

a high and relatively wide passage led into a square, high-roofed cella hewn out of the rock, and as much as forty-five feet square. Within the cella was ordinarily to be found a group of images occupying either an elevated platform or else placed in a kind of alcove facing the entrance. All the wall faces were covered with plaster bearing frescoes. Those on the passage walls ordinarily represented rows of Bodhisattvas moving in procession or seated in tiers. Within the cellas the paintings were generally arranged in large, elaborately bordered panels, either singly or, where the wall surface was extensive, in a series. In the centre of these there appeared mostly figures of Buddhas, singly or in groups, surrounded by divine worshippers and attendants in many varied forms and poses. There were scenes from the Buddhist heavens, from legends in which Buddhas or saints figured, representations of life in their places of worship, etc. (Fig. 160).

But whether the wall decoration showed such pious compositions, or only that infinite multiplication of Bodhisattvas and saints in which Buddhist piety revels, all details in the drawing and grouping of the divine figures bore the impress of Indian models. In the figures of Buddhas particularly, the faithful preservation of the type of face, pose, and drapery as developed by Graeco-Buddhist art was most striking. In the subjects of the friezes and side panels, which often, apparently, reproduced scenes from the daily life of monks and other mundane worshippers; in the designs of rich floral borders, the Chinese artists seemed to have given free expression to their love for ornate landscape backgrounds, graceful curves, and bold movement (Figs. 203, 204). But no local taste had presumed to transform the dignified serenity of the features, the simple yet impressive gestures, the graceful richness of folds with which classical art, as transplanted to the Indus, had endowed the bodily presence of Tathagata and his many epiphanies.

Of the general style and merit of the sculptural remains it was more difficult to form a rapid impression; for much of this statuary in friable stucco had suffered badly through decay of its material, mere soft clay, and even more from