

fifths. Arrayed in three lines and kneeling on mats, they all wear a very plain type of dress. It comprises high-waisted skirts of brown, green, or blue, bodices with long close-fitting sleeves, and small shawl-like stoles. They have no jewels, and their hair is done in a small topknot without any ornaments. By the side of the hindmost two ladies kneels a child, and at the back stands a young female attendant in a long plain gown. On the men's side there kneels foremost a shaven monk in a brown cloak, behind him three men dressed in long belted coats of light greenish-blue and wearing peaked and tailed caps of dark brown or blue. A young attendant with bare head holding a staff stands at the back.

A glance at the lay donors is enough to prove that the dress in each case is in closest agreement with that worn by the donors in the two paintings of Amitābha's Paradise in Plates x and xi.<sup>74</sup> For these a series of concordant indications postulates a date distinctly older than that of our earliest dated picture of A.D. 864.<sup>75</sup> A variety of considerations lead me to believe that the date of those two paintings and of our hanging as well cannot be later than the eighth century, but may possibly be even somewhat earlier.<sup>76</sup>

In accessory details, too, a very close contact reveals itself between the embroidery picture and the paintings shown in Plates x and xi, proving that they belong to the same period and were probably produced under the influence of the same pictorial school. In all three we see the identical pair of graceful Apsaras figures, in an attitude not found elsewhere among our paintings. In the dress of the Bodhisattvas we may note as a common peculiarity the same brocade-like decoration of the edges of the lower robes. Peculiar, too, to the three pictures are the plain sage-green lotus seed-beds underfoot or as seats of the divine figures. Whatever the exact date of production may be, there seems little reason to doubt that the hanging must rank with the oldest of our Ch'ien-fo-tung paintings. The needlework is of the finest, as Plate xxxv shows with particular clearness, and to this the picture owes the striking freshness of its colour effects and the excellent preservation of all parts that remain.

## PLATE XXXVI

### BHAIṢAJYAGURU'S PARADISE

THE subject of the silk painting (Ch. liii. 002) reproduced here on the scale of one-sixth is a Buddhist Heaven, and by evidence of the side-scenes preserved on the right, which are identical with those of the larger painting seen in Plates I and II, it can be recognized with M. Petrucci as another representation of Bhaiṣajyaguru's Paradise. The reproduction in our Plate is too small to permit of close study of details. But it suffices to convey an adequate impression of the style and general arrangement which correspond closely to those of the larger painting fully discussed above. For these reasons my comments may be brief here.

Apart from the top and bottom portions and the side-scenes on the left, which are lost, our painting is in excellent condition and retains its colours in particular freshness. The colouring is rendered very distinctive by the large proportion of black and blue. The drawing is refined and the work well finished throughout.

In the centre we see the figure of the presiding Buddha in the same pose and dress as seen in Plate II; his flesh here, too, is yellow shaded with pink. The two enthroned Bodhisattvas on either side carry here purple or scarlet lotus buds in the hands nearest him and hold the others in the *vitarka-mudrā*. Immediately behind the central Buddha are seen four haloed monkish disciples with close-cropped black hair. The rest of the company on the main terrace is made up of twelve smaller Bodhisattvas seated with their hands in mystic poses or holding lotus buds, and two blue-haired nymphs kneeling in very graceful attitudes by the altar and holding offerings.

<sup>74</sup> See above, pp. 20 sqq.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. *Serindia*, p. 885.

<sup>76</sup> See above, p. 21.