

belonged to double quadrangular passages enclosing the cella. There was plentiful evidence that the walls of timber and plaster had been almost completely destroyed at an early period for the sake of abstracting the woodwork. The larger posts and beams must have been worked upon the spot for facility of transport elsewhere; for again and again I came upon heaps of carpenters' chippings, often showing remains of delicate painted representations of Buddhist saints, etc., with which the surface of columns and other exposed woodwork had evidently been covered.

Of the sculptures in stucco which must have once risen on a central platform about nine feet square laid bare within the cella, no trace remained *in situ*,—a proof of long-continued exposure and the havoc wrought by quarrying operations. But of the elaborate rilievo decoration in hard white stucco which had formed vesicas behind those statues and others, set perhaps against the cella walls, many small pieces had escaped those early vandals. They represented figures of Bodhisattvas or flying Gandharvis, and showed excellent workmanship (Fig. 76). The friable plaster of the wall surfaces must have been entirely broken when the timber framework was being abstracted.

Yet fortunately large fragments of the wall frescoes up to five feet in length had got detached before this destruction, and lying buried near the floor had escaped (Fig. 77). They showed close resemblance to the frescoes of the Dandan-oilik shrines in style, but marked superiority in design and colour. Most of the wall-surface seems to have been occupied by stencilled representations of small Buddhas, seated in rows and varied only in the colours of dress, halo, etc. But large fragments of individual fresco panels showing Buddha in different poses—teaching, fasting, or worshipped by attendants—fortunately came to light also. The colours had survived in remarkable freshness; and, if the pieces selected for transport could safely reach London, I felt sure of their offering plenty of details to the trained eyes of an artist such as my devoted friend and helpmate Mr. F. H. Andrews, to feast upon.