

is a feature never seen on any sacred Buddhist figure. The large curling moustache and the bushy black eyebrows add to the martial look of the face. Over the head with its long black locks rises a high golden tiara closely resembling the head-dress of the Sasanian 'kings of kings' of Persia. The body, narrow-waisted in keeping with the traditional Persian type of manly beauty, is dressed in a brocaded coat. Below this are shown the feet and legs encased in high black top-boots. From the waist is suspended a short curving sword. From the neck descends a curling scarf which winds round the arm just as usually seen on Bodhisattva figures of Central Asia. As so often among these figures, the divinity is shown with four arms. Of the emblems which three of them carry, two only can be clearly recognized, and both of these, a drinking-cup and a spear head, are unmistakably secular.

The picture on the opposite side of the panel in curious contrast shows a three-headed figure of demonic look and distinctly Indian type. The dark blue flesh of the body, nude but for a tiger skin descending from the waist, the two bulls *couchant* below the crossed legs and the emblems carried in the four hands, all suggest affinity to some Tantric divinity of India. Subject and style of this picture seemed so far removed from the 'Persian Bodhisattva' on the other side of the panel that to find any connexion between the two was very puzzling.

The clue to the interpretation of the two figures and their juxtaposition did not offer itself until fifteen years later when, towards the close of my third Central-Asian expedition, I came to explore an imposing ruined site on the hill of Koh-i-Khwaja, which rises above the Hamun marshes of Sistan by the south-eastern border of Persia. There I