

PLATE XXV
PAINTINGS FROM BEZEKLIK

Bez. x. P, Q

THIS is from the inner end of the east wall of the cella. Although badly damaged and with considerable portions missing, there remain some interesting details. The subject seems to be the triumphal progress of an important person riding a high-stepping horse and attended by a mixed retinue. Unfortunately the rider himself is missing and identification therefore impossible, but from the nature of his entourage it may be assumed that he is a Lokapāla, and perhaps Vaiśravaṇa. Running between the legs of the horse is a long-tailed, sleek hound, his head thrown back and jaws wide open, exposing a curled tongue. A girelot bell swings from his collar. Standing at the wayside is a curious round-shouldered man, wearing extravagantly wide-legged trousers, gazing up at the approaching rider. It is one of the very few examples of a face in profile. His left hand rests on the head of a bamboo staff and at his side is slung a tiger-skin bow case. Behind, to the right, is an earth goddess dressed in the typical long, rich red robe with extravagant pendent sleeves and complicated coiffure, the hair cut in sharp angles over the ears. On a raised platform is another similarly dressed figure with the right arm upraised. Her coiffure is different and seems to be studded with pearls. An unusual feature with both goddesses is the sharp contraction of the eyebrows, giving a stern and rather masculine appearance. In the foreground, on the right, is a kneeling demon with streaming hair, an agonized expression, and tightly clenched fists. Traces of red and green remain on his cloak and *dhōṭī*, which through abrasion are now merged into one mass. Of the two rather brainless-looking advance guards, one carries a sword against his shoulder. These and the other figures are easily distinguishable. The plump demons with flaming hair, and with tushes at the corners of the mouth, seem to be officiating as policemen and enjoying it. The stars with which they are spotted were probably originally white or gold.

Discoloration, particularly in several of the faces, is perhaps mainly caused by the use of pigment sensitive to atmospheric action. The double contour lines, especially in the faces of the demons, are attributable to this, one of the lines having been a high light, brilliant when applied but now changed to black. Wherever the flesh has not discoloured it is probable that the older, less brilliant, but more stable