

PLATE XVII
PAINTINGS FROM BEZEKLIK

Bez. iii. G-K

FROM the western outer wall of cella. The Buddha, with vesica and nimbus, stands with head inclined to the left, his right hand uplifted in *vitarka-mudrā*, and the left hanging down, lightly grasping a fold of his robe. The subject is that so often repeated in the Bezeklik shrines—the Buddha teaching, attended by *devatās* or Bodhisattvas and monks.

This picture, besides having lost large portions on both sides of the central figure (probably removed by German archaeologists) has suffered from exposure to weather at its upper part.

The features of the Buddha, excepting the chin and portions of the mouth and left eye, are destroyed. Small, even, white teeth, outlined with grey, can be seen at the surviving corner of the mouth, and the end of a fantastically scrolled moustache. Other details resemble many of those of Bez. iii. S-U, plate xviii. The hair is dull blue, outlined on the forehead with a red, scalloped edge. An under-garment, visible at the waist, is yellow with a red scroll border. Two long ends of the jewelled garland hang right and left, each terminating in a tassel (that to the right is missing). Each foot, sandal-shod, rests on a lotus with green seed-table, surrounded by a whorl of pointed petals, shaded pink.

As in all of this type of Bezeklik composition, the vesica and nimbus are highly decorative. Here, on a green background, are Chinese coral-like flames in red, surrounded by white and grey bands, then a band of red, bearing grey rosettes. An outer border of prismatic zigzags is divided into wing-shape masses (recalling the corresponding border in Bez. iii. W-Y, plate xvi) against a dark brown background. At the base of each wing-shape palmette, and resting on the inner, yellow edge of the band, is a large white disk; and between the palmettes, on the brown background, are smaller disks or pearls.

The lotuses supporting the Buddha's feet rest on a raft with a golden deck, the red frame fitted with golden ferrules and bands at the projecting ends. The raft, which seems to bend under the supported load, floats on the swirling green water of a stream running between green banks, of which only that on the left remains. This is conventionally treated, with black grass tufts and contour lines curving