

extreme north-west of India. This art has been rendered familiar by a wealth of sculptures brought to light from ruined Buddhist sanctuaries in ancient Gandhara, the present Peshawar District, and the adjacent tracts of the Indo-Afghan Frontier. These remains of decorative art in Buddhist shrines of distant Khotan are far removed in time from the period when Greek art was first applied in the western borderlands of India to figures of Buddhist sacred lore. Yet they reflect quite as clearly the impress of Hellenistic style.

I cannot attempt here to give a detailed account of all the manifold interesting finds which rewarded the clearing of the less injured shrines. The briefest indications must suffice. In the centre of the inner cellas there stood generally an elaborately stuccoed pedestal which had once borne a colossal Buddha image (Fig. 28). The feet, which were all that survived, furnished an idea of its size. In a number of cases I found several painted panels of wood still resting against the foot of the pedestal just as pious hands had placed them as votive offerings.

Among the painted panels thus recovered there are fortunately several which, when they had been carefully cleaned at the British Museum, revealed very interesting representations of legendary scenes. Thus one of them shows a curious rat-headed divinity (Fig. 30). This figure would have been difficult enough to interpret had not Hsüan-tsang's account of Khotan preserved for us the story how sacred rats and their king, by destroying the horses' harness, etc., of an invading Hun host, had caused its defeat and thus saved the land. The legend still lives, as I was able to prove, in a form modified to suit Muhammadan notions, at the same spot