

PLATE XXII
PAINTINGS FROM BEZEKLIK

Bez. v. J, K

FROM the left jamb of the entrance to the cella of the shrine. This fragment shows the lower part of a very ornate Buddha or Bodhisattva standing on a lotus, to whom a scantily clad man kneels in supplicating pose. The 'Buddha' is, as usual in the Bezeklik paintings, dressed in three robes; but unlike most of the examples, two of the robes are trimmed with borders of contrasting colours, and the treatment of the pleats in the upper robe is affected and over-elaborated. An unusual feature is the stiff, white pleat of the waist girdle (*izārband*) hanging from below the edge of the upper robe. Garlands of elaborate design are looped about the figure, the links in the form of a lotus, alternately yellow and green. Gold rosettes and pendent strings of beads occur at certain points, at the two large loops in front and at free ends swinging to the left of the figure, carrying large, composite tassels. From the right hand of the figure hangs a rosary of green beads. One of the monks on plate XVIII wears a rosary of black beads round his neck, carrying a pendent cross. In the present case in place of the cross is a *vajra*.

Although in this figure there is a general resemblance to the Buddha of these Bezeklik shrines, the exceptional features described give rise to some doubt as to the identity of the present example; and the doubt is strengthened by the position it occupied on the jamb of the entrance—an unlikely place for the Buddha. Further, there seems to be no representation of the Buddha carrying or wearing a rosary. But the rosary is one of the symbols associated with the Bodhisattva Avaloketeśvara, as is also the *vajra*. The kneeling man has not the appearance of a donor; he seems to be supplicating; and as the chief concern of Avaloketeśvara is to comfort the afflicted and to obtain clemency for the transgressor, there is a probability that he is the deity represented here.

The supplicating figure, with arms raised imploringly towards the Bodhisattva, although scantily clad, is rich in jewels. A kind of red *jānghiyā*, supported by a knotted girdle, is drawn between the legs of the green *caleçons* which clothe the thighs. A gold rosette at the midriff is surrounded by six large beads, which form the end links of radiating bead chains holding the rosette in position, one of the chains being carried round the hips. Armlets and bangles adorn the arms. Round the calf of the leg is the queer abbreviated fur gaiter, such as those worn by the musicians in plate XXVII; and