

employment for their skill along the Silk Route running between Khotan and China on which Mīrān stood. The partial shaving of the heads of the garland-carrying boys is almost certainly Indian and has spiritual significance of ancient sanction. Although trading connexions with China by this route must have been considerable there is nothing in the Mīrān paintings definitely indicative of borrowings from Chinese art.

The technique of the Mīrān painting, all *in tempera*, follows well-developed methods. Assuming that the design is first drawn on paper it is transferred to the whitened wall-surface either by pouncing through the pricked drawing or by other means familiar to craftsmen. The transferred outlines are then lightly traced over with a pale colour to fix them. The masses of colour are next laid in with the brush, shading tints are added to suggest chiaroscuro, and the contours are strengthened with soft brush lines of red or dark grey which blend to some extent with the colour masses, giving softness and roundness to the edges. Finally touches of black or red are added for emphasis where most effective, and white for high lights and the white of the eyes. The sharp hard line of the later paintings, such as those of Turfān, is never used in the Mīrān work. The colours are few and mainly those readily obtainable from mineral sources, from lamp black and indigo, and possibly occasionally other vegetable origins. The shading tint on flesh is either a warm umber or a delicate pearly grey, and is disposed in accordance with a fixed conventional system.

Considerable changes in conception and treatment mark the painting of a later period, represented by the examples on sites farther west, in the direction of Khotan—Khādalik, Farhād-Bēg-yailaki, and Balawaste. The doctrine of the 'Lesser Vehicle' followed in Kāshgār, as recorded by Hsüan-tsang in the seventh century, was less favoured in neighbouring districts. There are no garland-bearing *putti*, and winged figures no longer appear. The *padmāsana* now invariably supports the Buddha and in similar function is extended to most of the celestial figures. Costumes are elaborated and, excepting that of the Buddha, are often represented as made of richly figured stuffs with patterns sometimes suggestive of Western derivation. The vesica appears, generally, in highly decorative form, and the nimbus has lost its simplicity, being patterned in keeping with the vesica. The essentially human quality, the easy grace and almost domestic note, that distinguishes personages of the Mīrān paintings, gives place to figures of complaisant, inscrutable visage, posing dramatically in accordance with canonical prescript, and