

its origin and successful application mainly to the technical skill and devoted care of Mr. F. H. Andrews. In illustration of the most satisfactory results which he secured by it, I may invite a comparison between the condition of the main figure in panel M. III. 003, as originally discovered at the foot of the wall (see Fig. 127), and the appearance of the same Buddha figure in the joined-up panel reproduced in Plate XLII. The big cracks visible in the photograph, showing the condition of the piece on discovery, have closed up so well in the panel as finally secured that they have become almost imperceptible, and yet the original painted surface has been left entirely unaltered.

Height and
ground
colour of
frieze.

The known original position of this panel furnishes us with a very useful indication of the size of the frieze to which it belonged, just as its subject does of the probable character of the composition adorning it. From the size of the figures and the fragments of the border that survive, it can safely be concluded that the height of the frieze is likely to have been approximately similar to that of the frieze next to the dado which I found still partially surviving on the walls of the adjoining rotunda M. v, viz. between three and four feet. The vermilion colour of the background, a kind of Pompeian red, which we see in M. III. 003, was certainly common to the friezes of both shrines. To these points of agreement I may add at once two others of more importance which we shall see clearly proved presently: close similarity in style, and the fact that both friezes treat of scenes drawn from Buddhist iconography. All these indications combined are sufficient to create a presumption that the general scheme of grouping is likely in both friezes to have exhibited the same close correspondence which we shall further on be able to trace as regards the decorative scheme governing the design of both dados.

Analogy of
painted
frieze in
M. v.

Now in the case of the frieze decorating the rotunda M. v, as seen in the photographs Figs. 134-40, it is certain, firstly, that the scenes depicted in it extended as a continuous band round the walls, except where the latter had two openings giving light and access to the circular passage of the cella, and, secondly, that the scenes were all meant to illustrate incidents of the same Jātaka story. In the shrine M. III, with the plan of which M. v shows otherwise the closest agreement, the circular wall of the interior was, as we have already seen, divided by a door and three windows into four equal segments. Only from two of these, on the north-east and south-east, were fragments of the friezes once surmounting the dado recovered. But even these suffice to throw light on two points of importance. In the first place, they show that the paintings within each segment formed a continuous composition. In the second place, a closer examination of the fragments makes it appear very probable that the scenes represented in at least the lower of the friezes all belonged to the same Buddhist legend, whether taken from the life of Gautama Buddha or from one of the Jātaka stories relating to Buddha's previous births.

Composi-
tion un-
broken.

The first point is established by evidence which, though negative, seems none the less

at the British Museum during the years 1910-11 by Mr. F. H. Andrews and, under the direction of his artist eye, by my second assistant Mr. J. P. Droop, with extreme care and skill.

It may be useful to record here the exact technical method followed. The painted fragments were placed with their surface downwards on strong panes of plate glass. After the backing of clay and straw had been slowly removed by careful scraping, etc., until only the smooth surface layer of plaster of Paris remained, the several pieces belonging to one panel could be moved into the position requisite for correct junction by the guidance of the image which was reflected on a mirror placed at a suitable distance below the glass pane. Care was taken to use, for all the larger panels, panes of

glass bent exactly to the curve which the known diameter of the rotunda indicated for the surfaces originally occupied by them. After the several pieces had thus been reassembled in their correct position, a thin layer of plaster of Paris was spread over the whole as a new backing. This was subsequently strengthened by a wire grating connected with a wooden frame, and finally an outer and thicker layer of plaster of Paris was applied, in which the grating became embedded. After having been treated in this manner the panels could be handled with perfect ease and safety.

It ought to be clearly recorded that the slightest attempt at supplementing missing bits of the original painted surface or at other 'restoration' of any sort has been rigorously avoided.