

features. Across the temples it measured fully seventeen inches.

The material was merely a coarse clay mixed with straw and faced on the surface with a finer though very soft plaster, which, however, derived some consistency from an admixture of vegetable fibres. To lift this heavy mass of friable material in safety was no easy task. But when it was accomplished without serious damage and I found that the wooden core, though rotten, still survived within, I decided to risk its removal. Subsequently another colossal head emerged from the midst of the débris near the centre of the north-east passage, even larger and somewhat heavier in type, but in spite of all damage displaying with equal clearness features of Graeco-Buddhist style.

The origin of these colossal heads was revealed when, late in the afternoon, the clearing of the north-east passage had proceeded sufficiently to show that its outer wall was lined by the torsos of huge figures seated with folded legs, which, judging from the surviving portions of the drapery, manifestly represented Buddhas (Fig. 140). On completing the excavation next day I ascertained that this side had accommodated altogether six of these colossal statues. Across the knees they measured a little over seven feet. One near the middle of the row still retained the hands folded in the 'Dhyanamudra' or pose of meditation. Its head had fallen with the face upwards when débris filled the passage to a height of nearly three feet, and had been badly battered.

On its left knee we found placed another head, of life size, which manifestly belonged to one of the images filling the niches on the opposite passage wall. This smaller head had survived relatively well. Remembrance of similar observations in the course of my Rawak work supplied the explanation that it had been removed to this position of safety by the pious hand of one of the last worshippers when it threatened to fall off. Enough survived of the ample drapery of these colossal seated Buddhas to prove how closely the sculptor far away at Lop-nor had followed the elaborate arrangement of the folds, which the Graeco-Buddhist style of Gandhara derived