

destruction, these cave-temples still retained plentiful remains to attest the prolonged continuance here of the sculptural traditions which Graeco-Buddhist art had developed and Central-Asian Buddhism transmitted to the Far East.

Where the heads, arms and often the upper portions of the statues in general had been destroyed by vandal hands and then been replaced in modern times, the contrast of these crude restorations brought out still more clearly the fine modelling of what survived elsewhere as well as the graceful arrangement of the drapery and the harmonious colouring of the whole (Fig. 81). In the profusion of gilding, of which plentiful traces survived, as well as in the remarkable effort bestowed on those colossal figures of Buddha I recognized features of Buddhist art well known to us from the Indian North-West Frontier and the huge rock-carved 'Buts' of Bamian to Khotan and beyond.

Still more impressive, perhaps, was the wealth and abundant artistic interest of the old paintings, throughout Buddhist in character, which cover the plastered walls of all the large shrines and of many of the smaller ones. For the most part they were found in remarkably good preservation. This was obviously due to the extreme aridity of the atmosphere and the absolute dryness of the rock-cut walls as well as to the strength and tenacity with which the plaster bearing the frescoes clings to the conglomerate surface. I use the term 'fresco' for the sake of its convenient brevity; for with the exception of one small shrine all the wall-paintings are executed in tempera.

In the antechapels and passages the mural decoration ordinarily consisted of rows of large Bodhisattvas or Bud-