

and beard suggested barbarian races. But it was clear at a glance that neither they nor the few portraits of beautiful girls interspersed among them, could have any relation to Buddhist worship or mythology. The pose of the hands, where it could still be made out, confirmed the conclusion to be drawn from the frank enjoyment which was expressed in the faces and the lustrous wide eyes. Thus, one girl, richly adorned, was resting her hand on the neck of a three-stringed musical instrument, while in another festoon lunette close by a gay youth, curiously reminiscent of some quattrocento figure in dress and features, raised his right hand with some fingers stretched out and others bent under, just as if engaged in the classical game of 'Mora.'

But all doubts as to the purely secular nature of this dado vanished as soon as I could examine more closely the portraits in the southern hemicycle. Here the wall still rose in parts to a height of nine to ten feet, and towards the south-east its frescoed stucco surface was in better preservation. The lunette immediately adjoining the east entrance was filled with a large eight-petalled crimson flower which its strongly marked seed pods clearly showed to be meant for a lotus. The next upward bend of the festoon depended from the shoulders of a well-drawn wingless amorino, whose forehead displayed the peculiar leaf-like lock which we had already come across in the angels of the neighbouring temple. The portrait in the following hollow of the festoon, as seen in Fig. 146, was that of a graceful girl playing on a four-stringed mandoline and looking demurely downwards. A wreath of white flowers sat on her rich black hair, which was bound by a crimson ribbon and gathered in a bunch behind the neck. A diadem made up of red beads and pendent jewels stretched across the forehead. A crimson flower or ornament of that shape hung from each ear, before which a curly love-lock descended. The full sensual lips harmonized with the elaborate adornment of this mature beauty, the glowing effect being heightened by the rich crimson cloak shown on her shoulders and over part of her slate-coloured vest.