale, proportions, and decorative format of the Cleveland slab suggest two possible functions. It might be one of several low, rectangular stones that formed the foundation or the floor of the house-shaped outer coffin. A rubbing from the perimeter of Wei Chiung's coffin foundation illustrates a similarly frenzied animal chase against a simpler cloudscroll ground (Figure 28, below). This, however, is the only comparable pattern *from a coffin* thus far published. We have more plentiful evidence of similar patterns on T'ang memorial tablets or epitaph stones, which were the standard form of grave inscription and are a commoner find. Occupying the four vertical sides of these solid square tablets is a menagerie of real and imaginary animals against foliate patterns, arranged either in a continuous frieze (Figure 42) or in a series of cartouches. The latter format almost invariably includes three cartouches per side and may originally have been designed to accommodate the twelve zodiac animals that frequently surround the epitaph.<sup>72</sup>

The three animals on the Cleveland slab do not belong to any such well-known set, and though the elephant is thoroughly naturalistic, the two lupine creatures flanking him are not. The one leading the chase, with spotted coat and wing-like shoulder tuft, resembles a number of unidentified composite beasts that race around the edges of epitaph stones of the late seventh and early eighth centuries,<sup>73</sup> but the jagged-spined fellow bringing up the rear (Figure 43) appears even more obscure. Similar creatures, with wing-tufts and jagged spines, are found engraved on plinths below the Spirit Road sculptures that line the approach to the tomb of Kao-tsung and Empress Wu (Figure 44), and these have recently been labeled *hsieh-chai*, perhaps refer-

Figure 42. *Cougar and Lion*, details from side of epitaph stone of Princess Yung-t'ai, dated AD 706.  
Ink rubbings from original stone in Shensi Provincial Museum, Sian.

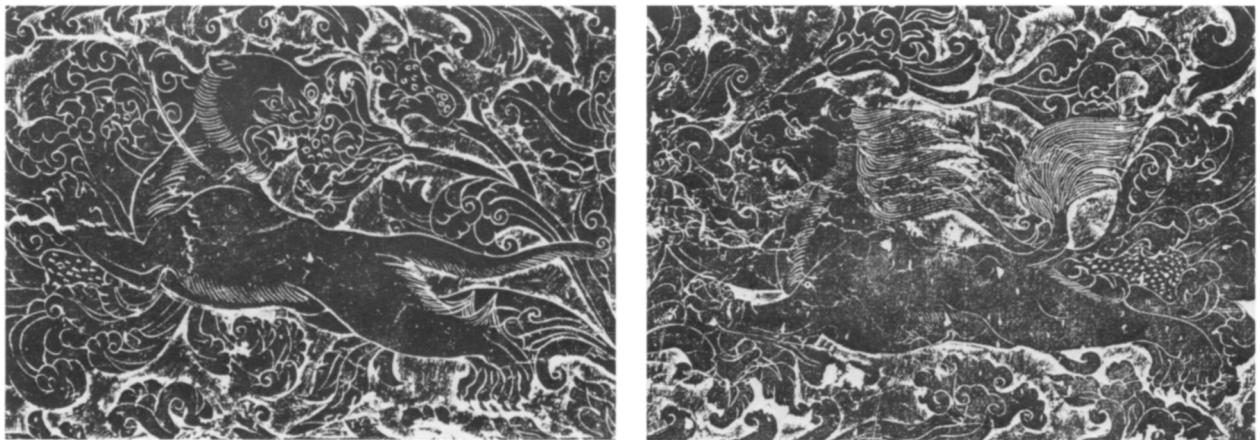
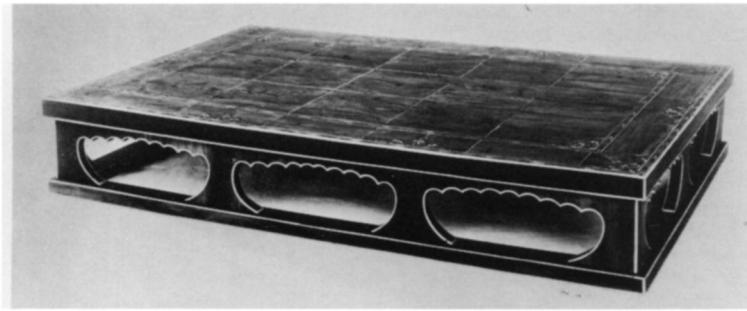


Figure 43. *Lupine Creature*, detail of Figure 41 (CMA 59.184).



**Figure 44. Pair of Hsieh-chai,**  
from stone plinth beneath the  
Winged Horse, Spirit Road  
to tomb of Emperor Kao-tsung  
and Empress Wu, Ch'ien-ling  
cemetery, Ch'ien-hsien,  
Shensi province. Line drawing  
after the engraving in stone,  
63 x 254 cm, ca. AD 684.  
China, T'ang Dynasty.



ring to the righteous fire-eating monster of Six Dynasties origin.<sup>74</sup> Alternatively, both of our creatures may share an older and more obscure derivation in the *Shan-hai-ching* (Classic of mountains and seas) or a comparably ancient gazeteer of supernatural worlds.<sup>75</sup> For the time being, we can affirm only that they occupied a fierce and exuberant place in the T'ang imagination.

The general decorative format of this stone clearly originated in wooden furniture. Low rectangular platforms with perforated side panels served both as tables and as seating platforms from Han times on. During the T'ang Dynasty the standard panel cut-out was cusped or scalloped along the top and flat along the bottom. Several lacquered wood game tables in the Shōsō-in treasury are the finest extant examples of this T'ang open-panel platform (Figure 45).<sup>76</sup> The cartouches carved in our stone precisely duplicate these perforations in wood. Their conversion here to frames for fabulous animals is a noteworthy adaptation of the ornament of this world to the uses of the next.

ELINOR PEARLSTEIN  
*Assistant Curator of Chinese Art*

#### Addendum

In October 1984 I visited the Kuan-lin Hall in Loyang and examined the coffin platform cited in endnote 21. The front three-footed facade is cut with mortise holes along the top surface as in the Lange piece. The Vice-Director, Chang Kuan-yin, informed me that the platform was originally constructed with vertical panels along all four sides, although only the back and short sides were discovered and illustrated (see Figure 5). According to Mr. Chang's interpretation, this four-sided *kuan-ch'uang* would form a complete enclosure or *kuo*.

**Figure 45. Gaming Table.** Hinoki, ginkgo, and persimmon woods inlaid with horn and ivory, 7.3 x 43.7 x 29 cm.  
Nara period, eighth century AD. Shōsō-in, Nara, Japan.

I am especially grateful to Hou-mei Ishida and to Hiroko Aikawa for assistance with Chinese and Japanese sources. Annette Julian Geneve offered advice on Six Dynasties problems, and Naomi Noble Richard provided instructive suggestions for the text.

1. *Li Chi: Book of Rites*, trans. James Legge, ed. Ch'u Chai and Winberg Chai (New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1967), I, 149, quoting Book II: T'ang Kung. This encyclopedia of Confucian teachings was compiled in the first century BC from various texts of earlier ages.

2. According to ancient ritual literature, the *p'o* was the element of the human soul that remained in the body at death and required these symbolic comforts of home in the life hereafter. The Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) concept of the *p'o* and funerary rites observed for its benefit are elucidated in Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise: The Chinese Quest for Immortality* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), pp. 9-13. For a broader intellectual background, see idem., *Chinese Ideas of Life and Death* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982).

3. For literary and artistic surveys of *ming-ch'i*, see Yao Tsung-i, "A Short Account of Tomb Pottery Figures," in *Chinese Tomb Pottery Figures*, exhib. cat. (Hong Kong: Institute of Oriental Studies, University of Hong Kong, 1953), pp. 5-13; Kōsei Andō, "Burial Objects—Models of Worldly Comfort," in Terukazu Akiyama et al., eds., *Arts of China: Neolithic Cultures to the T'ang Dynasty* (Tokyo and Palo Alto: Kodansha, 1968), pp. 141-200; and Ezekiel Schloss, *Chinese Ceramic Sculpture from Han through T'ang* (Stamford, CT: Castle Publishing Co., 1977).

4. In China, rubbings of smooth stones traditionally have been produced by a "wet method"—spreading a sheet of slightly moistened paper over the stone, pressing it into all crevices with a brush while still damp, and tamping it with a soft, inked pad when semi-dry. The resulting paper imprint renders all relief surfaces in black, while recessed areas and intaglio lines remain white. Rubbings of coarser stones are normally made by a "dry method"—by pressing thin, tough paper onto a stone with the palm of the hand and directly rubbing it with a soft ink cake. See R.H. van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur* (Roma: Instituto Italiano Per Il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente, 1958), pp. 86-89, and Tsuen-hsuin Tsien, *Written on Bamboo and Silk: The Beginnings of Chinese Books and Inscriptions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 86-89.

5. The *Li Chi* instructs that "the gutters of the tent-like frame over the coffin should be like the double gutters of a house" and describes the emperor's coffin as a "plastered house." *Li Chi: Book of Rites*, I, 156, 159. The Confucian philosopher Hsun Tzu (fl. 298-238 BC) analyzed the tomb as follows: "The grave and grave mound in form

imitate a house; the inner and outer coffin in form imitate the sideboards, top, and front and back boards of a carriage; the coffin covers and decorations and the cover of the funeral carriage in form imitate the curtains and hangings of a door or a room; the wooden lining and framework of the grave pit in form imitate railings and roofs." Burton Watson, trans., *Hsün Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 105, quoted also by Robert Lee Thorp, "The Mortuary Art and Architecture of Early Imperial China" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1979), p. 53. The latter is a comprehensive survey and interpretation of structural developments and furnishings of the Ch'in (221-206 bc) and Han dynasties, based on archaeological reports published through 1978.

6. Michele Pirazzoli-T'Serstevens, *Living Architecture: Chinese* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1971), p. 12. Arthur F. Wright, "Symbolism and Function: Reflections on Ch'angan and Other Great Cities," *Journal of Asian Studies*, xxiv, no. 4 (August 1965), 677-679, offers a lucid interpretation of the system of values behind this architectural tradition.

7. CMA 82.260 *Side of a Coffin Platform (Kuan-ch'uang)*, limestone, 45.7 x 212 x 10.8 cm. China, Six Dynasties period or Sui Dynasty, sixth century AD. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Lange. Publication: *CMA Bulletin*, lxx (June 1983), repr. 238 (detail). Exhibition: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1984: Year in Review for 1983 (cat., *CMA Bulletin*, lxxi [February 1984]), no. 263.

8. CMA 62.280 *Relief from Tomb Chamber*, sandstone, 120 x 49.5 x 5 cm. China, Eastern Han Dynasty, first-second century AD. John L. Severance Fund. Publication: *Handbook of The Cleveland Museum of Art*, rev. ed. (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), repr. p. 327. Exhibition: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1963: Year in Review for 1963 (cat., *CMA Bulletin*, l [December 1963]), no. 77, repr. p. 282.

9. Li Fan-Lin, "On the Techniques and Periodization of Han Pictorial Stone Carving," in Chinese, *K'ao-ku*, 1965, no. 4: 199-204. Li distinguishes eight techniques of carving, including engraved line, thread relief, low and high relief, and openwork.

10. Wang Tzu-yün, "T'ang Dynasty Stone Engraving," in Chinese, *Wen wu ts'an-k'ao tzu-liao*, 1956, no. 4: 29-30. Wang refers to engraving as an art of the *tao-pi*—knife-brush or knife-pen. Writers since the T'ang Dynasty have referred to the *tao-pi* as the tool used for engraving inscriptions on stone tablets. However, the Sung antiquarian Wang Fu (d. 1126) identified the *tao-pi* as a short knife used as an eraser to scrape off erroneous characters from these tablets, and the term has also been used to designate a scribe. This confusion in terminology is discussed in Tsien, *Written on Bamboo and Silk*, pp. 174-176. Tsien terms the burin a *ch'i-chieh*.

11. The other two symbols are the Black Warrior (Tortoise and Snake) of the North and the White Tiger of the West. For the early history of these four directional animals, see Annette L. Juliano, *Teng-hsien: An Important Six Dynasties Tomb*, Artibus Asiae Supplementum xxxvii (Ascona: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1980), pp. 35-43.

12. This interpretation was suggested by Alfred Salmony in reference to a pair of stone doors carved with a simpler triad comprising a similar pheasant-like bird, a tiger-like monster mask (cf. Rietberg doors, Figure 2), and a fish. Salmony, *Chinese Sculpture: Han (206 BC-AD 220) to Sung (AD 960-1279)—Collection of Jan Kleijkamp and Ellis Monroe*, exhib. cat. (San Francisco: The M. H. De Young Memorial Museum, 1944), pp. 25-26.

13. For the Rietberg doors, formerly in the collection of Baron Eduard von der Heydt, see Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Sculptures in the von der Heydt Collection* (Zurich: Museum Rietberg, 1959), no. 4; and Helmut Brinker and Eberhard Fisher, *Treasures from the Rietberg Museum*, exhib. cat. (New York: Asia House Gallery, 1980), no. 36.

14. Cf. Tomb 30.14 in Loyang, Honan, illustrated in Jan Fontein and Tung Wu, *Unearthing China's Past*, exhib. cat. (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1973), frontispiece; Käte Fisterbusch, *Verzeichnis und*

*Motivindex der Han Darstellungen* (Weidbaden: Harrasowitz, 1971), II, pl. 256; and Machida Akira, "The Construction of Han Tombs in North China," in Japanese, *Tōhō Gakuhō*, no. 49 (1977), p. 46. The tomb has been moved from its original site to the Loyang Worker's Park and opened as a public museum.

For the Ssüch'uan cave tombs, see Richard C. Rudolph and Wen Yu, *Han Tomb Art of West China: A Collection of First- and Second-Century Reliefs* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), p. 8, p. 10: figs. 4 and 5, p. 16: ground plans, and pls. 60-63; Cheng Te-k'un, *Archaeological Studies in Szechwan* (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1957), pp. 140-142 and pl. 70; and Nagahiro Toshio, "The Function of Stone Engravings at Tombs," pp. 3-4 of English summary in idem., ed., *Kandai-gasho no kenkyū* [The representational art of the Han Dynasty], in Japanese (Tokyo: Chuo-koron, 1965).

15. These regional relief styles are compared in Richard C. Rudolph, "Han Dynasty Reliefs from Nanyang," *Oriental Art*, n.s. xxiv (Summer 1978), 179-180; and Brinker and Fischer, *Treasures from the Rietberg Museum*, no. 36.

16. More naturalistic subjects carved in stone, molded in tile, and painted in lacquer are notable for their descriptive accuracy and advanced spatial effects.

17. Wang Zhongshu, *Han Civilization*, trans. K. C. Chang et al. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), pp. 175-177, 180-181 (here *kuan* and *kuo* are translated as inner and outer casket); and Thorp, "Mortuary Art And Architecture," pp. 139-187.

18. Holes were drilled into the ends of the stones for the insertion of the steel dowels and sleeves that now hold them together. The shallow engraved lines of the horizontal stones were painted with white water-color to clarify the design. Treatment was completed in April 1983 by the Museum's Chief Conservator, Fredrick L. Hollendorner.

19. Sirén, *Chinese Sculpture in the von der Heydt Collection*, no. 5 (Museum Rietberg); Rene-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé, *Chinese, Korean and Japanese Sculpture: The Avery Brundage Collection, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1974), no. 50; and *An Exhibition of Chinese Stone Sculpture* (New York: C. T. Loo & Co., 1940), no. 36 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston [note: the watchtower shaped panels in pl. XXVIII and the rectangular side panels engraved with filial piety scenes in pls. XXIX-XXX may be later additions. They are not currently exhibited with the front section. There, however, is archaeological evidence for the form of these rectangular panels; cf. Figure 5 and note 21 below.]). Doris Dohrenwend, *The East Asian Galleries: A General Guide* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1969), no. 46, p. 32, previously published as no. 35 in the C. T. Loo catalogue cited above. The C. T. Loo Archives at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, contains a photograph of another three-footed façade, carved with an ogre mask, lion, and phoenix, but I do not know the present whereabouts of this piece.

20. Ta-t'ung City Museum and Shansi Cultural Work Team, "The Su-ma Chin-lung Tomb of the Northern Wei at Shih-chia Village in Ta-t'ung, Shansi," in Chinese, *Wen wu*, 1972, no. 3: 21-22, illus. fig. 4 in a distant view. According to this report, the rectangular coffin platform is constructed of six slabs, one along each side and two forming the top surface. It measures 51 x 241 x 133 cm. The carved façade is exhibited in the Ta-t'ung City Museum within the temple complex of Lower Hua-yen-ssu. Two details published in *Shan-hsi ch'u-t'u wen wu* [Cultural relics unearthed in Shansi province] (Shansi Cultural Relics Administrative Bureau, 1980), pls. 146, 147, resemble Buddhist carvings ascribed to Northern Wei artists at the nearby Yün-kang cave temples. Comparable designs were found on stone-carved pillar bases. However, the most significant finds in this tomb are fragments of a lacquered wood screen painted in the "southern" style of Ku K'ai-chih (cf. Figure 7).

21. Kung Ta-chung, "Discussion of Several Stone Carvings from Northern Wei Tombs Exhibited in the Kuan-lin [Hall], Loyang," in Chinese, *Wen wu*, 1982, no. 3: 81. Unfortunately, this platform has been illustrated only in the line drawing reproduced here as Figure 5. It measures H. 49.5 cm.; L. 239 cm.; D. 14 cm.; the feet are 27 cm. wide. Teng Hung-li and Tsai Chuan-fa, "A Tomb of the Northern Dynasties and Its Stone Coffin-Bed with Pictorial Images Discovered at Hsi-hsiang in Chin-yang County," in Chinese, *Chung-yüan wen-wu*, 1983, no. 1: 4-14.
- Stone panels simulating hinged screens and engraved with pictorial images in sixth-century style most likely came from comparable coffin-beds. There are examples in the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum (Kansas City), the Kyoto University Institute for Humanistic Studies, and the Tenri Museum (Nara). See Nagahiro Toshio, *Rikuchō jidai bijutsu no kenkyū* [The representative art of the Six Dynasties], in Japanese with English summary (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppan-sha, 1969), chap. 9, for the Nelson Gallery slabs; and *Rikuchō no bijutsu* [The art of the Six Dynasties], exhib. cat. (Osaka: Municipal Museum of Fine Arts, 1975; Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1976), pls. 293, 294, for the Kyoto University and Tenri Museum slabs.
22. Committee for the Preservation of Archaeological Monuments (hereafter CPAM), Honan Province, "An Unprecedented Discovery in Chinese Archaeology: A Large Warring States Tomb at Ch'ang-t'ai-kuan, Hsin-yang," in Chinese, *Wen wu*, 1957, no. 9: 21-25, illus. p. 24, figs. 6, 7 (bed frame), and p. 23, fig. 5 (canopy?).
23. Michael Sullivan, "Notes on Early Chinese Screen Painting," *Artibus Asiae*, xxvii, no. 3 (1965), 241.
24. Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, *Chinese Furniture: Hardwood Examples of the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties* (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 89-90. If originally part of a three-sided couch, the Lange stones must have formed the long back side. However, none of the reports on excavated examples mentions that this side was decorated.
25. Max Loehr, "The Fate of Ornament in Chinese Art," *Archives of Asian Art*, xxi (1967-68), 15.
26. CMA 30.731 *Monster Mask (Pu shou): Holder for a Door Ring*, gilt bronze, 13.7 x 20 cm. China, reportedly Honan province, late Six Dynasties period, sixth century AD. Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund.
- Publications: Howard C. Hollis, "Two Chinese Bronzes," CMA Bulletin, xviii (April 1931), 72; Anthony Christie, *Chinese Mythology* (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1968), p. 106; *Handbook of The Cleveland Museum of Art* (1978), p. 328; Sherman E. Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art*, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, and New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982), fig. 183.
- Exhibitions: New York, 1939: Metropolitan Museum of Art, Chinese Bronzes; San Francisco, 1939: Golden Gate International Exposition, no. 55, repr.; San Francisco Museum of Art, 1957: Art in Asia and the West, no. 16b, repr.; Toronto, 1959: Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, Masks, no. E-17, repr. p. 49.
27. CMA 57.360 *Squatting Caryatid Monster*, limestone, 75 x 63.5 cm. China, (Northern) Hsiang-t'ang Shan, Hopei-Honan provinces, Northern Ch'i Dynasty, late sixth century AD. The Fanny Tewksbury King Collection.
- Publications: Mizuno Seiichi and Nagahiro Toshio, *Kyōdōsan Sekkutsu: The Buddhist Cave-Temples of Hsiang-t'ang-ssu* (Kyoto: Tōhō-Bunka-Gakuen Kyoto Kenkyusho, 1937), pl. 6A; *Handbook of The Cleveland Museum of Art* (1978), p. 328; Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art*, 4th ed., fig. 183; and William Watson, *The Art of Dynastic China* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1981), pl. 389.
28. The chamber doorway of a recently excavated Northern Ch'i (550-577) tomb is painted with a monster mask, dragon, and tiger whose contours are accented with similar bands and spirals. See Institute of Archaeology, Shansi province and CPAM, T'ai-yüan, "Excavation of the Northern Ch'i Tomb of Lou Rui at T'ai-yüan in Shansi," in Chinese, *Wen wu*, 1983, no. 10: pl. II:l; cf. also a carved stone lion from this tomb, pl. VI:2.
- The continuation of this style into the Sui Dynasty (581-618) is apparent in monster masks and dragons carved in low relief along the An-ch'i Stone Bridge in Chao-hsien, Hopei, completed in 605. The original Sui stones, dredged from the river in 1953-54, are displayed in a museum adjacent to the bridge. See *Ancient Chinese Architecture*, comp. Chinese Academy of Architecture (Peking: China Building Industry Press and Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co, 1982), pp. 58-59.
29. See Nagahiro Toshio, "Monsters in the Arts of the Six Dynasties Period," in Nagahiro, *Rikuchō jidai bijutsu no kenkyū*, pp. 105-142, and English summary, pp. xiii-xvi; Susan Bush, "Thunder Monsters and Wind Spirits in Early Sixth Century China and the Epitaph Cover of Lady Yüan," *Boston Museum Bulletin*, lxxii, no. 367 (1974), 25-54; and idem., "Thunder Monsters, Auspicious Animals, and Floral Ornament in Early Sixth Century China," *Ars Orientalis*, x (1975), 19-33, especially 29-33 for a summary of demonic beings. For comparable monsters in situ at a Buddhist site, see *Kung-hsien shih-ku ssu* [The Buddhist cave-temples at Kung-hsien] (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan she, 1963), figs., 16, 18; pls. 31, 53.
30. For a discussion of this motif and its application to decorative art, see Hin-cheung Lovell, "Some Northern Chinese Ceramic Wares of the Sixth and Seventh Centuries," *Oriental Art*, n.s. xxi (Winter 1975), 329.
31. Rubbings of the complete epitaph are published in Nishikawa Nei, *Seian hirin* [The Forest of Stele at Sian], in Japanese (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1966). For stylistic and historical commentary, see Bush, "Thunder Monsters," p. 26.
32. CMA 75.63 *Sarcophagus Panel*, limestone, 119 x 69 x 10 cm. China, T'ang Dynasty, early eighth century. John L. Severance Fund. Ex collection: Sasakawa Shinichi (architect, painter, and curator of the Sumitomo Collection).
- Publications: Sasakawa Akio, ed., *Sasakawa Shinichi kokekushon* [Collection of Sasakawa Shinichi] (Osaka: Eishōnichiedo, 1939), pl. 11 (unnumbered); Joan M. Hartman, "Report from America," *Oriental Art*, n.s. xxii (Autumn 1976), 308, fig. 4, and (Winter 1976), 422, fig. 3.
- Exhibition: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1976: Year in Review for 1975 (cat., CMA Bulletin, LXIII [February 1976]), repr. p. 30 (detail), pp. 56-57.
33. The main hall at Nan-ch'an Ssu was constructed before 782, the earliest date of repair inscribed on a crossbeam. It was extensively damaged by an earthquake in 1966 and reassembled piece by piece in 1975-75. Except for the doors and windows, almost all the original architectural members were salvaged for the restoration. See Chi Ying-t'ao and Ch'ai Tse chün, "Restoration of the Main Hall of Nan-ch'an Ssu in Shansi Province," in Chinese, *Wen wu*, 1980, no. 11: 61-75; and Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, "Nanchan si Main Hall," in idem. et al., *Chinese Traditional Architecture*, exhib. cat. (New York: China House Gallery, 1984), pp. 101-108.
34. Chi Ying-t'ao, "Notes on the Epochal Features of Early Chinese Wooden Buildings," in Chinese, *Wen wu*, 1983, no. 4: 65-66.
35. Liu Chih-yüan, "Record of Clearing Cliff Tombs at T'ieh-hui-shan, Chengtu," in Chinese, *K'ao-ku hsieh-pao*, 1958, no. 1: 91, fig. 3; also noted in Thorp, "Mortuary Art and Architecture," p. 195.
- Engraved stone coffins of the Six Dynasties period are typically long, narrow boxes with arched and sloping lids. Miniature versions in stone and precious metals were used throughout T'ang as Buddhist cineraria.
36. Layouts and furnishings of the major T'ang tombs, all distinguished for their wall paintings, are tabulated in Su Pai, "Tomb Murals of the T'ang Dynasty in the Sian District," in Chinese with English summary, *K'ao-ku hsieh-pao*, 1982, no. 2: 150-153. The only carved

stone coffin listed by Su and not considered here is dated 668 and described only in general shape. It appears to follow the Six Dynasties type described above (note 35), though the pillar-and-panel assembly of the walls resembles the house-shaped structures discussed below. See Shensi Provincial Museum et al., "Summary Report on the Discovery of the Tomb of Cheng Jen-t'ai of the T'ang," in Chinese, *Wen Wu*, 1972, no. 7: 34, fig. 2 and p. 38.

37. Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, *T'ang Ch'ang-an-ch'eng-chiao Sui Tang mu: Excavation of the Sui and Tang Tombs at Xi'an [Sian]*, in Chinese with English abstract (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan she, 1980), pp. 3-29, especially pp. 7-10, pls. I-VII, and figs. 2-10 for the coffin structures. The inner coffin is approximately the size of a modern household freezer: H. (including roof) 122 cm.; W. 192 cm.; D. 89 cm. Its walls are 15 cm. thick. The "flaming pearl" roof finial, usually associated with Buddhist architecture, is unique among the house-shaped coffins reported to date.

38. Shensi Provincial Museum and CPAM, "Excavation of the T'ang Tomb of Li Shou at San-yüan, Shensi Province," in Chinese, *Wen Wu*, 1974, no. 9: 71-72, p. 76, fig. 7; and *Sensei-sho hakubutsukan* [The Shensi Provincial Museum], Chūgoku no hakubutsukan [Museums of China], vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kodansha and Wen-wu ch'u-pan she, 1981), pls. 111, 113, 114. The outer coffin measures 220 x 355 x 185 cm. As shown in Figure 22, the walls and roof are now reinforced with metal strapwork.

39. Shensi Provincial Museum and CPAM, "T'ang Tomb of Li Shou," figs. 25, 31, 33; and Jan Fontein and Wu Tung, *Han and T'ang Murals*, exhib. cat. (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1976), cat. VII, pl. 98 (modern copy of wall mural).

40. This was the most decisive measure of Chung-tsung's brief and otherwise ineffectual reign, which ended in 710 when he was poisoned by his own wife, the Empress Wei. For a lucid account of this palace intrigue, see Charles Patrick Fitzgerald, *The Empress Wu* (London: Cresset Press, 1968).

41. Yung-t'ai (Li Hsien-hui) was Chung-tsung's daughter by a concubine. It is not clear whether she was slain at command of her grandmother or died of natural causes. Cf. Fitzgerald, *Empress Wu*, pp. 170-171; and Fontein and Wu, *Han and T'ang Murals*, p. 121. For her sarcophagus, see CPAM, Shensi Province, "Excavation of the Tomb of Princess Yung-t'ai of the T'ang Dynasty," in Chinese, *Wen Wu*, 1964, no. 1: 8, fig. 8 (plan) and figs. 52-66 (rubbings); and *Yung-t'ai kung-chu shih-kuo chien-k'e hua* [Engraved images on the stone sarcophagus of Princess Yung-t'ai], Shen-hsi ku-tai mei-shu hsün-li [Survey of the ancient arts of Shensi], no. 4 (Shen-hsi: Jen-min mei-shu ch'u-pan she, n.d.) Better photographs of these rubbings are published in Nishikawa, *Seian hirin*, pls. 201-210. For the tomb murals, see *T'ang Yung-t'ai kung-chu mu pi-hua chi* [Collection of wall paintings from the tomb of Princess Yung-t'ai of the T'ang] (Peking: Jen-min mei-shu ch'u-pan she, 1963).

I-te (Li Chung-jun) was Chung-tsung's eldest son by Empress Wei (cf. note 40) and the heir-apparent to the throne. Cf. Fitzgerald, *Empress Wu*, pp. 170-171; and Fontein and Wu, *Han and T'ang Murals*, p. 104. Only one panel of his sarcophagus has been illustrated; see Shensi Provincial Museum, Ch'i'en-hsien Bureau of Culture and Education, and T'ang Tombs Archaeological Team, "Excavation of the Tomb of Crown Prince I-te of the T'ang," in Chinese, *Wen Wu*, 1972, no. 7: 7 and fig. 2. For the tomb murals, see Shensi Provincial Museum and CPAM, Shensi Province, *T'ang Li Chung-jun mu pi-hua* [Wall paintings in the tomb of Li Chung-jun of the T'ang] (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan she, 1974).

Chang-huai (Li Hsien) was Kao-tsung's second son by Empress Wu's sister, Lady Ho-lan. He was exiled to Ssuc'huan and committed suicide. Cf. Fitzgerald, *Empress Wu*, pp. 86-88; and Fontein and Wu, *Han and T'ang Murals*, p. 90. For rubbings of his sarcophagus, see Shensi

Provincial Museum, Ch'i'en-hsien Bureau of Culture and Education, and T'ang Tombs Archaeological Team, "Excavation of the Tomb of Crown Prince Chang-huai of the T'ang," in Chinese, *Wen Wu*, 1972, no. 7: 15, fig. 5 (pillar), figs. 21, 22 (door and window panels). For the tomb murals, see Shensi Provincial Museum and CPAM, Shensi Province, *T'ang Li Hsien mu pi-hua* [Wall paintings in the tomb of Li Hsien of the T'ang] (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan she, 1974).

Wei Chiung, Prince of Huai-yang, was the younger brother of Empress Wei. Rubbings of his sarcophagus are published in Shensi Cultural Bureau, "Report on the Discovery of the Tomb of Wei Chiung of the T'ang at Nan-li-wang Village, Ch'ang-an County," in Chinese, *Wen Wu*, 1959, no. 8: 18, figs. 7-13, 15; and Nishikawa, *Seian hirin*, pls. 216-223. For brief descriptions in English, see Terukazu Akiyama, "Painting — The Embellishment of Tombs," in idem. et al., eds, *Arts of China*, p. 228 (notes to pls. 219-221); and Fontein and Wu, *Unearthing China's Past*, pp. 155-157, fig. 77.

Tombs of two prime ministers have been unearthed in Ch'i'en-ling but not published; descriptions of their coffin structures hopefully will be forthcoming in the excavation reports. The twelve unexcavated tombs have been identified with three nobles (*chu wang*), three princesses, and six prime ministers. See Wang Jen-po, "The T'ang Dynasty Imperial Burial System as Manifest in the Tomb of Prince I-te," in Chinese, *Chung-kuo k'ao-ku hsüeh-hui ti-i ch'ih pien-hui lun-wen chi* [Collected essays of the first annual conference of the Chinese Archaeological Society] (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan she, 1980), p. 402.

42. I-te's tomb measures 100.8 meters long; Yung-t'ai's, 87.5 m.; Chang-huai's, 71 m.; and Wei Chiung's, 39.5 m. For their ground plans, see the reports cited in note 41.

43. The four tomb plans are the single chamber earth cave tomb, the single chamber brick tomb, the double chamber earth cave tomb, and the double chamber brick tomb. See Wang Jen-po, "T'ang Dynasty Imperial Burial System," p. 401. According to Wang, only the double-chamber brick tomb is characteristically furnished with a stone *kuo*. However, Yang Ssu-hsu (d. 740), a favorite eunuch of Emperor Hsüan-tsung, was buried in a carved, house-shaped stone *kuo* in a single chamber brick tomb. See Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, *T'ang Ch'ang-an-ch'eng-chiao Sui Tang mu*, pp. 67-75. The correlation between tomb and coffin structures remains open to study.

44. Mary H. Fong, "Four Chinese Royal Tombs of the Early Eighth Century," *Artibus Asiae*, xxxv, no. 4 (1973), 309-310.

45. Yung-t'ai's *kuo* is constructed of thirty-four slabs (including nine foundation slabs raised on a brick platform and five roof slabs). The walls measure 140 x 383 x 275 cm. (approximately the size of a small van). I-te's *kuo*, constructed of thirty-four slabs, measures 180 x 375 x 300 cm. Chang-huai's *kuo*, constructed of thirty-three slabs, measures 200 x 400 x 300 cm. It is not clear whether these latter two sets of dimensions quoted in the reports include the roof and foundation stones. Wei Chiung's *kuo* is constructed of thirty slabs (six foundation and four roof slabs). The walls measure 105 cm. high and vary between 50 and 70 cm. wide. In scale, the Cleveland panel seems to fit between the *kuo* of Wei Chiung and the three at Ch'i'en-ling.

46. Shensi Provincial Museum et al., "Tomb of Crown Prince Chang-huai," fig. 22.

47. Tseng Yu-ho Ecke, "A Reconsideration of *Ch'u'an-mo-i-hsieh*, the Sixth Principle of Hsieh Ho," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting* (Taipei: National Palace Museum 1972), p. 316 and pls. 14-15.

48. Nishikawa, *Seian hirin*, note to pls. 201-210.

49. Compare, for example, a cloud-shaped gilt bronze ornament made for Tōdai-ji temple in 752 and preserved in the Shōsō-in repository. *Shōsō-in ten mokuroku: Exhibition of Shōsō-in Treasures*, exhib. cat. (Nara: Nara National Museum, 1980), no. 24.

50. Jessica Rawson, *The Ornament on Chinese Silver of the T'ang Dynasty (AD 618-906)*, British Museum Occasional Paper no. 40 (London: British Museum, 1982), pp. 8-12; and William Watson, "Divisions of T'ang Decorative Style," in *Chinese Painting and the Decorative Style*, Colloquies on Art & Archaeology in Asia no. 5 (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, 1975), pp. 6-7.
51. Nishikawa, *Seian hirin*, pl. 246, illustrating the epitaph cover of Feng Chün-heng.
52. The far southern and perhaps aboriginal town of Tao-chou (in present-day Hunan province) suffered annual tribute offerings of its population until a late eighth-century public official successfully condemned the practice. Cf. Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 47-48; and Arthur Waley, *The Life and Times of Po Chü-i* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949), pp. 66-67.
53. The male dwarf illustrated here from the east side of the south wall of the antechamber is matched by a female dwarf on the west side. Cf. Shensi Provincial Museum and CPAM, *T'ang Li Hsien mu pi-hua* [Wall paintings in the tomb of Li Hsien (Prince Chang-huai)] (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan she, 1974), pl. 45. For European depictions, see E. Tietze-Conrat, *Dwarfs and Jesters in Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1957).
54. The window fragment is one of twelve panels identified as the disassembled *kuo* of Wei Hsü, whose dated epitaph is in the Forest of Steles of the Shensi Provincial Museum. The panels were discovered in 1943 at a Taoist temple in Sian, where they were used to line a staircase. According to museum officials, the tomb was looted in the late Ch'ing Dynasty and the panels turned over to a local school. See Wang Tzu-yün, *Chung-kuo ku-tai shih-k'e-hua hsüan-chi* [Selections of ancient Chinese stone-carved pictures] (Peking: Chung-kuo ku-tien mei-shu ch'u-pan-she, 1957), nos. 20:14 (window fragment) and 20:1-13 (other eleven panels).
55. Classical texts such as the *Chou-li* [Institutes of Chou] identify *hu* as memorandum tablets inscribed for brief communication between the emperor and his subjects, though their actual function remains problematic. *Hu* were carved of jade, ivory, and wood. Jade *hu*, traditionally associated with imperial rank, are sometimes classified as types of *kuei* scepters. See Tsien, *Written on Bamboo and Silk*, p. 85; and William Willetts, *Chinese Art* (London: Penguin Books, 1958), I, 80-82.
56. Cf. facial features of bowing attendant painted in tomb of Li Shuang (d. 668) near Sian, illustrated in Akiyama, "Painting—The Embellishment of Tombs," in Akiyama et al., eds., *Arts of China*, pl. 193.
57. For an illustrated chronology of the *po-t'u chin-tzu* based on literary records as well as wall paintings and ceramic figurines from dated tombs, see Fu Hsi-nien, "Notes on Chan Tzu-ch'ien's Handscroll Entitled 'A Spring Trip,'" in Chinese, *Wen-wu*, 1978, no. 11: 41-43. Fu details a sequence of four styles current between the early seventh and mid-eighth centuries. A more general discussion of the head wrapper is provided in Shen Ts'ung-wen, *Chung-kuo ku-tai fu-shih yen-chiu* [Studies on the history of ancient Chinese costume] (Hong Kong: Shang-wu, 1981), pp. 188-191.
58. The *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* (rose of China), a large shrub with red flowers, is known as *fu-sang* after the magical tree traditionally believed to grow on Mt. P'eng-lai, three legendary islands in the Eastern Sea inhabited by immortals. The *fu-sang* mythology, pervasive in Han mortuary art, was still current in the eighth century when the motif of figures under a tree became a common artistic convention. The isles of P'eng-lai are depicted above the doorway of Yung-t'ai's sarcophagus. Cf. H. L. Li, *Garden Flowers of China* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959), pp. 138-139; Michael Sullivan, *The Birth of Landscape Painting in China* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), pp. 175-177; idem., *Chinese Landscape Painting*, vol. II: *The Sui and T'ang Dynasties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 89; and Nishikawa, *Seian hirin*, pl. 210.
59. Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, pp. 116-117.
60. Shen, *Chung-kuo ku-tai fu-shih yen-chiu*, p. 212.
61. For this "bending and falling" style of hairdo (*wo-to chi*), see Sun Chi, "Feminine Dress and Cosmetics in the T'ang Dynasty," in Chinese, *Wen-wu*, 1984, no. 4: 67 and fig. 14:8.
62. Cf. back view of the court lady in Figure 40, illustrated in Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, *T'ang Ch'ang-an-ch'eng chiao Sui T'ang mu*, pl. LXXVI.
63. Quoted in *Ch'üan T'ang shih* [Complete T'ang poetry] (Peking: Chung-hua, 1960), ts'e 5, chuan 334, p. 3749. This reference was generously provided by Edward Schafer of the University of California, Berkeley.
- Unlike the modern American version of adult animal slippers of 100 percent acrylic (see May Company sale brochure, 28 November 1983, no. 32a: duck shoes), these were undoubtedly woven of silk or a comparably luxurious material.
64. Bo Gyllensvard, "T'ang Gold and Silver," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* (Stockholm), no. 29 (1957), pl. 7e (fig. 68a), fig. 68b, pl. 11b (fig. 68c), fig. 68d (silver implements and vessels); *Wen-hua ta-ke-ming ch'i-chien ch'u-t'u wen-wu* [Historical relics unearthed during the Cultural Revolution] (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan she, 1972), I, 105: bottom (wax-resist dyed gauze).
65. Shensi Provincial Museum and CPAM, Shensi Province, *T'ang Li Hsien mu pi-hua*, pl. 21.
66. Cf. fn. 1 and "Royal Regulations" in the *Li Chi*: "After sixty (the coffin and other things for the mourning rites) were seen to be in readiness, (once) in the year; after seventy, once in the season; after eighty, once in the month, and after ninety, every day they were kept in good repair..." (*Li Chi: Book of Rites*, I, 241, quoting Book III: Wang Chih).
67. Chang-huai's sarcophagus seems to have been left intact in 711 when the tomb was reopened for his wife. Archaeologists tentatively identified her with skeletal remains found behind the back (west) wall of the sarcophagus. However, since the burial chamber had been flooded as well as looted prior to excavation, the original position of these remains is unknown. See Shensi Provincial Museum, et al., "Tomb of Crown Prince Chang-huai," p. 14.
68. This ideal of feminine beauty—formerly associated with the mid-eighth century rise of the plump imperial consort, Yang Kuei-fei—was current already in the 720s as evidenced by the figurines in Hsien-yu Ting-hui's tomb (Figure 40). Figurines from tombs dated in the 740s have heavier proportions and wear fuller, shoulder-length versions of the pageboy coiffure. For this later style, see Shensi Cultural Committee, *Shen-hsi ch'u-t'u T'ang yung hsüan-chi* [Selection of T'ang tomb figures excavated in Shensi Province] (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan she, 1958), pls. 67, 69, 70, 105. Also see Sun, "Feminine Dress," pp. 66-68.
69. The sarcophagus of Yang Ssu-hsu (see note 43 above) is relatively simple in construction, being a three-by-one bay building assembled of eight wall panels, eight pillars, and five roof slabs that are carved to imitate tilework only on one long and one short side. On the exterior, the east doorway is incised with decorative nail heads and scrollwork, and the window panels with straight and curly haired (male and female) lions. The interior is undecorated except for these two panels flanking the doorway, each sketchily incised with a male attendant and background floral patterns. The cursory quality of this sarcophagus contrasts markedly with that of two superbly carved stone figurines found in the same tomb.
70. There is indirect evidence for the continuation of the house-

shaped *kuo* beyond the first half of the eighth century in a three-by-two bay wooden building, which formed the enclosure of a stone coffin in a Liao (907-1125) tomb at Yeh-mao-tai, Liaoning. This building is designated as *kuan-ch'uang hsiao-chang* or inner coffin-platform tent, by Ts'ao Hsin, author of the excavation report. He speculates that the house-shaped stone *kuo* of T'ang were modeled after such wooden structures, which sometimes served as temporary coffins to be burned before burial. The Liao "coffin tent," featuring square columns, a hip-and-gable roof, a low railing enclosure, and a foundation decorated with a row of animals set in cartouches, was hung with curtains and scroll paintings. (See accompanying illustration.) Ts'ao sees the origin of the coffin tent in ancient bed enclosures such as that illustrated in the Admonitions scroll (Figure 7). His thesis suggests that the *kuo* and *kuan-ch'uang* (discussed above) may share a common derivation in such enclosures. See Ts'ao Hsin, "The *Kuan-ch'uang hsiao-chang* in the Liao tomb at Yeh-mao-tai," in Chinese, *Wen wu*, 1975, no. 12: 49-62.

71. CMA 59.184 *Section of a Sarcophagus Foundation or Epitaph Stone*, limestone, 33 x 140.3 x 17.8 cm. China, T'ang Dynasty, late seventh-early eighth century. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Severance A. Millikin.

Publication: "La Chronique des Arts," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, LVII, no. 1105 (February 1961, supplement), 20, no. 71.

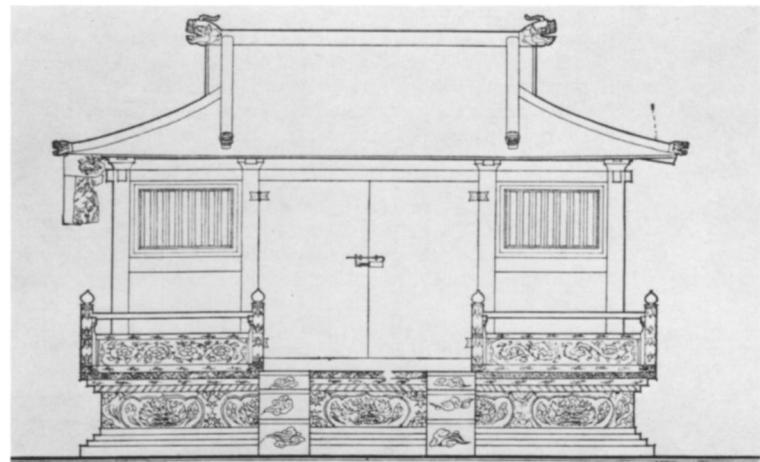
Exhibitions: New York, 1940: C. T. Loo & Co., An Exhibition of Chinese Stone Sculptures, no. 37, pl. XXXIII, top (Loo illustrated this slab together with two slightly longer stones of approximately the same height and decorative format. The two longer stones, whose present whereabouts are unknown to me, each contains four cartouches that are proportionately narrower than the three on the Cleveland stone and do not continue the animal chase. Loo described the eleven designs, right to left, as follows: [stone 1] (now in Cleveland) "running wolf, running elephant, running winged wolf with turned head, [stone 2] standing ibex, winged griffin in front of a goose, standing winged griffin with turned head, man shaking a fist at a snarling lion, [stone 3] man stabbing erect ape with a lance, galloping winged horse, crouching lion with raised mane, snarling griffin." He identified the three stones as "part of an architectural unit" and dated them to the seventh-eighth century.); The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1959: Year in Review for 1959 (cat., *CMA Bulletin*, XLVI [December 1959]), repr. p. 222.

72. See, e.g., the epitaph of Li Shuang, d. 668 (Shensi CPAM, "Discovery of the Tomb of Li Shuang of the T'ang at Yang-t'ou-chen, Sian," in Chinese, *Wen wu*, 1959, no. 3: 52, fig. 41); the epitaph cover of Princess Yung-t'ai (Nishikawa, *Seian hirin*, pls. 177, 179-190); and the epitaph from an undated T'ang tomb (Wang Tzu-yüan, *Chung-kuo ku-tai shih-k'e-hua hsüan-chi*, no. 26).

73. Cf. the epitaph of Cheng Jen-t'ai, d. 664 (Shensi Provincial Museum et al., "Summary Report on the Discovery of the Tomb of Cheng Jen-t'ai," p. 39, fig. 10); and the epitaph of Chang Ch'u-shao, d. 747 (Nishikawa, *Seian hirin*, pls. 249-251).

74. Yang Cheng-hsing and the Ch'i'en Mausoleum Museum, "Linear Engravings on Stone Carvings at Ch'i'en-ling," in Chinese, *K'ao-ku yü wen-wu*, 1983, no. 1: 28, 31: figs. 6, 7. For the *hsieh-chai*, see Alexander C. Soper, "Addendum: The 'Jen Shou' Mirrors," *Artibus Asiae*, xxix, no. 1 (1967), 65.

75. The *Shan-hai-ching* or *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (authorship unknown, ca. third-first century BC) describes several supernatural creatures — such as the *ch'iung-ch'i* of Shensi attributed with the shape of a bull, the horns of a porcupine, and the howl of a dog — that may relate to these images. However, the text is inconsistent (another passage likens the *ch'iung-ch'i* to a tiger) and by T'ang, such literary origins were probably unrecognizable. See Derk Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press,



1975), pp. 82-83, 86-90 for the *ch'iung-ch'i*; and John Wm. Schiffler, *The Legendary Creatures of the Shan-hai-ching* (Taipei: Hwa Kang Press, 1978).

76. For open-panel platform construction, see Gustav Ecke, *Chinese Domestic Furniture* (Rutland, Vt. and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1962), pp. 3-4; Ellsworth, *Chinese Furniture*, pp. 18-19; and Laurence Sickman, "Chinese Classic Furniture," *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, XLII (1977-78), 2-3.

## Photograph credits

Figures 3 above, 10, 31, and 39, drawings by author; Figure 5, after Kung, "Discussion of Several Stone Carvings from Northern Wei Tombs Exhibited in the Kuan-lin [Hall], Loyang," p. 79, fig. 1; Figures 6 and 24, after Liu Tun-chen, ed., *Chung-kuo ku-tai chien-chu shih* [A history of ancient Chinese architecture] (Peking: China Building Industry Press, 1980), p. 52, fig. 33 (center right), and p. 148, fig. 99-2, respectively; Figures 13, 29, 38, and 42, after Nishikawa, *Seian hirin*, pls. 146 and 148, 207 and 209, 211 and 212, and 198 and 199, respectively; Figure 16, after Chinese Academy of Architecture, comp., *Ancient Chinese Architecture*, p. 65; Figures 17, 26, 33, and 35, after Shensi Provincial Museum, *T'ang Li Chung-jun mu pi-hua*, pls. 4, 26, 40, and 39, respectively; Figure 18, after Wang Tzu-yüan, *Chung-kuo ku-tai shih-k'e-hua hsüan-chi*, pl. 25; Figures 19 (shading added), 21, and 40, after Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, *T'ang Ch'ang-an-ch'eng-chiao Sui T'ang mu*, figs. 4, 8, color pls. 6 and 8, respectively; Figures 22 and 23, after *Sensei-sho hakubutsukan*, pls. 111 and 114, respectively; Figure 25, after *T'ang Yung-t'ai kung-chu mu pi-hua chi* (unnumbered pl.); Figures 27 and 37, after Shensi Provincial Museum, *T'ang Li Hsien mu pi-hua*, pls. 29 and 44, respectively; Figure 28, after Shensi Cultural Bureau, "Report on Discovery of the Tomb of Wei Chiung," pls. 13 and 15, respectively; Figure 30, after CPAM, Shensi Province, "Excavation of the Tomb of Princess Yung-t'ai," figs. 57-59; Figure 44, after Yang and the Ch'i'en Mausoleum Museum, "Linear Engravings on Stone Carvings," p. 31, fig. 6; Figure 45, after *Shōsō-in Gomotsu Zuroku* [Catalogue of the Imperial Treasures in the Shōsō-in], in Japanese with English notes (Tokyo: Imperial Household Museum, 1936), vol. viii, pl. 16.