

heavenly scenes, and their juxtaposition, as seen in Fig. 203, helps to bring out the contrast. As an interesting departure from the usual styles of wall decoration practised at the 'Thousand Buddhas,' I may mention the paintings found in a small cella to the north of the Tao-shih's cave. Here the work seemed to be real fresco, not the usual tempera on a plain stuccoed surface. The large figure in the middle is that of Avalokitesvara represented as 'the most compassionate Kuan-yin' with many hands. On either side haloed figures are shown in the act of worship, while above floats on a cloud a beautifully designed Gandharvi.

The photographs reproduced in Figs. 160, 203 may convey some idea of the wealth of mural paintings in one of the largest cave-temples (Ch. VIII. as I numbered it). Its cella has retained most of its original wall decoration and, judging from certain indications, appears to have served as a model for several other grottoes. The screen at the back of the chief image, which has completely disappeared and been replaced by a coarse modern Stupa in plaster, is covered below with rows of colossal Bodhisattvas. Above is painted a canopy with garlands of big flowers resembling chrysanthemums. Behind the screen is seen the rich decoration of the roof rising in the shape of a truncated pyramid. The spandrels in the corners below, where it springs from the side walls, are filled with four grotesque figures of warriors painted in unmistakably Chinese style and representing the Guardian-kings of the Regions.

The cella walls are covered throughout with paintings, all about twelve feet high, those on the north and south sides being divided into five panels, each over nine feet wide, while the rest show continuous compositions. The panels contain scenes from Buddhist heavens cleverly varied in their composition. The wall facing the entrance is covered with crowded representations of stories, probably taken from the 'Jatakas,' shrines, monastic dwellings, and scenes of travel being distinguishable even in the photograph (Fig. 204). The shorter walls on either side of the entrance show above a royal procession, and below,