

on the edges, and an under-robe of pure azure. The car, too, is richly coloured in blue and green, with golden ornaments.

Fresco of
Buddha with
planetary
divinities.

The globes already referred to and others seen floating in the air filled with the symbols of different planets leave no doubt that the fresco is intended to represent the progress through space of a Buddha escorted by planetary divinities. It is, therefore, of interest to compare it with the silk painting Ch. liv. 007 (Plate LXXI), where the same subject is treated, but in a simpler setting and by a hand far less skilled in composition and drawing. Whether Buddha Tejahprabha is intended also in the fresco and what his progress as here represented signifies, I must leave to experts to determine. Above the whole composition runs a cornice showing within rilievo panels in brown stucco small figures of seated Buddhas. The sloping foot of the ceiling is painted with a richly decorated valance, and above this a floral diaper in gay colours covers the flat vaulting.

Interiors of
shrines Ch.
ix-xi.

Among the numerous grottoes lining the cliff between Ch. viii and the shrine of the colossal seated Buddha most either show poor decoration or else have their interiors badly darkened by later antechapels, etc. In the large restored shrine Ch. ix (Plate 45), which has its entrance at some height above the present ground level, I was thus able to photograph only the procession of Bodhisattva figures, in flowing garments of dark brown and green, that decorate the south wall of the porch (Fig. 225). Of the interior of some small restored shrines below, Fig. 228, showing the raised altar recess of Ch. x (Plate 45) with its badly renovated stucco images, may serve as a specimen. Both the cave containing the colossal seated Buddha and that next but one to the north of it, Ch. xi, where the inscribed slabs of the fourteenth century are placed,¹⁶ are abundantly decorated with wall-paintings of old date. But the dim light which penetrates through the recent structures built in front of them made photographing or even examination difficult. After a long stretch of small grottoes, ranged in several tiers (see Fig. 199) but containing, as far as I could see, no notable decorative work, comes the cave Ch. xiii, occupied by the colossal standing Buddha. Here the frescoes to be seen in the several stories through which the image rises to a height of about 90 feet look old, but proved beyond the reach of the camera.

Cave-
temples of
colossal
Buddhas.

Mural paint-
ings in
shrine Ch.
xii.

A small shrine, however, Ch. xii, which closely adjoins this great excavation at a height of about 70 feet and is reached by troublesome rock-cut passages, retains wall-paintings of merit, unfortunately smoke-begrimed and effaced in places, as the grotto appears to have been long used as a living place. Fig. 229 shows the alcove containing, besides debris of attendant figures, a seated Buddha image which seemed old. The frescoes on either side (Fig. 230), drawn in a more spirited and careful fashion than the usual Sukhāvātīs, represent Buddhas surrounded by throngs of Bodhisattvas and other divinities. The side walls north and south are occupied each by three panels containing Paradise scenes with celestial ballets, etc., in elaborate architectural setting. But more interesting than these is the dado running along the foot of the panels (Fig. 232). Its subjects, which I have not found elsewhere in these frescoes, look as if copied from contemporary life. On the south wall there are depicted cavalcades of mounted soldiers and dignitaries with flying banners, squads of mail-clad horsemen with musicians playing on long horns and kettle-drums, etc. The varied movements of the horses are rendered with conspicuous skill. The dado of the north wall has suffered much damage, but still shows in places carts and palanquins escorted by servants, with remnants of hunting scenes near the entrance. Carefully executed figures of donors and monks appear on the dado below the alcove, and suggest by their dress a later date for these paintings (ninth-tenth century) than might have been inferred from their superior workmanship.

To the south of the colossal standing Buddha there follows a group of much-restored large

¹⁶ See above, pp. 799 sq.