

miniatures. A Gothic character is noticeable also in the scroll-work on the Toyuk dome in plate x.

PAINTED FRAGMENT FROM KHARA-KHOTO

THE site from which this example comes lies 600 miles to the east of Turfān. The ancient fortified town of Khara-khoto, the 'Black Town', has been identified as Marco Polo's 'City of Etzina'. Its position is such that invaders from the North found it a convenient stage on their repeated inroads. The Yüeh-chih, 'destined to become later the Indo-Scythian rulers of north-west India', the Huns, and the Uigur Turks 'had all passed along this natural highway'.

Unfortunately there is no certainty as to the actual provenance of this finely preserved piece of wall-painting, and there is no definitely recognizable reference to it in Stein's Report—*Innermost Asia*. If I rightly identify it, it was found within the town wall, but was believed by Stein to have been taken from the shrine K. K. II, which is about two miles west of the town, by members of the Russian party, under the direction of Colonel Kozloff, who seem to have ransacked this shrine with less care than vigour, causing considerable destruction and confusion of interesting matter left behind; and that in packing their finds, this piece, temporarily deposited within the town, was inadvertently overlooked.

K. K. II. 0314

This is probably a small portion of a large subject, perhaps a Buddhist Paradise, and shows a sacred tree, enthroned, on a palatial terrace approached by a sloping gangway or steps, protected by a hand-rail and panel between two octagonal newel-posts, each with a finial in the form of a red lotus rising from the green top surface of the post. The stairs are coloured in alternate green and buff bands, representing, perhaps, 'tread' and 'riser' respectively. From the upper newel-post, panelling and hand-rail, similar to that of the stairs, extend across the picture, with a band of mottled pink-buff and green, decorated faintly with a floral pattern below; and below this again, a band of formal ribbon pattern in buff on black. The bracket-shape tie in light grey (silver) with red-gold decorative bands above and below, on the hand-rail, has a distinctly Chinese character. In the foreground stands a two-headed (*jīvajīva*) green parakeet. From behind the tree, upward curving bands of white or buff, green and red, form a halo. The background behind the draped