style, with a profusion of fine wood-carving inside and rich decoration in terra-cotta on the roofs. The central and largest hall had a large wooden frieze running above the niches that contain the main images. Carved on this was a line of debased Brāhmī characters such as are often displayed by Tibetan sacred diagrams, wood-carvings, &c. The decayed condition of much of the graceful architectural wood-carving pointed to considerable age and accounted for the repairs which the uppermost hall was undergoing at the time. An inscribed stone stēlē outside the central shrine was said to name two Nien-haos of the Ming period as dates of reconstruction. From the copy supplied to me these have been read by Dr. Giles as corresponding to A.D. 1427 and 1565.

Cave-shrines of Ma-ti-ssŭ.

The main group of cave-shrines occupies the rock face of yellow sandstone that rises wall-like from a level about 120 feet above the temple just described. These caves, all small, appear to have been originally carved out on a symmetrical plan in five stories, of which the three lowest each contain five rooms or chapels, and those above three and one chapels respectively. The caves of the lowest story have in front of them a kind of eaves carved along the whole length of the rock face. These lowest caves appear to have been converted into store-rooms and were found partially walled up and their doors locked. But under the exposed portions of the arches leading into them I found traces of fresco decoration in green and brown, reminiscent of painted work done at the caves of Ch'ien-fo-tung in Sung times. From the northernmost excavation a dark rock-cut gallery leads up to the five small cave-shrines of the second story. These all measure about 8 feet square inside and show much uniformity in their internal arrangement. They are faced outside by small porch-like ante-rooms which may once, as at Ch'ien-fo-tung, have communicated with an outside gallery of wood. Now the chapels are accessible only by small arched openings leading from one chapel into another.

Sculptures in chapels.

Each chapel shows on the side facing the porch a trefoil-arched niche containing the image, in high relief and about life-size, of a Buddha seated on a Padmāsana (Fig. 273), either in the Bhūmisparśa or Dhyāna-mudrā pose. The top part of the niche displays a pair of elephants carved in low relief, raising their trunks over the head of the Buddha in a pose that is strikingly Indian in design. A broad horizontal band divides the elephants from a pair of animals standing rampant by the side of the Buddha and resembling dogs. The corner of the cella on either side of the niche is occupied by the statue of a Bodhisattva in stucco, slightly under life-size, richly dressed and bedecked with elaborate jewellery, all in a style strongly resembling that of the statuary of late T'ang or Sung times at Ch'ien-fo-tung.

Relievo decoration of cella walls.

A peculiar feature of all these cellas on the second and third story is that the walls are decorated all over with small relief plaques of plaster displaying a seated Buddha. These are from a variety of moulds, which might well have been derived from T'ang times. A number of broken or fallen plaques were found deposited in the niches or at the feet of the attendant Bodhisattvas, and from these were secured the specimens described in the List below and reproduced in Pl. LXVII. As seen there, the Buddha is represented always seated on a Padmāsana, but with the hands in a variety of Mudrās. Of particular interest are the plaques 06–8 which show the seated Buddha under a pillared shrine of true Gandhāra style, surmounted by a relief of two deer facing each other and symbolizing the Sermon in the Deer Park of Benares. The Buddha figure and perhaps other details of these plaques may have originally been gilded. But as also in the case of the sculptures in the niches and corners of the cellas, all the surface of the stucco decoration has been thickly covered and darkened with soot deposited, probably during centuries, by fires lit in the cellas. That these were used as living quarters by monks down to quite recent times was proved by a cooking hearth, a Chinese *k'ang*, and the sleeping platforms that I found in several of them.

A steep turning staircase carved in the rock leads up to the third floor, where a row of similar