

PLATE XIV
PAINTING FROM BEZEKLIK

Bez. iii. C-F

FROM the north-west wall of corridor. This fragmentary painting is part of one of a series, all designed after the same model, repeated many times, with slight variations, in the Bezeklik shrines. The central figure—the Buddha—ever expounding, is always attended by monks, *devatās* or Bodhisattvas, and others; but although the same formula is followed, each picture is doubtless intended to illustrate an incident recorded in the Birth Stories, although not always identifiable because of the absence of those figures which might provide the clue.

In the present example, there stands the Buddha, irradiated by gorgeous vesica and nimbus, expounding as usual, the right hand raised in *vitarka mudrā*, thumb against finger indicating the progress of the discourse. With slight downward inclination of the head, he seems to be addressing a donor, probably in obeisance at his feet. But the donor is missing. It will be seen that resting lightly on the upraised left hand of the Buddha is a length of some striped fabric. We are told that the Buddha received many gifts of garments from his worshippers, and this, doubtless, represents such a gift presented by the missing donor, who is being rewarded by the delivery of one of the Buddha's famous homilies. The fabric presented is of red-brown (saffron?) colour, striped with yellow.

The Buddha wears a red-brown robe over a grey under-robe, showing at his left breast. A jewelled garland hangs round the shoulders and crosses the front of the body. The links are alternately gold rosettes and lozenges, with a coloured bead at every joint, and a bead on each outer edge of every rosette. Rosettes and lozenges are chased and have coloured centre-jewels.

The field of nimbus and vesica is filled with zigzag bands of colour—red, grey, green, pink—in various tones with yellow dividing bands, surrounded by a yellow border with a scroll pattern in red. An outer zone of coral-like cloud-scrolls has the same colours as the zigzag field, but shaded from dark along the centre of each scroll to nearly white at the edges.

In the foreground, on the left, stands a *devatā* or Bodhisattva, in *añjali* pose, turned towards the centre. The face, damaged, is pale; the hair, grey, with top-knot and heavy tresses falling behind the shoulders, and studded with gold, voluted ornaments. The *mukuṭa* or tiara, tied with a white taenia, has a group of three gold