

Representa-
tion of
legendary
scenes.

None of these scenes have as yet been identified. But two of them must immediately claim our attention, even though no interpretation can be attempted at present. In the top scene we see what obviously is a miniature reproduction of the central Buddha image, rising on an open lotus pedestal outside what appears to be meant for a shrine, and with a monk's figure pointing towards it as if to call to it the attention of passers-by shown below. Separated from this scene by another which need not detain us here, we see the Thunder-god above in furious movement surrounded by clouds, and underneath them a small but clearly recognizable replica of the central Buddha image, with the characteristic background of rocks. But what is of particular interest to note is the substantial timber scaffolding which encloses the statue to the height of the shoulders. Perched behind on the scaffolding two workers appear to be busy on the Buddha's head, while below and behind a partially broken building or enclosure a man is seen endeavouring to attract their attention. Even without a clue to the exact interpretation of the side scenes it seems difficult to resist the inference that we have some legend in which the miraculous translation of a sacred statue representing the Buddha on the Vulture Peak played a conspicuous part.¹⁹ But where this evidently famous statue was originally placed and where it was supposed to have miraculously made its subsequent appearance remains so far hidden. Whatever the explanation of the legend may be, it is instructive to observe the strong contrast between the careful reproduction of the stiff hieratic features of the image and the artistic freedom in the rest of the picture, full of life and vigour.

Painting of
pair of Ava-
lokiteśvaras.

Among the paintings which show divinities in simple co-ordination we may mention first the large and excellently preserved picture Ch. xxxviii. 005.²⁰ It presents two almost life-size figures of Avalokiteśvara facing each other, and is painted with great care and high artistic feeling in the style to which, when dealing above with representations of single Bodhisattvas, we have applied the term 'Chinese'. For details of the figures and their rich attire painted in a wealth of harmonious colours, reference to the reproduction in colours and the Descriptive List must suffice. The flower carried by the figure on the left and the flask and willow sprig in the hands of the other are well-known attributes of Avalokiteśvara. Which of the many particular forms of this favourite Bodhisattva of Chinese Buddhism are intended may be determined from the inscribed cartouche above, of which no translation is as yet available. We have a similar pair, probably also of Avalokiteśvaras in 'Chinese' style, in the much-damaged silk painting Ch. lxi. 0010.

Painting
of four
Avaloki-
teśvaras,
A. D. 864.

The well-preserved large silk painting Ch. lv. 0023 offers special interest.²¹ It is the oldest exactly dated painting in the collection, the dedicatory inscription indicating the year A.D. 864. It also combines in a curious fashion hieratic tradition of Indian origin, as displayed in the row of four Avalokiteśvara figures ranged stiffly side by side in the upper half, with the far more spirited treatment of Bodhisattvas in 'Chinese' style in the lower half. There the Bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī are represented in procession on their respective 'Vāhanas', the white elephant and the lion, and with their attendants. The combination of these two Bodhisattvas into a pair is typical in our paintings, and illustrated also by a number of frescoes in the cave-shrines of the

¹⁹ Legends of Buddha statues miraculously carried through the air are well attested for the Khotan region by Chinese pilgrims. Thus Hsüan-tsang was shown at a site close to the Khotan capital the statue of a standing Buddha which was believed to have miraculously come to this spot from Kuchā; cf. Julien, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 230; for the identification of the locality, *Ancient Khotan*, i. p. 225. Another famous statue of a standing Buddha, carved in sandal-wood, which was believed to have been made by King Udayana of Kauśambī, and to have come through the air, was worshipped at Pi-mo,

east of Khotan, where both Hsüan-tsang and Sung Yün saw it; see Julien, *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 242 sq.; Chavannes, *Voyage de Song Yun*, p. 14. Its location and the divers miraculous stories related about it have been fully discussed, *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 455 sq.

²⁰ See Pl. LXXXI, and for a very successful reproduction in colours, *Thousand B.*, Pl. XV.

²¹ See *Desert Cathay*, ii. Pl. VIII, for a reproduction in colour, and *Thousand B.*, Pl. XVI, for one, on a more adequate scale, in monotone.