

shrines, which have lost most of their original wall-paintings or else are rendered very dark by structural additions in front. Apart from the large modernized temple Ch. xv containing the slab inscribed in A.D. 776 and 894,¹⁷ I may mention here the smaller grotto Ch. xiv which is now dedicated to 'T'ang-sêng', i.e. Hsüan-tsang, in his capacity as a canonized Arhat of the Chinese Buddhist Pantheon. Fig. 227 shows the altar recess holding his stucco image seated in the fashion of a Buddha in the pose of meditation, together with four attendants. In front of the great pilgrim saint is modelled a quaint monster, half dog, half seal, looking affectionately towards him. Though the statues have a modern appearance, the installation of the pious traveller as the resident divinity of this shrine cannot be quite recent; for the spirited paintings on the walls of the porch and antechapel representing his mythical companions with the head of a bull and a horse respectively, and also scenes from the legendary story of his travels, have faded a good deal.¹⁸

Shrine of
Hsüan-tsang
as Arhat,
Ch. xiv.

Just above the southernmost of the restored cave-temples is a large well-lit shrine, Ch. xvi, the mural decoration of which offers points of special interest and may fitly serve as the subject of my concluding notes. In general arrangement, subjects, and style, the wall-paintings of its cella correspond very closely to those in Ch. viii, and certain indications of detail, including a less careful execution of the brushwork, made it appear to me probable that the Khotan princess's cave-temple had served here in the main as the model. The north and south walls show practically the identical scheme of large panels with divine assemblages and scenes in Buddhist Heavens (Fig. 235), while the subjects represented in the panels on both sides of the entrance are also in close agreement.¹⁹ But in the dado below there is a significant difference, rows of typical Bodhisattvas painted mainly in browns and greens replacing the procession of princesses and their ladies. What, however, gives to the decoration of Ch. xvi its particular interest is the curious and impressive composition which covers the whole of the west wall. Instead of being covered as in Ch. viii with a multitude of small scenes without any obvious design or cohesion in their grouping, the big wall-surface serves here for the pictorial representation of a legendary subject which, in spite of an abundance of incidental scenes, is held together by two predominant motifs. This division itself is necessitated by the screen at the back of the central platform which hides the middle portion of the fresco from view except when examined in the narrow passage behind serving for the Pradakṣiṇā.

Wall-
paintings of
large cella,
Ch. xvi.

The most striking feature of the whole composition is seen in its right-hand portion, where the effect of a powerful wind is depicted in a remarkably vivid and realistic fashion (Figs. 234, 236). In the centre is shown a canopied tent-like structure in danger of being blown away to the right. While its occupant, a richly dressed figure without a halo, bends forward as if to balance the force of the wind and to prevent the threatened overthrow of the structure, its curtains along with the massive tassels of the canopy are tossed up into the air in violent movement. Some bearded attendants, with hair and clothes twisted by the gale, are seen engaged in the endeavour, from a ladder and pole, to secure the whirling curtains and canopy. The violence of the wind-effect is reflected also in other figures and objects seen on the left, while some spectators on the right seem to watch in amazement or to move quickly forward to help. Near the edge on the right and below, incidents are depicted apparently distinct from the main story.

Representa-
tion of 'wind
scene' on
west wall,
Ch. xvi.

The left-hand portion of the wall-paintings forms a well-designed *pendant* to the one on the right (Fig. 233). We see there the wind-raised tumult of the latter balanced, as it were, by the

¹⁷ Cf. above, p. 799.

¹⁸ Regarding the modern popular legends which have transformed Hsüan-tsang into a kind of saintly Münchhausen, cf. *Desert Cathay*, ii. pp. 169 sq. [Regarding the fanciful novel known as *Hsi yü chi* 西遊紀 to which Hsüan-

tsang owes his modern celebrity, see now Couling, *Encyclopaedia Sinica*, pp. 241 sq.]

¹⁹ For the similarity of decorative details in borders, ceiling, etc., comparison of Figs. 219 and 234 is instructive.