

every detail close dependence on the models of Graeco-Buddhist art as transplanted to Central Asia. There were portions of the arms of a statue somewhat under life size, modelled round cleverly dowelled wooden cores, bearing ornaments, and of well-shaped hands and fingers. The blackened surface of the stucco, originally not baked, and the charred condition of the projecting core portions, showed that the statuary, like the little temple itself, had been destroyed in a conflagration. One fragment of particular interest showed two small heads, one above the other, each only about three inches high, but excellently modelled (Fig. 273, 4). While the upper one displays a look of placid contemplation, the lower one, with frowning brows and eyes and mouth wide open, cleverly expresses intense anger or passion. As a third head is evidently missing below, it seems likely that one of those numerous 'Trimurti' representations of Buddhist divinities was intended, in which the 'angry' or demoniac form of the god usually plays a part.

However this might be, so much was clear, that the remains of the small Buddhist shrine here uncovered had some relation to the watch-station close by and the wall line which passed it. But the style of the sculptured remains, though unmistakably old, seemed to speak against contemporary construction. So I was led to conjecture that it was, perhaps, the tenacity of local worship—such as I had often seen exemplified elsewhere, and last among the ruins of deserted Shih-pan-tung—which had here caused a small shrine to be restored centuries after the wall was abandoned. I did not realize until some time later that the direct route from the Tun-huang oasis towards Hami and the northern oases of Chinese Turkestan, passes even now in the vicinity of this old watch-station (T. XXIX.). Thus, if we may assume that already in ancient times it crossed the line of wall here, the existence of a small shrine near the gate station and its continued maintenance by pious wayfarers, say down to T'ang times, present nothing strange. My subsequent discovery of a similar cult having survived on the old route westwards supplies an exact parallel.