

a kettle from. Remains of ancient bones, oilcakes, and small layers of charcoal found scattered over the floor in several places corroborate the above conclusion.

Of the remaining structures traceable at the southern group of ruins two could easily be recognized, by the characteristic arrangement of their posts emerging above the sand, as small shrines of the type with which we have already become familiar. The first cleared among them (D. x.), situated about 80 feet to the west-north-west of the little monastic dwelling last described, proved to consist of an oblong cella measuring 10 ft. 6 in. outside from north to south, with a width of 9 ft. 6 in. The entrance, as in the case of the other small temples of this group, lay to the north. A passage, 4 feet wide, surrounded the cella, but the walls of this had almost completely decayed on the north and west, and elsewhere rose only 1 to 2 feet above the original ground. The walls of the cella, too, stood nowhere higher than 4 feet. Their construction was of the usual timber framework and plaster, with a thickness of about 6 inches. The mural decorations were here of a very simple kind, consisting both inside and outside the cella almost solely of rows of small seated Buddha figures. Each row, including the vesica around the figure and the gaily coloured background, was 6 in. high. The dresses of the Buddhas were alternately coloured dark brown, red, and white, the colours of the background varying in a similar fashion. The whole of these little frescoes showed inferior work, evidently done with the use of stencils.

Excavation  
of shrine  
D. x.

The sculptural decoration of the shrine must have been equally modest, and restricted to a single image occupying the octagonal base found near the south wall of the cella. Of the statue itself there remained nothing but the wooden post which had served as a core, and shapeless pieces of very friable stucco. But the base, still fairly intact on the north to a height of about 2 ft. 6 in., showed some peculiar features. It consisted below of eight facets, 1 ft. 5 in. broad at the foot, sloping inwards, and thus gradually narrowing to a width of about 1 foot. Then followed a circular moulding, 1½ in. high, and above this eight facets of exactly similar dimensions, but arranged in the inverse direction and thus sloping outwards<sup>4a</sup>. These upper facets had suffered greatly, and when the sand had been cleared from behind the base it was found to have been dug into almost to the centre, undoubtedly by 'treasure-seekers' who may have suspected here some valuable deposit.

In view of the damage thus caused it was the more gratifying that my clearing revealed in front of the base, and leaning against it, a series of painted panels which had remained undisturbed just as the last attendants at the shrine must have placed them. The relatively good preservation of some of these panels is probably due to the fact that they had rested not on the actual floor of the cella, but on a rim of plaster about 3 in. high and 5 in. broad which ran round the foot of the pedestal, and was evidently intended for the placing of offerings. The most interesting among the paintings, and fortunately also one of the best preserved, is D. x. 4 (see Plate LXIII), painted on a wooden tablet 18 in. long and 4½ in. high, which was found standing upright against the east corner of the front facet of the pedestal. In its subject I think I can recognize with certainty a spirited representation of the main features of the legend which Hsüan-tsang relates of the introduction of sericulture into Khotan and of the princess instrumental in it<sup>5</sup>. The second female figure from the R. proper, bearing over her rich curling locks an elaborate golden diadem, is undoubtedly meant for the princess. Our attention is forcibly drawn to the diadem by the significant gesture with which the outstretched arm and forefinger of the first figure from the R. proper, evidently a female attendant, point towards it.

Illustration  
of legend of  
silk-bringing  
princess.

<sup>4a</sup> [Mr. Andrews points out that this form of base is seen in many Chinese bronzes.]

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 229 sq.