

treated at present as conjectural. Two curious points, wholly independent of it, still remain to be noted. There is nothing, as far as I know, in Indian art to account for the appearance of the vine-leaf which is displayed so conspicuously in front of the lady's body. Manifestly an imitation of the post-classical fig-leaf, it presents us with an unmistakable proof of western influence on Khotan art of the period. Have we possibly to recognize another but more distant trace of this in the general pose of the principal figure? I am unable to adduce for this pose any parallel from old Indian art; but western eyes cannot fail to be struck by the curious resemblance it presents to that of the traditional Venus of late Greek sculpture. The position of the right hand is practically identical, while the left is raised only to such an extent as the use of the vine-leaf would justify. Is it mere coincidence which presents us here, in a fresco of a small Buddhist shrine, dating as we shall see from the last quarter of the eighth century, with a pendant of a famous type of classical antiquity; or is it possible to suppose links which would account for the re-appearance of that type, however disguised in form and motive, in so distant a quarter of Central Asia, and at so late a period? Only further research can give the assurance needed for a definite answer.

The adjoining small frescoes of the east wall offer no difficulty in their interpretation. On the right of the scene just discussed we see a seated Buddha surrounded by a medallion-shaped aureole, the whole measuring only about 4 inches. The dress is shown a deep red-brown against a green background. On the left there appears above the tank, which extends frieze-like below the remaining frescoes, a remarkably well-drawn though much effaced male figure of youthful appearance. Seated in cross-legged fashion, and dressed in a dark blue cloak that leaves the right shoulder bare and shows excellent drapery, it is manifestly that of a Buddhist scholar. His right hand holds the oblong leaves of a 'Pōthī,' on which his eyes are fixed in intent study. Beyond this figure, and likewise turned to the proper right, an old man is depicted in the act of teaching. His robe, worn in the same fashion, seems to be made up of patches of varying shades of brown, thus curiously suggesting the orthodox *cīravastra* of mendicant monks of all Indian sects. The well-shaped right hand is raised in the act of teaching, with the second and third fingers stretched out, while the palm of the left supports a closed Pōthī. The two boards of thin wood between which the leaves are placed, after a fashion still commonly observed in the case of Indian manuscripts, are distinctly marked, and can be made out in the photograph. The cleverly-drawn features of the old man's face bear an expression of complacent assurance in his teaching and full abstraction in its subject. The tank below this figure showed open lotuses floating in the water, and also two birds looking like wild geese, with necks marked dark blue and green and turned towards the teacher.

To remove any portion of these interesting frescoes proved quite impracticable, owing to the friable condition of the plaster. The faded state of the colours made it difficult even to secure a photographic record. Nevertheless, I hope the enlarged reproduction of the photograph (Plate II) will suffice to illustrate some thoroughly Indian features which these mural paintings exhibit in style of composition and the drawing of figures. There can be little doubt that, just as in the case of its sculpture, the original models of the pictorial art of old Khotan were derived from Gandhāra and the immediately adjoining region. Of the paintings which once adorned the walls of Buddhist shrines and monasteries in the Valleys of Kābūl, Peshāwar or Swāt, no direct remains have survived, and this loss invests such relics as the frescoes and the painted tablets of the Dandān-Uiliq shrines, however distant the reflex they represent, with additional interest.

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