

PAINTED FRAGMENT FROM KHĀDALIK

Kha. i. E. 0047

THIS is a part of a large composition from the passage wall of the shrine, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the floor. A vertical, yellow band divides a series of small, upright panels on the right from a large panel on the left. The part of the large panel visible shows a portion of the petalled border (yellow, shaded with red-brown) of a vesica. On the shaded white ground of the vesica appear part of the left arm and knee of a figure seated on a lotus. The arm wears a richly ornamented armband; and a narrow, jewelled scarf comes from behind the shoulder, falling to the thigh, which is clothed in a yellow garment. The *padmāsana* is pink. Above the shoulder, and standing on a pink lotus, is an elaborately decorated flask, with ovoid body, spreading foot, and narrow neck curving inwards as it rises from the body and outwards again to a trumpet mouth which is covered by a lid of inverted funnel shape. The flask is yellow, and from its shoulder projects a grotesque bearded mask with tongue thrust out. The mask, the form, and the decorative details of the flask recall the ancient pottery recovered by Stein, in 1900, at Yotkan, about seventy miles west of Khādalik.¹ Between the vesica and the vertical band is an architectural shaft composed of sections of crystal or other translucent material, held together by very ornate bands and crowned with an elaborate bracket capital. The ornamental details are interesting. The bands of ornament are reproductions of metal ferrules or housings such as were used in wooden buildings of the Chinese, and frequently depicted in the terrace pavilions on the painted silk temple-banners brought by Stein from the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas. The capital is a clumsy modification of beautiful Byzantine and Indian examples, expressive of a vase of flowers and leaves. The architrave supported by the bracket capital is composed of three horizontal, decorated members, in front of which comes some scroll ornament, perhaps proceeding from the top of the vesica.

The narrow panels to right of the vertical dividing band, one above the other, each contain a standing figure. The upper one is a Buddha or Bodhisattva against a vesica of green and grey flames arranged *en échelon*, outlined alternately with black and red. The black hair shows a high *uṣṇīṣa*. The *tilaka* is marked on the forehead and a spot in the palm of the right hand (not clear in the reproduction). Both hands are upraised—the right in *abhaya mudrā* and the left, probably counting the points of the

¹ See Stein: *Ancient Khotan*, plates XLIII, XLIV, vol. II.