

needed protection from rain quite as much as the stucco sculptures along the walls of the latter.⁸ The comparative thinness of the walls, only a little over 2 feet, shows that they could not have been meant to bear any great weight.

Passage of
temple cella
excavated.

Adjoining the north-west end of the frescoed wall excavation, continued under great difficulties (Fig. 321), brought to light the remains of what must have been part of a passage enclosing a temple cella (Ta. i in Plan). Its walls, apart from an outer one which continued that of ii at right angles towards the north-east, were built with timber and wattle. They were only about 6 inches in thickness and had, like all other remains at this ruin, become quite rotten and soft through saturation with subsoil moisture. Those to the south-east and north-west of what seems to have been the cella broke down as soon as they were being cleared. That the paintings on the plaster surfaces of the passage walls should have under such conditions retained their colours in relative freshness was remarkable. The same may be said with regard to what survived of the stucco images set upon a low platform along the outer walls of the passage i.

Fragments
of colossal
statue.

Of the colossal seated Buddha statue once occupying the south corner there remained little more *in situ* than a broken lotus base over 5 feet across, with portions of the folded legs. But the colossal Buddha head, partially broken (Fig. 323), which turned up on the floor of this corner of the passage, may probably have belonged to it. It measured about 16 inches from the chin to the top of the forehead in its present condition. The heavy piece of stucco was too soft and friable for transport, but still retained its colouring on most parts of the surface. The dark blotches which the photograph shows may mark places once covered by patches of leaf-gold. Tiny flakes of this were still found to adhere here and there. The same explanation may perhaps apply to the numerous dark spots displayed by the surviving fresco pieces, as seen in Figs. 325, 328.⁹

Painted and
inscribed
image base.

On the other side of the corner was found the stucco base with the legs of a second seated Buddha over life-size, as seen in Fig. 324. The extant portion of his dress was of Pompeian red colour with a blue edge. The whole front of the base, about a foot high, was painted, and this I succeeded in removing, though with great difficulty owing to the extreme softness of the moist stucco and the subsequent brittleness of the surface after drying (Ta. 009, Plate CXXVI). The upper portion of the base represents the edge of a cushion, decorated with semicircular cartouches imitating the pattern of a woven fabric and with tassels at the drooping ends. The round discs in the circular border enclosing half-rosettes suggest imitation of a 'Sassanian' pattern. On the panel below there are painted, on either side of a vase with lotus-flowers, two groups of kneeling worshippers obviously intended to represent the donor and his family. For a detailed description of the figures, three male on the left and three female on the right, I must refer to the List below. The figures are very carefully drawn, and their costume presents a good deal of interesting detail. The chief donor in front wears the dark-red robe of a monk, and his hair is close-cut. The two men behind him carry, besides a sword, pen and tablets hanging from their belt. The chief lady on the opposite side wears a richly embroidered jacket with elaborate sleeves, and below it voluminous trousers. The scarcity of donor figures in the paintings that have come to light from Khotan sites makes it difficult to draw chronological evidence from these features of the costume. An inscription in Central-Asian Brāhmī characters is painted over the right-hand portion of the panel. It has been shown by Mr. Pargiter to contain a Sanskrit Śloka in honour of the painting (and image?); but the initial portion, which may have contained the artist's name, has suffered too much damage for complete decipherment.^{9a}

Beyond the image base just described there was found the life-size statue of a richly dressed

⁸ Cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. p. 488.

⁹ Regarding the custom of applying leaf-gold in patches

to stucco images, cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. p. 496.

^{9a} Cf. F. E. Pargiter, *J.R.A.S.*, 1913, pp. 400 sq.