

PLATE IV

PAINTING FROM FARHĀD-BĒG-YAILAKI

F. XII. 004

FROM a small shrine built of clay blocks, its walls about $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick enclosing a cella measuring about 8 feet by 10 feet. The painting was on the right-hand side of the entrance, placed low on the wall and therefore exposed to damage by the passing of visitors to the shrine.

The subject is the goddess Hāritī in her regenerate aspect as the protectress and nourisher of children and goddess of fecundity. Legend credits this cherisher of children with a lurid 'past'. She was a Yakṣiṇī, a demon goddess, promoter of disease, personification of small-pox, and devourer of babies. But whether she had exhausted all varieties of exercise for her evil inclinations and yearned for new fields of enterprise, or suffered from shock after thoughtlessly devouring her last-born, it appears that she sought or encountered the Buddha who administered a severe rebuke against her evil practices, and by indicating to her the more desirable paths, she was converted, dedicated her life to good works, and became the benign goddess here depicted.

The fearless playfulness of the children clambering about her shows the apparent thoroughness of her regeneration, and if we detect in the mingled sadness and sweetness of her expression a smouldering survival of the old fires still capable of renewed activity, they are, at least, well under control. The heavy-lidded, half-closed, dreamy eyes denote introspection in which perhaps visions of the exciting past may not all be as completely effaced or even repented as they should be. However sad her eyes, there is something of the Persian *hourī* in her appearance especially marked by the rather insistent love-locks, the complementary bloom on her cheeks (now, alas, sadly discoloured), and the approved voluptuous folds of her plump neck. Her hair is decked with strings of pearls and a central jewel (broken away). Large rings seem to depend from her ears or it may be simply that the lobes are pierced with gaping holes. The halo is turquoise green surrounded with red and buff.

The badly damaged condition of the painting makes some description of detail necessary. Hāritī, dressed in a costume of Persian character, sits cross-legged, her right forearm bent to support one of the boys who sits astride her wrist. Her left arm is akimbo, the closed hand with first finger pointing downwards, resting near