

From the silkworms' eggs hidden in the princess's headdress had been derived the cocoons which we see heaped up in a basket in front of the princess. Her eyes turned down upon them, and the right arm stretched out towards them seem clearly to indicate the protection which, according to the legend, the princess was anxious to assure, by an edict, to the silkworms within the cocoons.

Until I had correctly realized the character of the second figure and significance of the first's gesture as well as of the basket placed between them, the attitude of the fourth figure, also female, and of the object in front of her seemed very puzzling. With the subject of the panel once identified it is easy now to recognize, notwithstanding the faded colours, that the long stretched object shown in brown is meant for the wooden framework of a loom or silk-weaving gear such as is used to this day in Indian villages for preparing a warp of spun cotton threads. The instrument which the fourth figure is holding in her right hand is probably identical with the wooden implement, curiously resembling a currycomb, found in one of the ruined houses of the Niya Site, N. xx., and shown in Plate LXXIII. Its use is illustrated by the exactly similar wooden instrument which is still used in India by cotton-spinning villagers for separating and combing the threads while attached to the rude frames usually found fixed by the roadside. The four-armed third figure seen seated to the left proper of the princess undoubtedly represents a male divinity, perhaps the god presiding over the silkworms. He wears high top-boots like another divinity which appears on the interesting panel (D. VII. 6) reproduced in Plate LXI, but the emblems held in his hands are scarcely distinctive enough to guide us to a certain identification⁶.

Indications
of Persian
influence.

As regards all details in the drawing and colouring of the figures, I must refer to the description given in the inventory list and to the illustration in Plate LXIII, where, however, a full reproduction of all colours and delicately-shaded tints of the original could not be attempted. Special mention may be made here of the cleverly-arranged composition of the whole scene and the free and spirited drawing of the main figure. It is of interest to note the unmistakably Persian type of face given to the princess in spite of her Chinese origin, as rightly maintained by the legend. We have here a clear indication of the influence exercised at Khotan by Iranian pictorial art, which is traceable also in other panels of Dandān-Uiliq. The curious miniature representation of what looks like a tower with four pointed turrets or finials, faintly visible on the left proper edge of the panel, may possibly be meant to indicate a kind of reel round which the silk thread is wound when preparing it for the warp. The petal-shaped daubs of dark pink which appear on the background bear manifestly the same character as the auspicious *sindūra* or sandal-ointment marks with which pious Hindus have ever been fond of bedaubing objects of worship or votive offerings.

Painted
panel, with
Bodhi-
sattvas.

Another well-preserved tablet is D. x. 3, painted on both sides (see Plate LXIV). Its interest lies in the representation on the obverse of three seated Bodhisattvas, whose figures and attributes seem to agree closely with the typical forms given to this highly popular class of divinities by Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism. I must leave it to experts in Northern Buddhist iconography to determine exact identifications. The two-armed figure first on the right proper holding the Vajra in the right hand is probably meant for Vajrapāṇi. The three-headed and four-armed third figure holding in one of its left hands a bow may in view of this attribute be supposed to represent some form of Mañjuśrī⁷. As Vajrapāṇi and Mañjuśrī are found very

⁶ Julien's translation of Hsüan-tsang's legend, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 239, refers to the *Lu-shé* convent having been built 'en l'honneur de la déesse des vers à soie'. But other

renderings give a different meaning to the passage; comp. above, p. 229.

⁷ Comp. Grünwedel, *Mythologie des Buddhismus*, p. 138.