

of the porch are decorated on either side with an imposing procession of over life-size Bodhisattvas, drawn in vigorous outline and carrying offerings. The brown under-garments with the pale blue Saṅghāṭi and light green stoles make up a fine colour-scheme, and there is impressive dignity in the long array of divine figures. Their rich ornaments are shown in low relief and set off with gilding on the edges. An elaborate floral diaper in brighter colours adorns the ceiling of the porch, while that of the cella is covered with a profusion of scenes difficult to make out in detail but apparently representing legends.

Ch. VIII is a cave-temple but little smaller in size than Ch. I and situated near the middle of the main group of grottoes. In wealth and variety of its mural paintings it stands foremost among the shrines examined, and merits closer description all the more as it is possible to illustrate its decoration by an adequate number of photographs.<sup>12</sup> As seen in Fig. 218, the statues once occupying the large horseshoe-shaped platform of the cella have disappeared completely except for scant traces of their bases, while the wall-paintings of the cella have survived for the most part in perfect preservation except here and there at the foot of the dado. In front of what was the base of the principal image in the centre there rises now a small Stūpa, roughly built of clay but curious as showing correctly the three-fold square base and spherical dome typical of old Central-Asian Stūpas. The west side of the image platform is backed in the centre by a massive screen spared from the rock and expanding at the top, on a level with the cornice of the cella walls, into the shape of a high double cantilever. The face of the screen proper is painted with rows of colossal Bodhisattvas grouped in worshipping attitude on either side of what must have been the central image, while above there is shown an elaborate canopy surrounded by big chrysanthemum-like flowers. That the image in front of this screen must have been a Garuḍa or a divine figure borne by a bird is suggested by the remains of a colossal tail in low relievo seen rising between the two Bodhisattva groups, as well as by the stucco fragment of a colossal bird's foot with claws which I found placed on the top of the little Stūpa dome. Along the sides of the platform could be traced remains of bases for attendant images, four each on the north and south. The platform still retains its old decoration in painted plaster relievo and rises in two receding stories to 1 foot 8 inches and 3 feet respectively. In front of it a roughly built modern altar serves for offerings of incense, etc.

The ceiling of the cella rises in the shape of a truncated cone towards the coffer-like centre of the roofing, formed by two receding courses with three more added below in the shape of cornices painted in perspective. The decoration of two of these painted courses, consisting of closely set medallions with Buddha figures and of an elaborate valance, is visible in Fig. 218. The true receding courses or mouldings are decorated with floral scrolls, and the coffer in the centre, about 5 feet square, with a large rosette surrounded by a flower diaper. The sloping sides of the ceiling are covered with stencilled rows of seated Buddha figures, each of the four sides except the one partially covered by the screen containing in the centre an oblong central picture in which a Buddha is seated between two Bodhisattvas. The four corners at the foot of the ceiling are hollowed out into elliptical squinches, each of which is occupied by the well-painted colossal figure of a Lokapāla in full panoply with his attendants (Fig. 219).

The paintings of the cella walls, to which we may turn next, comprise, besides a dado to be described presently, two large compositions (ii, xv) on either side of the entrance; five panels, each 9 feet 2 inches wide on both the south and north walls (iii-vii, x-xiv); and one continuous fresco covering the whole west wall, 43 feet long, and passing behind the screen also (viii, ix). The panel ii, of which only the lowest portion is seen in Fig. 216, shows in the centre a haloed figure

<sup>12</sup> In the ground plan, Pl. 44, the position of the main panels into which the wall-paintings are divided is marked by

small Roman numerals, i, ii, etc., starting from the south side of the porch.

Sculptural  
remains in  
cella Ch. VIII.

Decoration  
of ceiling in  
Ch. VIII.

Mural  
paintings of  
cella Ch. VIII.