

had good reason to consider myself fortunate when my old friend M. A. Foucher, a leading authority in Buddhist iconography, kindly offered his collaboration for the study of these remains. To him and my artist helpmate, Mr. F. H. Andrews, I am largely indebted for the observations upon which the following remarks and descriptions are based. But seeing how succinct these must necessarily be, I feel doubly glad that it has been possible to illustrate the various classes of pictures by characteristic specimens faithfully reproduced in colours.

The diversity of the material used does not reflect a corresponding difference in subject or treatment. But a closer examination of the pictures, whatever their fabric, soon reveals an outward distinction which guides us to a classification on broad lines. The smaller pieces, when completely preserved, show mostly the shape of oblong banners, provided with a triangular headpiece, and streamers on either side, and attached below to 'strainers' of wood or bamboo, as seen in Fig. 195.

The streamers are secured at the bottom by a weighting-piece in lacquered or painted wood. This arrangement, and still more the care with which the picture proper is painted on both sides of the silk or linen, prove that the banners were invariably intended to float in the air suspended from the vaults of cellas and porches, or from the ceilings of antechapels. The larger pieces, being painted on one side only and often provided with some backing material, but never with streamers or other floating attachments, were clearly meant to be hung up on temple walls or gateways. The subjects represented in these are always groups of divine figures or scenes from Buddhist heavens; but the banners are painted only with figures of single divinities, or else with a succession of scenes from the life of Buddha. The latter are the less numerous, but may well claim the first place on account of the interest both of subject and artistic treatment.

The scenes presented to us are just those which Indian Buddhist art chose for its favourite subjects. They are ordinarily borrowed from that period of Buddha's life-story which preceded the Bodhi or final