

as sketches, pounces, and illustrative drawings, we may distinguish three main classes according to the manner in which it was intended to display them as it necessarily affected shape and arrangement. We find, in the first place, paintings, almost invariably executed on silk or linen and often of great size, which were manifestly meant to be hung up on walls of shrines. Now it must be remembered that in the cave-temples the walls of the cellas, porches, and in most cases of the antechapels, too, were already covered with elaborate frescoes making up schemes of decoration complete in themselves and bound to be spoilt by the hanging of paintings against them, whatever method were used for fixing these. So the idea suggests itself that such paintings, or at least the larger among them, may have been primarily used for the adornment of those spacious timber-built vestibules and verandahs which are now found in front of the larger cave-temples and which, though themselves of recent origin, are likely to have been preceded by similar structures of earlier date.¹ That they were hung in such places or else, perhaps, in the halls and chapels of monastic quarters which must have existed in old times in front of the caves, on the long strip of ground separating them from the river-bed,² is made probable also by another fact. It is that, in the dim light which alone penetrates into the cellas of the cave-temples, it would have been almost impossible to make out any of the elaborate small-scale details which abound in most of these paintings intended for hanging, still less to appreciate the often considerable merit of the work.

Paintings
for hanging
on walls.

Only very few out of this class of paintings were found mounted on paper or cloth as if intended to be kept ordinarily rolled up in Kakemono fashion.³ The rest appear to have been merely fringed with borders of silk or other fabrics. These borders were usually in plain colours, often purple, but a certain number of them had floral decoration in paint or print.⁴ In some cases the borders still retained the loops by which the paintings were suspended.⁵ Whatever the reasons may originally have been for not mounting the vast majority of such paintings, it is probable that the different extent of the stretching which the thin painted fabric and the thicker border underwent in the course of prolonged suspension may have increased the damage through tears, etc., suffered by these paintings before their deposit in the walled-up chapel. For the same reason these borders had in many cases to be removed before the paintings could be finally mounted on silk at the British Museum and framed. The paintings intended for hanging upon walls never have, of course, any design or colouring on the back surface, whatever the material. Their total number, including such as are recognizable though fragmentary, amounts to approximately 168, of which 131 are painted on silk, 26 on linen, and 11 on paper. The size in this class of paintings varies greatly, the largest specimen in the collection, Ch. xxxvii. 003, 005,^{6a} being without border about 7 feet 3 inches in height and having a width which originally may have been well over 7 feet.

Borders
of large
paintings.

The second class of paintings is the largest in numbers. It comprises banners which, as the regularly adopted arrangement of their fittings clearly proves, were intended to hang freely from the vaults of cellas and porches or from the ceilings of antechapels, verandahs, etc. The banners proper, narrow rectangles in shape, almost without exception show representations of single divinities,^{6b} usually with a valance and a band of small rhomboids at the bottom. Whether painted on silk, as in the great majority of the specimens, or on linen or paper, they invariably are provided, when

Arrange-
ment and
material of
banners.

¹ See above, p. 793; cf. Fig. 198, and *Desert Cathay*, ii. Figs. 185, 227, for similar verandahs elsewhere.

² Cf. Pl. 42; also above, p. 797.

³ See Ch. 0018 (Pl. LXXII); i. 009 (Pl. LXXIX); xviii. 003 (Pl. LXX); lvii. 002 (Pl. LXXI), 003.

⁴ Plain borders are illustrated by the paintings reproduced, e.g., in Pl. LVII, LX, LXI, LXIII, LXV, etc.; for

a richly decorated silk border, cf. Pl. LXIV; also Ch. xx. 005.

⁵ For borders with loops intact, see, e.g., Pl. LXII (Ch. i. 0012), LXVI, LXVII, LXXXVIII (Ch. xx. 009).

^{6a} See for R. portion *Thousand Buddhas*, Pl. IV.

^{6b} Instead of a divine figure Ch. 0024 has a design of flying ducks, Ch. 0089 of a Padmāsana. In each case the banner is of coloured silk.