

to the face. As in all these banners, the flesh is left the natural colour of the silk, with delicate shading in faint pink to show the modelling of face and body.

The dress is the traditional Bodhisattva attire in a particularly elaborate form. A trailing skirt of pale pink, with blue border, drapes the figure from the waist to the feet. Its upper edge is held by a white girdle and gold-edged belt. The end of this girdle hangs down with loops in front and the end of another behind it, made of a rich flowered red material. An under-robe of dull red appears only above the feet. The upper half of the body is nude except for a band of purplish-pink drapery, elaborate jewellery, and a filmy blue stole which shown in delicate transparent colour descends over shoulders and arms to the ground.

The abundant jewellery is of a type with which we have already become familiar in paintings of Avalokiteśvara and elsewhere. The head-dress consists of a narrow fillet of white drapery, ending with a narrow white band which hangs in a long loop to the knees. Over the forehead it carries a light gold ornament ending above in two lotus buds which spring backwards over the black hair. This falls behind in heavy locks down to the elbows and forms a dark background to the bust. The circular nimbus is made up of variegated rings of colour such as are seen round the heads of the Bodhisattvas in Plate XLI. The elaborate canopy is of a kind we have already met with. Its straight-hanging tassels agree with the motionless attitude of the figure. Yet notwithstanding this attitude the whole picture in its highly finished style seems instinct with life.

PLATE XXX

SIDE-SCENES AND DETAILS FROM A BUDDHIST PARADISE PAINTING

THIS Plate reproduces some side-scenes and small portions from the fine but very fragmentary remains of a large silk painting (Ch. 00216) representing a Buddhist Heaven, probably that of Amitābha. The colours of what is preserved are in remarkably fresh condition, and this, together with the large scale of reproduction (four-sevenths), facilitates close examination of interesting details.

Taking the side-scenes as shown in the left portion of the Plate we may note first the fine floral border which separates the two at the top from the main picture. Its vermilion ground is covered with rich trailing bunches of flowers and leaves painted in a variety of vivid colours. With their naturalistic style they closely recall the designs which are displayed by plentiful embroidery remains I recovered from the hoard of the 'Thousand Buddhas'.⁶² The outside border of the whole is decorated with bold groups of entwined tendrils in orange-red over dark brown, showing in their style a curious affinity to certain of the cloud scrolls which appear on the fine textile remains of Han times brought to light by me from ancient sites in the Lop Desert.⁶³

The two side-scenes above form part of a series extending along the left side of the picture and illustrating the ancient Buddhist legend of Ajātaśatru, the wicked son of King Bimbisāra. Chinese inscriptions accompany most of these scenes; but the upper one of those here reproduced has lost its inscription and its identification is hence not quite certain. It, however, appears to represent Ajātaśatru with his sword drawn menacing Bimbisāra, who is attempting to draw his own. Both are wearing flowing robes such as form elsewhere in our paintings the costume of ministers. The scene seems laid below the stairs leading up to the royal palace.

The scene below appears, according to the but partially legible inscription, to represent Ajātaśatru after repentance entering the Buddhist monkhood. What survives of the scene shows three men in plain belted coats advancing to the left in front of a decorated and

⁶² Cf. *Serindia*, pp. 904 sqq., and the embroidery specimens reproduced there in Plates CVI-CVIII, CX, CXI.

⁶³ Cf. F. H. Andrews, *Ancient Chinese Figured Silks*

excavated by Sir Aurel Stein (B. Quaritch, London, 1920), pp. 4 sqq., Figs. 1-3.