From Text to Images : A Case Study of the *Admonitions* Scroll in the British Museum

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Abstract: Attributed to Ku K'ai–chih 顧愷之 (c. A.D. 344-405), *The Admonitions of the Instructress to Court Ladies* (*Nü-shih chen* 女史箴) in the British Museum illustrates the text of the same title written by Chang Hua 張華 (A.D. 232-300) in the voice of an instructress to advise Emperor Chia 賈后 (d. A.D. 300) of her role as a virtuous court lady. This paper focuses on two issues regarding the text/image relationships of the scroll: First, how did the artist create the images for the corresponding text? Second, how does this painting represent the didactic meaning of the text? With three scenes missing from the beginning, the British Museum's *Admonitions* consists of nine scenes proceeding from right to left, each illustration following a passage of text in a sequence of monoscenic compositions. In order to convert the "Admonitions" text into an interesting painting, the artist experimented with many translation strategies, including literal, metaphorical, and suggestive. He also exercised great imagination to convey Confucian values advocated in the text through his choices of subjects and representation of figures: throughout the entire scroll, the meritorious deeds and the virtues of women, such as self-sacrifice, emotional suppression, prudence, sincerity, and obedience, are emphasized and shown in seven scenes; while unacceptable behaviors and attitudes, including narcissism, speaking with evil intent, and seeking the love of a man, are denounced and represented sparingly in three scenes. Also, the hierarchy of Confucian ethics is revealed in the treatment of figural forms: the ruler and the ruled as well as the dominator and the dominated are clearly differentiated in their varied dresses, facial expressions, and body language.

Keywords: Ku K'ai-chih, Chang Hua, *Admonitions* Scroll, words and images, narrative painting, didactic painting, Confucian ethics.

A renowned painting, the *Admonitions of the Instructress to Court Ladies* (*Nü-shih chen* 女史箴) (pl.1, The British Museum) scroll has intrigued scholars' interests worldwide. Dozens of papers on the scroll were published in the last century. In June

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臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

2001, the British Museum and the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art co-organized an international conference, "*The Admonitions Scroll*—Ideals of Etiquette, Art and Empire from Early China." About twenty papers were presented at the conference. Most of them dealt with problems pertaining to the scroll's date, style, authorship, authenticity, collection history, and cultural biography.[1] The important issue concerning the relationship between text and images on the scroll was not discussed in the conference due to the limit of time[2]. This paper aims to deal with this problem, particularly by examining how the artist of the *Admonitions* scroll illustrated the text of the same title by Chang Hua 張華 (232-300). There are two questions of concern in this issue: First, how did the artist create the images for the corresponding text? Second, how does this painting represent the didactic meaning of the text? The following discussions try to answer these questions.

Noted for its superb quality, the *Admonitions* scroll in the British Museum is one of the most famous Chinese paintings. The scroll had been in the Ch'ing 清(1644-1911) imperial collection[3] before it left China during the Boxer Rebellion of 1900[4] and entered the Bristish Museum in 1903, according to Laurence Binyon (1869-1943) and Basil Gray.[5] Attributed to Ku K'ai-chih,[6] the scroll illustrates the rhymed prose-poem of

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1. For detailed discussions of these issues, please see the conference papers to be published by the British Museum and the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art in 2003.
2. This paper was a part of "A Close Reading of the *Admonitions* Scroll in the British Museum," which I presented at the conference; however, due to the limit of time this part was eliminated in my presentation.
3. See Chang Chao 張照 and Liang Shih-chen 梁詩正 eds., *Shih-ch'ü pao-chi* 石渠寶笈(初編) (Treasured Boxes of the Stone Moat [Catalogue of Painting and Calligraphy in the Ch'ien-lung Imperial Collection], 1745), in the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* 四庫全書 (The Complete Books of the Four Libraries) (1772-1781), the *Wen-yüan-ko* 文淵閣 edition (Taipei: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan 商務印書館, 1983-86), vol. 825, *chüan* 卷 36, pp. 429, 430; *chüan* 44, pp. 642, 643; for more references related to the history of the scroll, see Yü Chien-hua 俞劍華, Lo Shu-tzu 羅叔子, and Wen Chao-t'ung 溫肇桐, *Ku K'ai-chih yen-chiu tzu-liao* 顧愷之研究資料 (References to the Study of Ku K'ai-chih) (Hong Kong: Nan-t'ung t'u-shu 南通圖書, 1962), pp.155-160.
4. See Yü Chien-hua et. al., *Ku K'ai-chih yen-chiu tzu-liao*, p.167.
5. Laurence Binyon, "A Chinese Painting of the Fourth Century," *The Burlington Magazine* 1 (1904), pp.39-44; Basil Gray, *Admonitions of The Instructress of The Ladies in the Palace—A Painting Attributed to Ku K'ai-chih* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1966), p.1; Roderick Whitfield, "Landmarks in The Collection and Study of Chinese Art in Great Britain—Reflections on the Centenary of the Birth of Sir Percival David, Baronet (1892-1967)," in Ming Wilson and John Cayley eds., *Europe Studies China—Papers from an International Conference on The History of European Sinology* (London: Han-Shan Tang Books and Taipei: The Chiang Ching-kuo Foundations for International Scholarly Exchange, 1995), pp. 209-210.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

the same title by Chang Hua, an esteemed scholar and high-ranking official who served the Western Chin 西晉 (A.D. 265-316) court, then dominated by Empress Chia and her corrupt maiden family members. Their abuse of power eventually led to the " Riot of the Eight Princes" (*Pa-wang chih luan* 八王之亂, A.D. 291-306), which jeopardized the stability of the empire.[7] Aware of the danger, Chang Hua felt it his responsibility to advise the empress of her role as a virtuous court lady; therefore, he wrote the "Admonitions," in the voice of an instructress, as a memorial to the empress. The text is short in length but rich in content. It comprises only eighty lines, generally four characters each, in nineteen rhymes (see Appendix). In brief and crisp wording, the "Admonitions" demonstrates a strong sense of musicality, due to the complex interplay and repetition of rhythmic variations. Didactic in nature, the "Admonitions" praises palace ladies of the past who acted meritoriously, and it denounces those behaviors Chang Hua deemed inappropriate for members of the imperial harem.

The British Museum's *Admonitions*, as it currently exists, consists of nine scenes proceeding from right to left, each illustration following a passage of text in a sequence of monoscenic compositions. Illustrating Chang Hua's entire text, the painting originally might have comprised twelve scenes.[8] The present scroll is incomplete, however. Three scenes are missing at the beginning. As a later copy in the Peking Palace Museum (pl. 2) suggests, these missing scenes include one introduction and two narrative scenes: 1) Man and wife, symbolizing the beginning of family structure and the initiation of an ethical order in human society, 2) Lady Fan 樊姬 refusing to eat the flesh of birds slaughtered by her husband, King Chuang 莊公 (r. 696-682 B.C.), and 3) Lady Wei 衛姬 rejecting music favored by her husband, Duke Hsüan 宣公 (r. 718-699 B.C.).[9]

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6. There are at least seven different opinions regarding the life span of Ku K'ai-chih, ranging from 341 to 407; for a detailed study, see Yü Chien-hua *et. al., Ku K'ai-chih yen-chiu tzu-liao*, pp. 131, 132; this paper follows that used in the "*Ku K'ai-chih nien-piao* 顧愷之年表 (Chronology of Ku K'ai-chih)," in pp. 125-130.
7. For further historical background, see Wang Chung-lo 王仲犖, *Wei Chin Nan-pei-ch'ao shih* 魏晉南北朝史(History of the Wei Chin and Southern and Northern Dynasties) (Shanghai: Jen-min ch'u-pan-she 人民出版社, 1980), vol. 1, pp.209-219; see also Fang Hsüan-ling 房玄齡 (578-648) and Ch'u Sui-liang 褚遂良 (596-658) eds, *Chin-shu* 晉書 (*The Book of Chin*) (646), in *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu*, vol. 255, *chüan* 31, pp.580-582.
8. For a detailed description of the scroll, see Basil Gray, *Admonitions of the Instructress of the Ladies in the Palace --- A Painting Attributed to Ku K'ai-chih, op. cit.*
9. The three scenes are reconstructed in a later copy, originally attributed to Li Kung-lin 李公麟 (c.1041-1106), in the Peking Palace Museum. For a recent study of this copy, see Yü Hui, "The

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

The British Museum's scroll opens with the fourth scene, which shows Lady Fung (Fung *chieh-yü* 馮倢伃) protecting Emperor Han Yüan-ti 漢元帝 (r. 48-33 B.C.) from being attacked by a black bear (pl. 3). The text, originally on the right but now missing, reads:

> Just as the black bear climbed out of the barred cage, Lady Fung hastily moved her body toward it. Was she not afraid of being hurt? Clearly, she knew that she might die, but she did not care about it.[10]
> 玄熊攀檻，馮媛趨進。夫豈無畏？知死不悔。

In the illustration, the emperor sits on a dais in the scene's lower right corner. Eyes startled and mouth open, he is astounded by the incident and makes ready to unsheath a long sword to defend himself. In the middle of the scene, Lady Fung bravely interposes herself between the emperor and the bear, which two guards wearing tall black gauze hats (*lung-kuan* 籠冠) and armed with spears hold at bay. At the same time, three other court ladies flee from the emperor: the two *kui-jen* 貴人 court ladies in light-colored dress toward the lower right corner of the scene, and Lady Fu (Fu c*hao-yi* 傅昭儀), in a red skirt, toward the left of the scene.

Admonitions Scroll: A Song Version," *Orientations* 32 (June, 2001) 6, pp. 41-51; for the Chinese version, see Yü Hui 余輝, "A Study of the Painting, '*Admonitions of the Imperial Instructress*' (Song Version) 〈宋本《女史箴圖》卷探考〉," in *Ku-kung po-wu yüan yüan-k'an* 故宮博物院院刊(*Palace Museum Journal*) 1 (2002), pp. 6-16. At the end of this scroll there are four colophons, respectively by Pao Hsi-lu 包希魯 (1345), Hsieh Hsün 謝珣 (1370), Chang Mei-ho 張美和 (1390), and Chao Ch'ien 趙謙 (1392); for more information, see Kohara Hironobu 古原宏伸, "*Joshi shin zukan* 女史箴圖卷 (The *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies* Scroll)," *Kokka* 國華 909 (Dec. 1967), pp.17-19; Basil Gray, *Admonitions of the Instructress of the Ladies in the Palace*, pp.5, 6; Ma Ts'ai 馬采, *Ku K'ai-chih yen-chiu* 顧愷之研究 (A Study of Ku K'ai-chih) (Shanghai: Shanghai Jen-min mei-shu 上海人民美術, 1958); Chin Wei-no 金維諾: "*Ku K'ai-chih te yi-shu ch'eng-chiu* 顧愷之的藝術成就 (The Artistic Achievements of Ku K'ai-chih)," *Wen-wu ts'an-k'ao tzu-liao* 文物參考資料 6 (1958), pp.19-24; T'ang Lan 唐蘭, "*Shih-lun Ku K'ai-chih te hui-hua* 試論顧愷之的繪畫(A Preliminary Discussion on the Painting of Ku K'ai-chih)," *Wenwu* 文物 6 (1961), pp.7-12. Most Chinese scholars believed that this copy was made during the Southern Sung 南宋 period (1127-1279); however, Kohara Hironobu believed that the scroll was copied from an early model in Liang Ch'ing-piao's 梁清標 (1620-1692) collection, see Shane McCausland, " 'The *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies* Scroll' by Kohara Hironobu," Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, Occasional Paper 1 (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, 2000), p. 40. For an English translation of the missing text in this beginning section, see Appendix.

10. English translation by Chen Pao-chen.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

Obviously this dramatic scene, which shows many characters engaging in different actions, represents more details than the text indicates. I believe that this illustration is not based on the text mentioned but on the biography of Lady Fung in *The Book of Han* (*Han-shu* 漢書). It reads:

> Lady Fung *chieh-yü* like Lady Fu *chao-yi* became one of the emperor's most favorite. During the *chien-chao* 建昭 era (38-34B.C.), the emperor went to see an animal combat in the Tiger Fence. He and his concubines were all seated within the palace. A bear suddenly escaped from the fence. No sooner had the bear climbed out of the barrier and attempted to approach the palace did all the ladies, including the two *kui-jen* on both sides of the emperor and Fu *chao-yi*, run away in panic. In contrast, Lady Fung *chieh-yü* moved hastily toward the bear, and stood firmly in front of it. Then, two guards came quickly and killed the bear.....
> ....而馮倢伃內寵與傅昭儀等。建昭中，上幸虎圈鬥獸，後宮皆坐。熊佚出圈，攀檻欲上殿，左右貴人、傅昭儀等皆驚走。馮倢伃直前，當熊而立，左右格殺熊。[11]

Evidently, Lady Fung's biography as cited served as textual reference for the iconography of this scene; there the artist deliberately put the scared Lady Fu in the left end to make a sharp contrast to the brave heroine, Lady Fung, in the middle of the composition. Nevertheless, unaware of this fact, many scholars have mistaken Lady Fu, who appears at the left end of this scene, for an attendant of Lady Pan (Pan *chieh-yü* 班倢伃) of the following scene, and thus trapped themselves in the trouble of punctuating the text and images properly.[12] Similar mistakes also appear in the first and the third scenes of the Peking version (pl. 2) where the copier, not fully understanding the text - alternating – image compositional principle, inserted words between, and thus separate, two figures from the same episode.

As we can see, here the image functions not as an illustration but as a pictorial reference to the inscription, which originally appeared to the right of the picture. In this

11. Pan Ku 班固, *Han-shu,* in *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* , vol. 251, *chüan* 97b, P. 29. English translation by Chen Pao-chen.
12. These scholars include Ise Sen'ichiro 伊勢專一郎, Taki Sei'ichi 瀧精一 and Kohara Hironobu; for details, see Kohara Hironobu, "*Joshi shin zukan*" in *Kokka* 908 (Nov. 1967), p.29; 909 (Dec. 1967), pp. 17-19; see also Shane McCausland tr. and ed., *ibid.*, pp. 30-31, 37-39.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

case, the internal relationship between text and image is mutually referential. This representational mode finds its precedents in the illustrations of Emperor Hsia Chieh 夏桀 and Fu-hsi / Nü-wa 伏羲女媧 in the Wu Liang Shrine 武梁祠, Shantung 山東, dated A. D. 151.[13] These two early illustrations were based on textual references other than their accompanying inscriptions. In each case the artist must be not only a painter but also a scholar. Only a scholar-artist, who is learned in history and literature, can create images drawn upon his broad knowledge and not limited to references from the given inscriptions. The scene of Lady Fung's story shown here serves as a good example.

The fifth scene shows Lady Pan 班婕伃 refusing to sit with Emperor Han Ch'eng-ti 漢成帝 (r. 33-8 B.C.) on a palanquin (pl. 4). The text written in one column on the right reads:

> Lady Pan had reason to end her pleasure in sharing the emperor's palanquin. Yet, it was not because she did not love him; rather, she was mindful of his small errors and thoughtful of his future.
> 班婕有辭，割歡同輦，夫豈不懷，防微慮遠。[14]

The text alludes to Lady Pan's meritorious deed recorded in *The Book of Han*:

> When Emperor Han Ch'eng-ti prepared to take an outing to the imperial garden, he invited Lady Pan *chieh-yü* to take the same palanquin with him. But Lady Pan refused by saying: "I have noticed that in ancient paintings wiser rulers are always represented with their ministers at their sides, while the decadent emperors at the close of the Three Dynasties have favorites with them. If I accede to your request, will you not resemble these latter?"
> 成帝遊於後庭，嘗欲與倢伃同輦載。倢伃辭曰：「觀古圖畫，聖賢之君皆有名臣在側。三代末主迺有嬖女。今欲同輦，得無近似之乎？」[15]

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13. For a detailed study of these two pictures, see Chen Pao-chen, "Three Representational Modes for Text/Image Relationships in Early Chinese Pictorial Art," *Kuo-li Tai-wan Ta-hsüeh mei-shu-shih yen-chiu chi-k'an* 國立台灣大學美術史研究集刊 (*Taida Journal of Art History*), 8 (March 2000), pp. 92-93.
14. My English translation here differs slightly from that of Basil Gray's, which reads: [Lady Pan] by her refusal lost the pleasure of riding in the imperial litter. Was it that she did not care to? No! but she was anxious to avoid even hidden and remote consequences." See Basil Gray, *ibid.*, p.3.
15. Pan Ku, *Han-shu*, *chüan* 97b, p. 10; the English translation of Lady Pan's words comes from Basil Gray, *Admonitions of the Instructress of the Ladies in the Palace*, p. 3.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

The illustration shows Lady Pan following the emperor, who sits by another concubine in a palanquin lifted by eight muscular servants (two on upper right are blocked by the palanquin). With a worried countenance, the emperor looks through the open window of the canopied palanquin and gazes at his beloved lady moving slowly behind. Her calm pose contrasts with the dynamic postures of the servants preceding her. Outfitted in *lung-kuan* hats, knee-length jackets, long trousers, and flat-soled shoes, these servants are portrayed as sparing no effort as they shoulder the palanquin; their legs are bent or braced against the ground, and their bodies push forward to the left.

The sixth scene shows a landscape (pl. 5) which is to be understood as a metaphor. The accompanying text is written in two columns, reading:

> In nature there is (nothing) that is exalted which is not soon brought low. Among living things there is nothing which having attained its apogee does not thenceforth decline. When the sun has reached its mid-course, it begins to sink; when the moon is full it begins to wane. To rise to glory is as hard as to build a mountain out of dust; to fall into calamity is as easy as the rebound of a tense spring.[16]
> 道罔隆而不殺，物無盛而不衰。日中則昃，月滿則微。崇猶塵積，替若駭機。

This whole passage is conveyed emblematically as a landscape scene. A disproportionately large archer shoots at a triangular mountain with sun and moon on either side. The sun houses a three-legged raven, and the moon a hare, as attributes. The pyramidal mountain is dotted with shrubs and inhabited by a deer, a tiger, two hares, and two pheasants; one of the birds flies up from the ground to escape the bowman's arrow.

In this scene the artist employs both literal and metaphorical translation methods to pictorialize the text. Literal translation is evident in two cases: 1) The images of the sun and moon on both sides of the mountain, referring to the words, "when the sun reached its mid-course, it begins to sink; when the moon is full it begins to wane 日中則昃，月滿則微；" and 2) The man holding a cross-bow to shoot, referring to the words, "to fall into calamity is as easy as the rebound of a tense spring 替若駭機." Interestingly, the idea of *hai-chi* 駭機 (the rebound of a tense spring) is further stressed by the image of

16. Henceforth, the English translation of the "Admonitions" text will follow that in Basil Gray's *Admonitions*. The present passage is quoted from p. 3.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

the scared pheasant (駭雞 *hai-chi*), which flies up from the ground, as a pun to the rebound of a tense spring, both pronounced as *hai-chi* in Chinese. Metaphorical translation can be found in the image of the mountain, which refers to the words, "To rise to glory is as hard as to build a mountain out of dust 榮猶塵積." And the whole scene showing a man hunting in the nature metaphorically represents the abstract notion of the text: "In nature there is (nothing) that is exalted which is not soon brought low. Among living things there is nothing which having attained its apogee does not thenceforth decline 道罔隆而不殺，物無盛而不衰." This is the fundamental law of nature—things change constantly; nothing remains at its apex forever.

The seventh scene represents three court ladies working on their appearance (pl. 6). The text runs in three columns:

> Men and women know how to adorn their faces, but there is none who knows how to adorn his character. Yet, if the character be not adorned, there is a danger that the rules of conduct may be transgressed. Correct your character as with an axe, embellish it as with a chisel; strive to create holiness in your own nature.[17]
> 人咸知脩其容，莫知飾其性。性之不飾，或愆禮正。斧之藻之，克念作聖。

The illustration shows two ladies seated on the floor attending to their make-up. Viewed from behind, the figure on the right draws on her eyebrows before a mirror; in three-quarters view, the figure on the left sits on a mat by a mirror behind her toilet box, while another lady standing behind helps with her hair. This picture illustrates only part of the first sentence, "men and women know how to adorn their faces 人咸知脩其容." While the rest of this passage denounces superficial beauty, this scene ironically advocates the value. That the treatment of the image contradicts the meaning of the text reveals the artist's intention to make this scene more attractive and interesting. As an artist, he was more concerned about aesthetic appeal than philosophical consistency. Still, there is no doubt that he is more than able to convert the abstract ideas of the text into a picture, as in his treatment of the previous scene. This approach to painting is consistently seen in most of the following scenes.

The eighth scene represents a man leaving a woman in a canopied bed (pl. 7). In two columns, the text reads:

17. Basil Gray, *Admonitions*, p. 4.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

> If the words that you utter are good, all men for a thousand leagues around will make response to you. But if you depart from this principle, even your bedfellow will distrust you.[18]
> 出其言善，千里應之。苟違斯義，同衾以疑。

The illustration shows a court lady dressed in a red garment sitting in a canopied bed enclosed by a folding screen of twelve panels. Her arm hangs over the screen on the left. Meanwhile, an emperor wearing a "golden-broad-mountain-hat (*chin po-shan shu* 金博山速)" sits on the side of the bed, putting on his shoes as he prepares to leave. Such a picture illustrates only the latter half of the last sentence of the passage, "even your bedfellow will distrust you 同衾以疑." Abstract ideas conveyed in the other sentences are not represented.

The ninth scene depicts a prosperous family (pl. 8). The text is written in four columns, reading:

> Do not think that you are hidden; for the divine mirror reflects even that which cannot be seen. Do not think that you have been noiseless; God's ear needs no sound. Do not boast of your glory; for heaven's law hates what is full. Do not put your trust in honours and high birth; for he that is highest falls. Make the "Little Stars" your pattern; do not let your fancies roam afar. Let your hearts be as the locusts and your race shall multiply.[19]
> 勿謂玄漠，靈鑑無象。勿謂幽昧，神聽無響。無矜爾榮，天道惡盈。無恃爾貴，隆隆者墜。鑑於小星，戒彼攸遂。比心螽斯，則繁爾類。

In the original text, two sentences precede this passage, "To utter a word, how light a thing that seems! Yet from a word, both honour and shame proceed 夫言如微，而榮辱由滋." For unknown reasons, these lines are absent here. The illustrtation shows an emperor and his family, including three concubines, five children and an old man, in a triangular composition. This figure grouping represents only the latter half of the last sentence, "your race shall multiply 則繁爾類." Nothing else is illustrated, because the abstract ideas are too complicated to convey pictorially. This scene clearly demonstrates that a court lady's primary duty is to bear the emperor's offspring.

In the tenth scene, a woman begs in vain for a man's love (pl. 9). The accompanying four-column text states:

18. Basil Gray, *Admonitions*, p. 4.
19. Basil Gray, *Admonitions*, p. 4.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

> No one can please forever; affection cannot be for one alone; if it be so, it will end in disgust. When love has reached its highest pitch, it changes its object; for whatever has reached fullness must need decline. This law is absolute. The 'beautiful wife who knew herself to be beautiful' was soon hated. If by a mincing air you seek to please, wise men will abhor you. From this cause truly comes the breaking of favour's bond.[20]
> 歡不可以瀆，寵不可以專。專實生慢，愛極則遷。致盈必損，理有固然。美者自美，翻 [*sic.*翩] 以取尤。冶容求好，君子所仇。結恩而絕，寔 [*sic.* 職]此之由。

Here the scribe made two mistakes by transcribing the characters *p'ien* 翩 (elegant) into *fan* 翻 (suddenly) (the second character from the bottom of the second column) and *chih* 職 (naturally) into *shih* 寔 (truly) (the fourth character from the end). The picture shows a court lady being rejected by an emperor, who raises his left hand in a gesture of refusal. The artist illustrates the line, "If by a mincing air you seek to please, wise man will abhor you 冶容求好，君子所仇." Again, abstract notions are not represented.

The eleventh scene depicts a beautiful young lady (pl. 10). In one column, the text reads:

> Therefore I say, be watchful: keep an eager guard over your behaviour; for thence happiness will come. Fulfill your duties calmly and respectfully; reflect before you act. Thus shall you win glory and honour.[21]
> 故曰：翼翼矜矜，福所以興。靜恭自思，榮顯所期。

The illustration represents a court lady with contented facial expression, who kneels on the ground facing left. Obviously, her happiness derives from her obedience to the above teaching. As an emblem, this beautiful, cautious, obedient and satisfied young woman represents an ideal image for court ladies, for whom the didactic doctrines were written.

In last scene an instructress is represented in the midst of writing (pl. 11). In one column, the text states:

20. Basil Gray, *Admonitions*, p. 5.
21. Basil Gray, *Admonitions*, p. 5.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

> Thus has the Instructress, charged with the duty of admonition, thought good to speak to the ladies of the palace harem.[22]
> 女史司箴，敢告庶姬。

The artist shows the instructress in a standing pose, writing the doctrines on a scroll and facing two smiling young women who enter from the left end of the painting. The left-to-right orientation of these two young women contrasts with that of all the ladies throughout the scroll and implies that they are newcomers to palace harem. This closing picture suggests that the above didactic doctrines are so important and valuable that every lady already in (or, about to enter) the harem accepts them happily.

In overall, the artist exercised great imagination in representing the Confucian values advocated in the text, particularly showing respect for the domestic ethical order, which forms the foundation for creating harmony, stability, and prosperity in the family. The artist reveals a strong intention to represent these values particularly in his choices of subjects and his way of representing figures of different classes. In terms of subject, through the entire scroll, the meritorious deeds and the virtues of women such as self-sacrifice, emotional suppression, prudence, sincerity, and obedience, are emphasized and shown in seven scenes (pls. 3-5, 8, 10-12), while the unacceptable behaviors and attitudes, including adoring one's superficial beauty, speaking with evil intention, and seeking the love of a man, are not only denounced but also represented sparingly in three scenes (pls. 6, 7, 9). Above all, harmony, stability, and prosperity are the most important values that the artist translated from the text to his painting. As shown in the family scene (pl. 8), the imperial family members are grouped in a wide-based triangular shape, with the emperor, his concubines and three younger children on the bottom and the old man and two elder children above. The pyramidal composition conveys a strong sense of stability. Moreover, everyone in this group looks happy and serene. They seem satisfied with their family positions. Their static poses and peaceful countenance create a harmonious atmosphere for the picture. Since harmony and stability will make a family flourish, all court ladies are encouraged to create such conditions and to expand the imperial family by giving birth to as many children as possible and to raise them together. That is their primary mission. The artist was aware that these values should be the guiding principle for the court ladies. Furthermore, they should practice these values in their daily life. The "Admonitions" were not intended as

22. Basil Gray, *Admonitions*, p. 5.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

an intensive course to be taken on a short-term basis and performed on special occasions only. As a reflection of this notion, the artist represents all the emperors and their concubines informally dressed in their occasional costume. None is formally attired or elaborately made-up. Their clothes look plain and comfortable, suggesting that they are enjoying their daily life in the imperial harem.

Additionally, the hierarchy of Confucian ethics is also revealed in the artist's treatment of figural forms. All figures are represented differently according to their social status. The ruler and the ruled as well as the dominator and the dominated are clearly differentiated. In every scene the emperor is larger than his companions, signifying his supreme power over his sovereigns. Also, men appear larger than women of similar age. This communicates an assumed difference between genders not only in terms of their biology but also in the prevailing power structure: man is the dominator, and woman, the subordinate. Furthermore, formal distinctions of figures' social status are made obvious. Imperial family members often wear subdued and subtle facial expressions; they are dressed in large garments with billowing sleeves; their movements look fluid and elegant; and their body language appears gentle and restrained. These formal characteristics bespeak their position as member of the well-educated upper class. In contrast, the guards and the palanquin bearers appear rude and rough. They wear short garment and long trousers, suitable for labor. Their exaggerated facial expressions show uncontrolled emotions. They are busy working, with their hands engaged in some task. These representations demonstrate a stereotype for the lower-class people.

In conclusion, as seen throughout the scroll, it is evident that in order to convert the "Admonitions" text into an interesting painting, the artist experimented with many translation strategies, including literal, metaphorical, and suggestive methods, and that the relationships between images and their related texts are complicated. Also, in a subtle way, the artist successfully conveyed the Confucian moral teachings advocated in the text through his choice of interesting subjects and imaginative representations of figures.

（責任編輯：羅麗華）

* This paper is a revised version of part of my Ph.D. dissertation, "*The Goddess of the Lo River*: A Study of Early Chinese Narrative Handscrolls," Princeton University, 1987, pp. 96-104. I wish to express my appreciations to Professor Richard K. Kent and Ms. De-nin Lee for their editing this manuscript in different periods.

臺灣大學藝術期刊資料庫

Appendix:

張華，〈女史箴〉

Chang Hua, "The Admonitions of the Instructress to Court Ladies (*Nü-shih chen*)"

1. 茫茫造化，	In the beginning the Universe was created in a gathering of misty air.
2. 二儀既分。	Coming from that, two primal principles (the *yin* and the *yang* forces) developed.
3. 散氣流形，	Then the air cleared up. It flowed with, and enlivened human beings shaped and modeled (by Nü-wa).
4. 既陶既甄。	
5. 在帝庖羲，	Among the ancient emperors, there was Pao-hsi,
6. 肇經天人。	Who began to set regulations for ruling men under heaven.
7. 爰始夫婦，	The human society starts with husband and wife.
8. 以及君臣。	Their relationship is extended to that for the emperor and his sovereign.
9. 家道以正，	A family should be maintained in a proper way.
10. 王猷有倫。	Likewise, a kingdom should be ruled in a good order.
11. 婦德尚柔，	Among women's virtues, gentleness is valued the first.
12. 含章貞吉。	A woman should be clear-minded, self-restrained, virtuous, and behave properly.
13. 婉嫕淑慎，	She should be gentle, obedient, elegant, and cautious.
14. 正位居室。	She must always keep herself in the right position in a family.
15. 施衿結褵，	She should always remember her mother's teaching while helping her dress for the wedding:
16. 虔恭中饋。	Be respectful in doing everything, including cooking daily meals for your family and preparing offerings for ritual purposes.

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

17. 肅慎爾儀，	Watch your manner, always keep yourself cautious and serious.
18. 式瞻清懿。	Make yourself look fresh and behave virtuously to earn others' respect."
19. 樊姬感莊， 20. 不食鮮禽。	Refusing to eat fresh meat for three years, Lady Huan eventually moved King Chuang of Ch'u to give up hunting.
21. 衛女矯桓， 22. 耳忘和音。	In order to help Duke Huan of Ch'i to cultivate a good taste in fine music, Lady Wei refused to listen to the sensuous songs (from the Cheng and the Wei areas).
23. 志厲義高， 24. 而二主易心。	These two ladies' strong will and noble principle made the rulers change their mind.
25. 玄熊攀檻， 26. 馮媛趨進。	Just as the black bear climbed out of the barred cage, Lady Fung hastily moved her body toward it.
27. 夫豈無畏， 28. 知死不怯。	Was she not afraid of being hurt? Clearly, she knew that she might die, but she did not care about it.
	(translated by Chen Pao-chen)
29. 班姬有辭， 30. 割歡同輦。	Lady Pan had reasons to end her pleasure in sharing the emperor's palanquin.
31. 夫豈不懷，	And yet it was not because she did not love him;
32. 防微慮遠。	Rather, she was mindful of his small errors and thoughtful of his future.
33. 道罔隆而不殺，	In nature there is (nothing) that is exalted which is not soon brought low.
34. 物無盛而不衰。	Among living things there is nothing which having attained its apogee does not thenceforth decline.
35. 日中則昃，	When the sun has reached its mid-course, it begins to sink;
36. 月滿則微。	When the moon is full it begins to wane.
37. 崇猶塵積，	To rise to glory is as hard as to build a mountain out of dust;

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

38. 替若駭機。	to fall into calamity is as easy as the rebound of a tense spring.
39. 人咸知脩其容，	Men and women know how to adorn their faces,
40. 而莫知飾其性。	but there is none who knows how to adorn his character.
41. 性之不飾，	Yet if the character be not adorned,
42. 或愆禮正。	there is a danger that the rules of conduct may be transgressed.
43. 斧之藻之，	Correct your character as with an axe, embellish it as with a chisel;
44. 克念作聖。	strive to create holiness in your own nature.
45. 出其言善，	If the words that you utter are good,
46. 千里應之。	all men for a thousand leagues around will make response to you.
47. 苟違斯義，	But if you depart from this principle,
48. 同衾以疑。	even your bedfellow will distrust you.
49. 夫出言如微，	To utter a word, how light a thing that seems!
50. 而榮辱由茲，	Yet from a word, both honour and shame proceed.
51. 勿謂幽昧。	Do not think that you are hidden;
52. 靈鑒無象，	for the divine mirror reflects even that which cannot be seen.
53. 勿謂玄漠。	Do not think that you have been noiseless;
54. 神聽無響，	God's ear needs no sound.
55. 無矜爾榮。	Do not boast of your glory;
56. 天道惡盈，	for heaven's law hates what is full.
57. 無恃爾貴，	Do not put your trust in honours and high birth;
58. 隆隆者墜。	for he that is highest falls.

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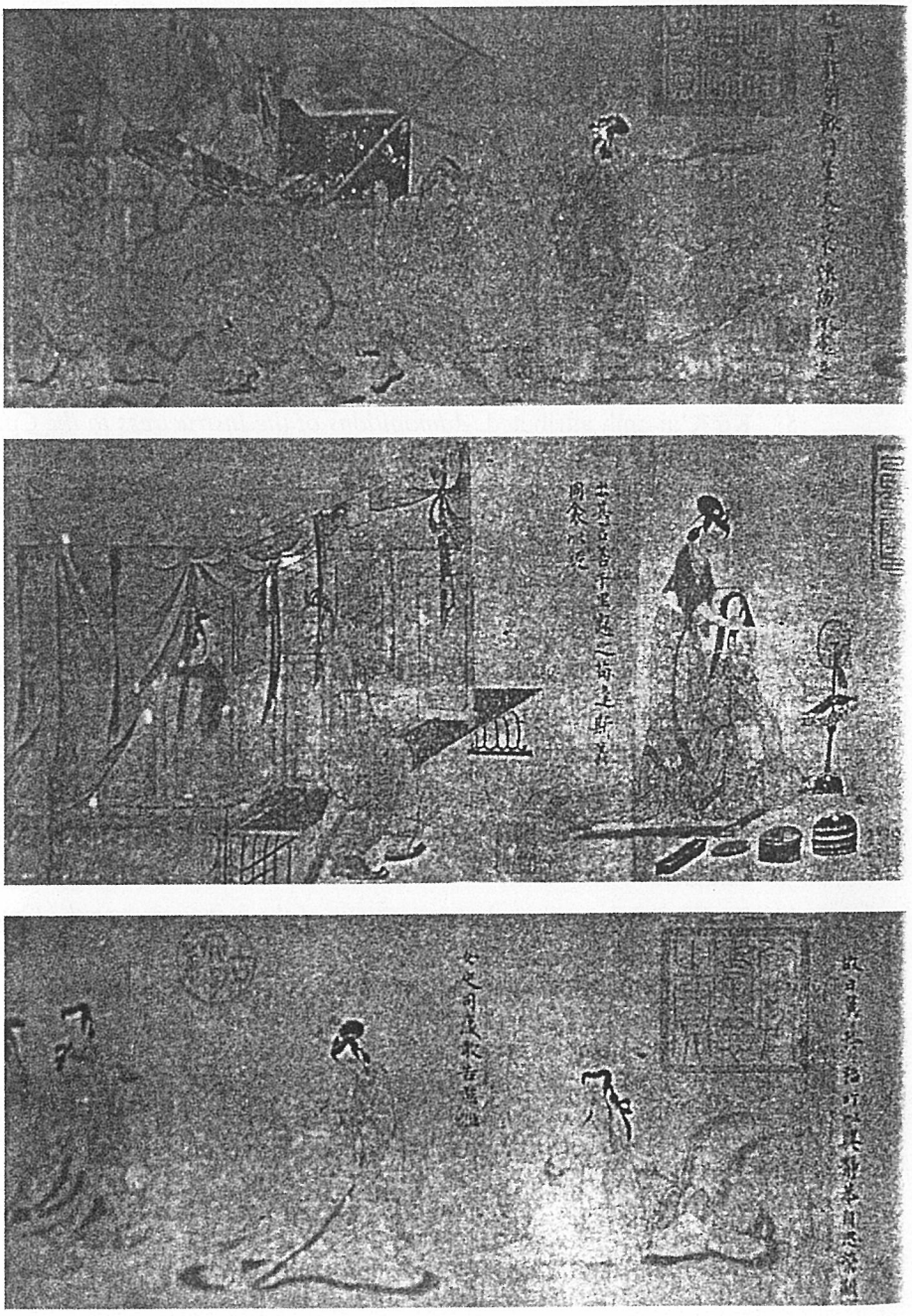
59. 鑒于小星，	Make the 'Little Stars' your pattern.
60. 戒彼攸遂。	Do not let your fancies roam afar.
61. 比心螽斯，	Let your hearts be as the locusts
62. 則繁爾類。	and your race shall multiply.
63. 驩不可以黷，	No one can please forever;
64. 寵不可以專。	affection cannot be for one alone;
65. 專則生慢，	if it be so, it will end in disgust.
66. 愛極則遷。	When love has reached its highest pitch, it changes its objects;
67. 致盈必損，	for whatever has reached fullness must need decline.
68. 理有固然。	This law is absolute.
69. 美者自美，	The 'beautiful wife who knew herself to be beautiful' was
70. 翩以取尤。	soon hated.
71. 冶容求好，	If by a mincing air you seek to please,
72. 君子所讎。	wise men will abhor you.
73. 結恩而絕，	From this cause truly comes the breaking of favour's bond.
74. 職此之由。	
75. 故曰翼翼矜矜，	Therefore I say, be watchful: keep an eager guard over your behaviour;
76. 福所以興。	for thence happiness will come.
77. 靖恭自思，	Fulfill your duties calmly and respectfully;
78. 榮顯所期。	Thus shall you win glory and honour.
79. 女史司箴，	Thus has the Instructress, charged with the duty of admonition,
80. 敢告庶姬。	thought good to speak to the ladies of the palace harem.
	(translated by Basil Gray, 1966)

臺灣大學學術期刊資料庫

Plates:

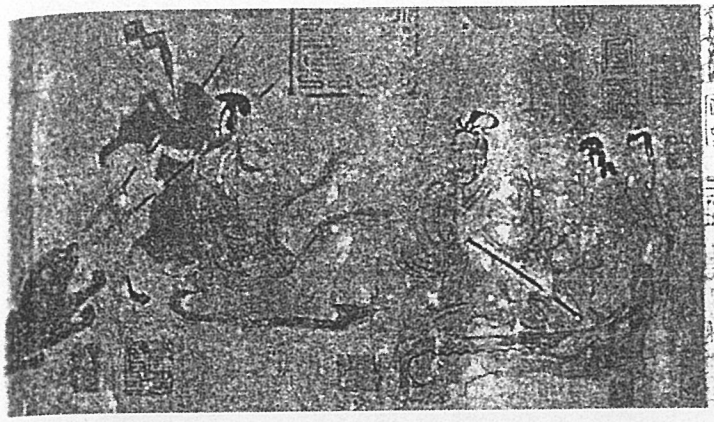
1. Ku K'ai-chih (c. A.D. 344-405) attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, copy, Tang period (618-907), The British Museum.
2. Li Kung-lin (c.1041-1106) attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scenes 1-3, copy, Peking Palace Museum.
3. Ku K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene 4, The British Museum.
4. Ku K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene 5, The British Museum.
5. Ku K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene 6, The British Museum.
6. Ku K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene 7, The British Museum.
7. Ku K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene 8, The British Museum.
8. Ku K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene 9, The British Museum.
9. Ku K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene 10, The British Museum.
10. Ku K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene 11, The British Museum.
11. Ku K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene 12, The British Museum.

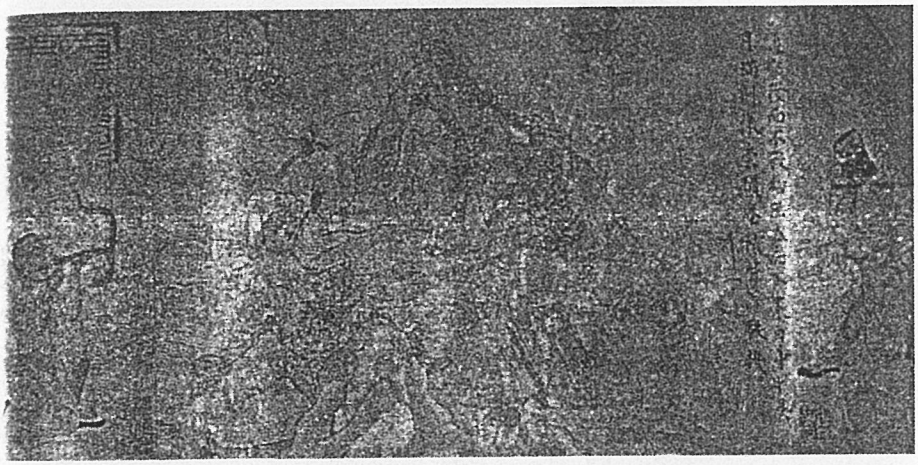
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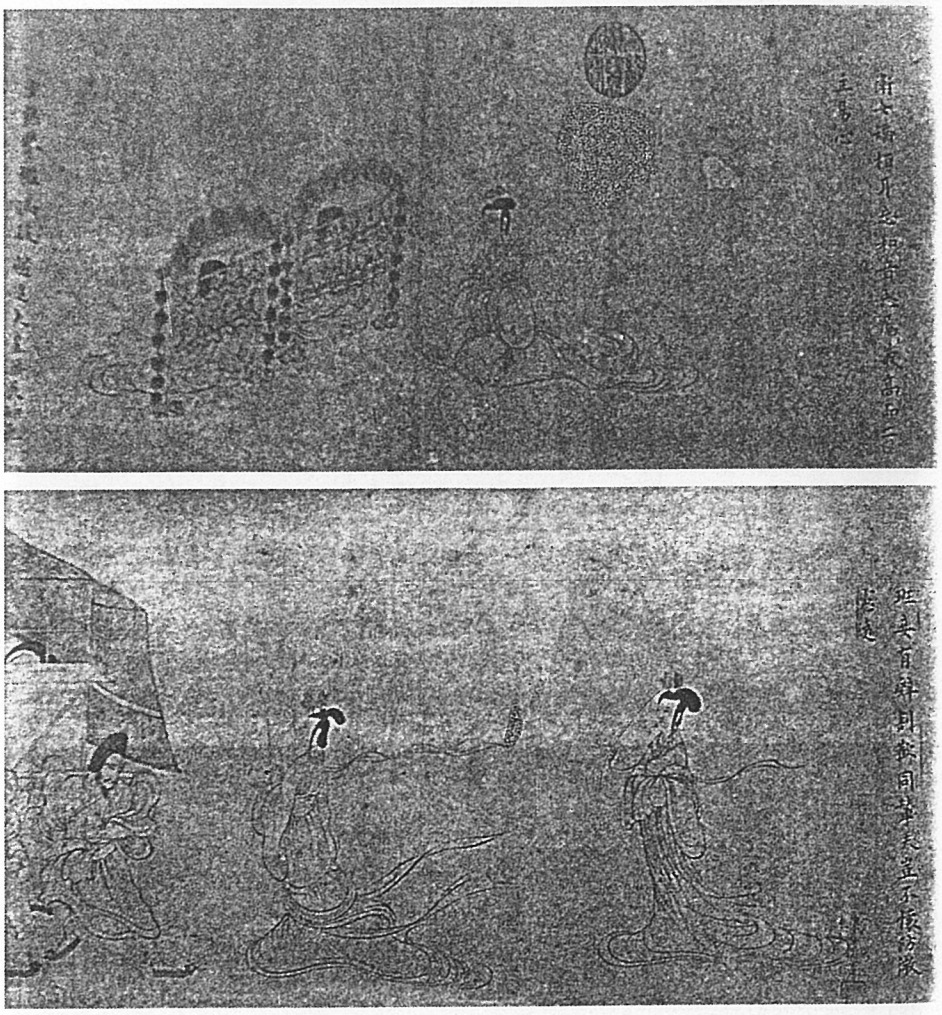
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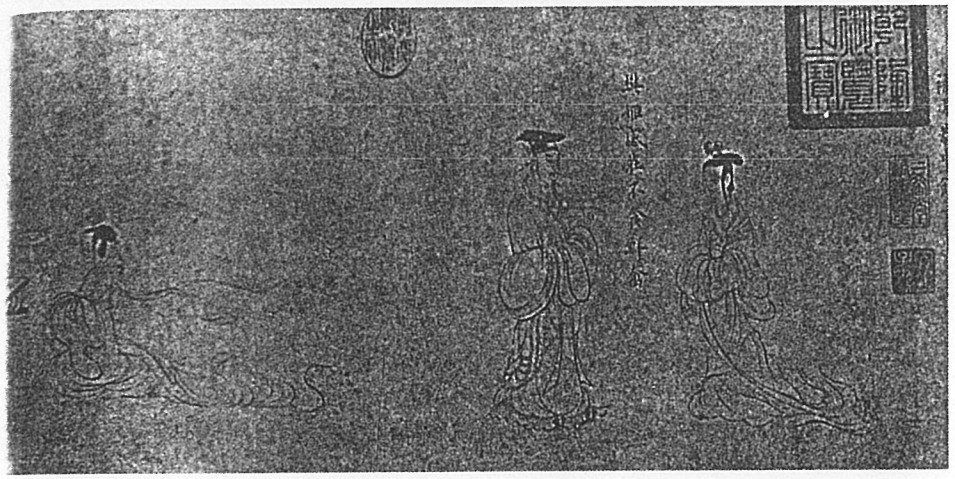


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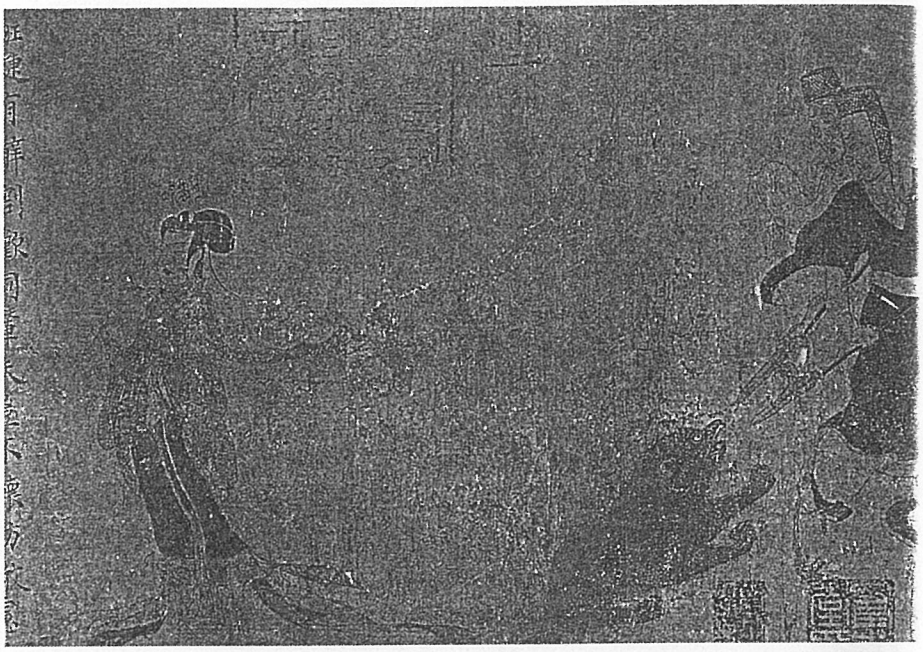
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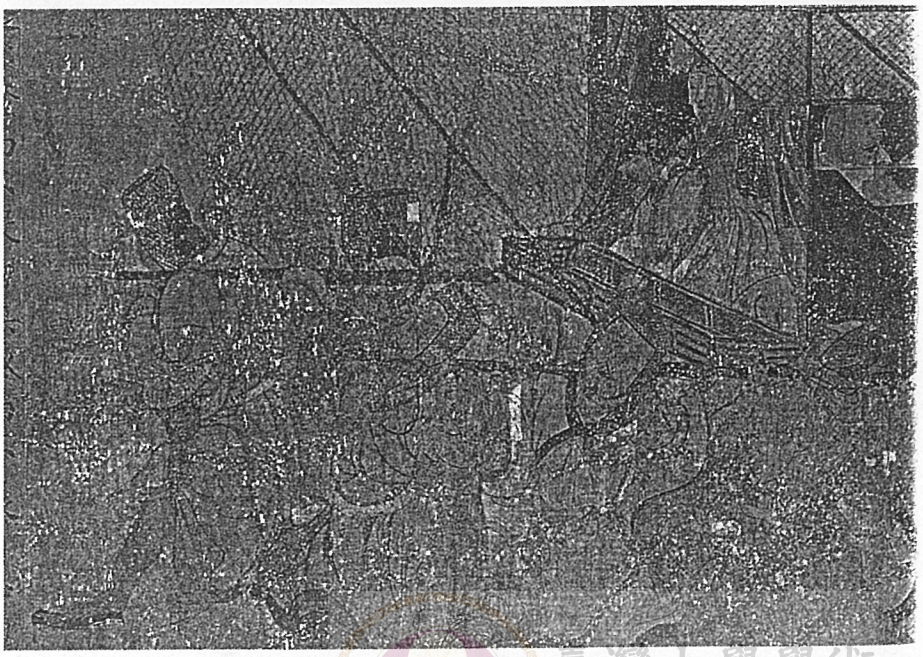




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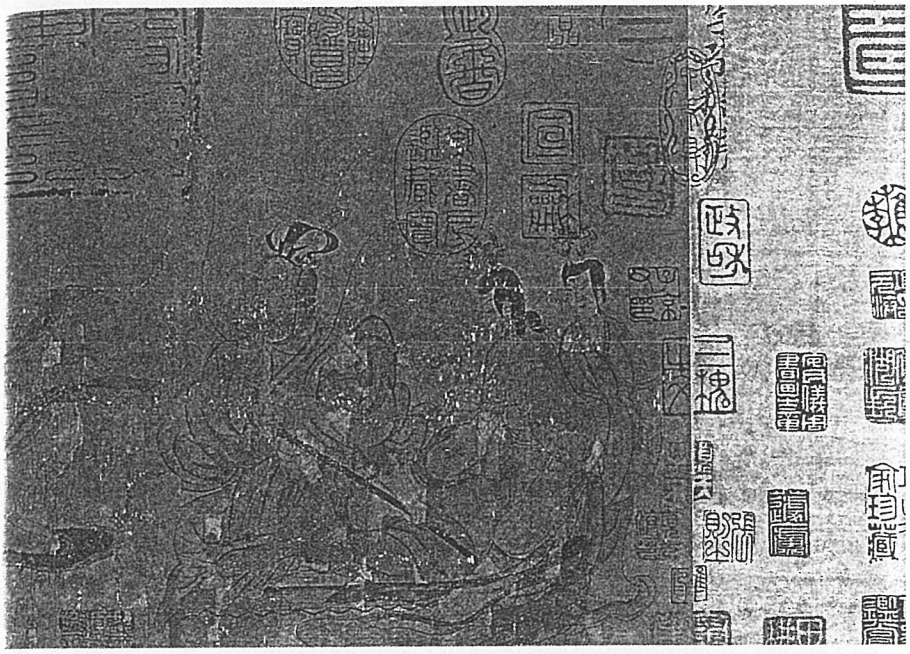


3. Ku K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene 4, The British Museum.



4. Ku K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene 5, The British Museum.

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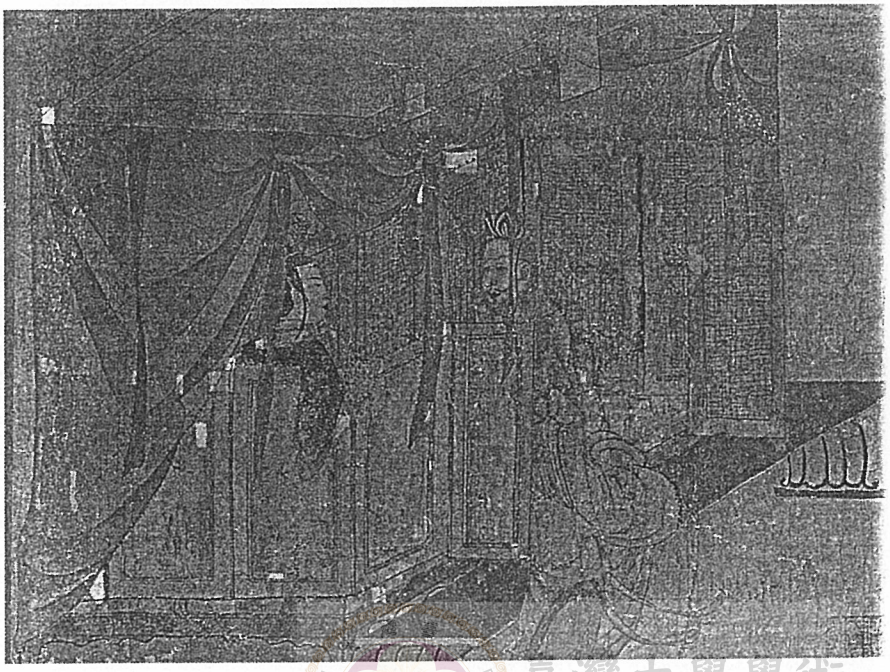




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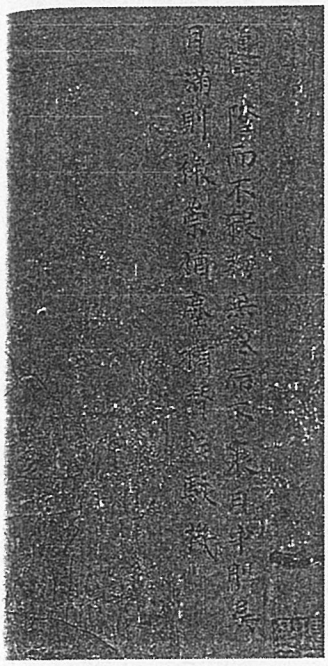


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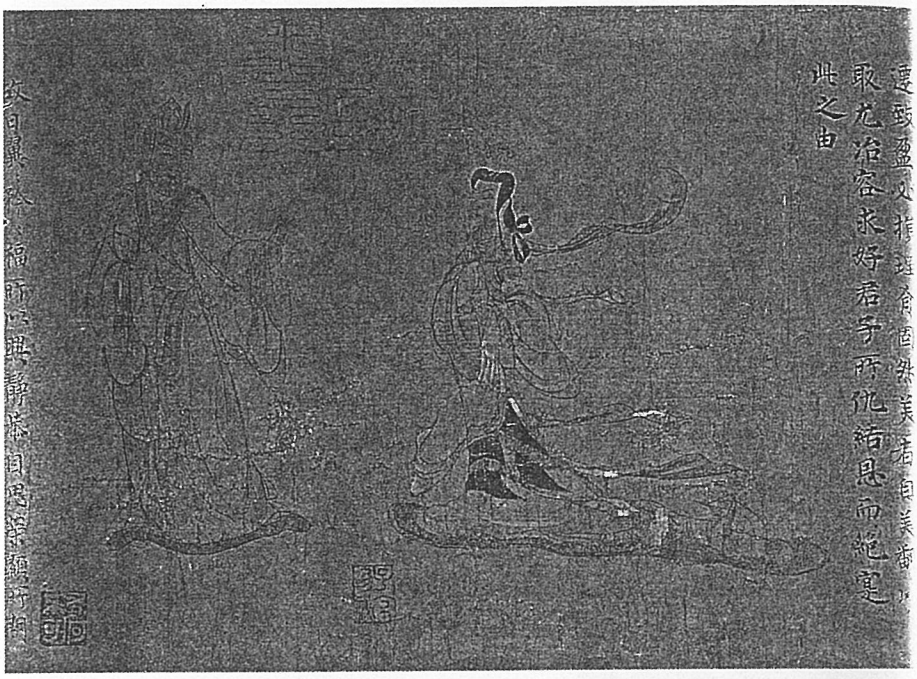
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6. Ku K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene 7, The British Museum.

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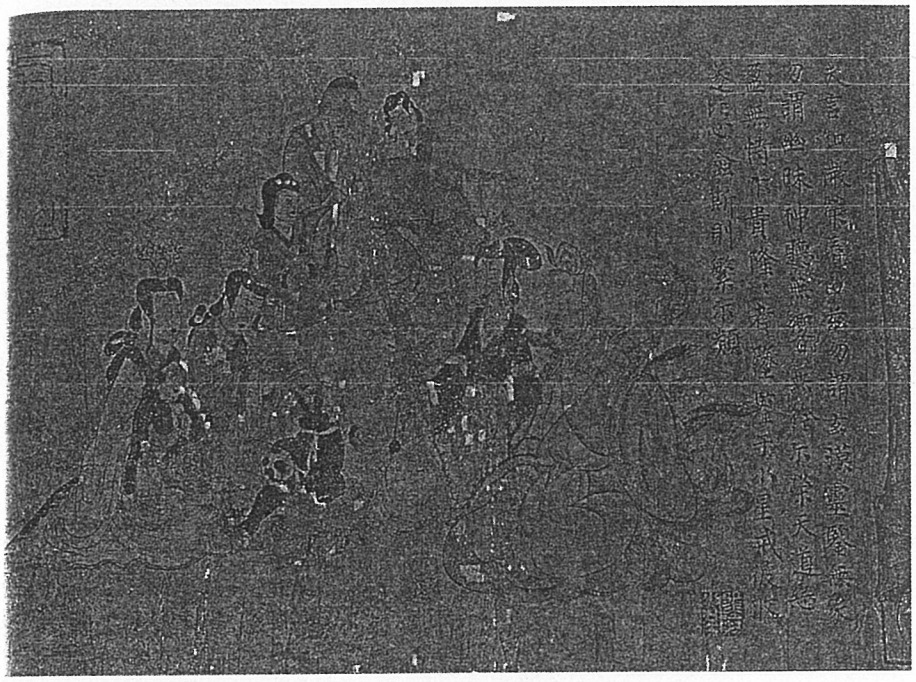


9. Ku K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene
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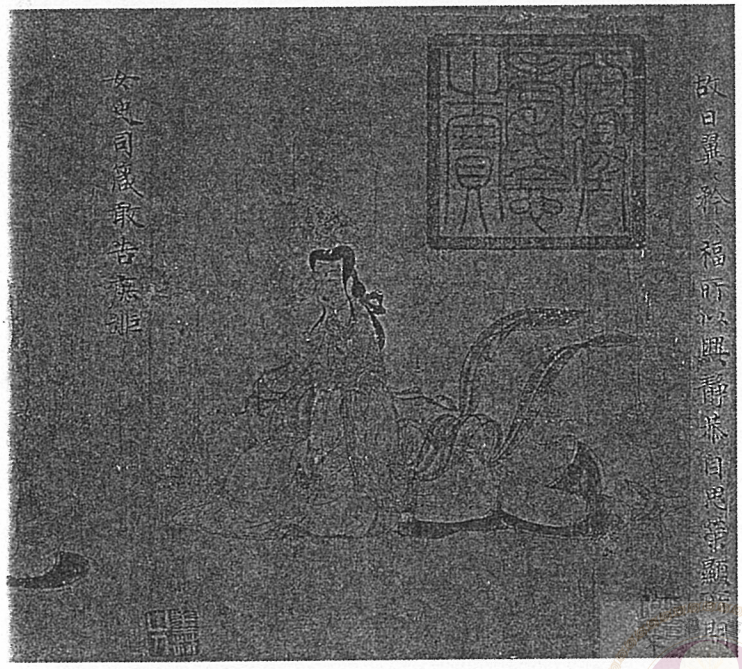


11. Ku K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to t*
Ladies, scene 12, The British Museum.

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K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene 9, British Museum.



K'ai-chih attributed, *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, scene 11, The British Museum.

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