

PLATE XXXI

PAINTINGS FROM BEZEKLIK

Bez. xiii. B

FROM the south wall of cella. A celestial figure—*apsara*—descends on very decorative clouds, her arms upraised and flowing draperies streaming backwards as she floats swiftly down. No wings control her flight. Aerial figures of human form are rarely, if ever, furnished with wings in Indian and Chinese medieval art, unless under influence from the West. The only examples in the paintings of this collection are the 'angel' heads of Mīrān (plates I and III), and these conform with the Gandhāra practice and so may be considered as influenced by Western convention. It is true that Garuḍa is given wings; but he is a bird, and if often given a human body, in that incarnation presents but an inversion of the principle.

Oxidization has disfigured the face of the *apsara*, and other parts of the picture have suffered from abrasion and flaking. The long under-robe is pale pink, the upper robe dull red trimmed with blue; the long stoles and sashes pale pink and blue. The folds or pleats of the sleeves on the forearms are similar to those of the *ḍākinīs* on plates XX and XXI. Below the *apsara* the rolling clouds are designed with true Chinese fancy, in which the vapoury masses are gathered into floral forms, in colour reflecting that of the draperies; and adapted as a repeating band of ornament, now very fragmentary, between the two discoloured bands above. These two bands seem to have been varnished to make the surface sufficiently hard to bear the pressure of some kind of broad-tipped *qalam* with which the inscription in very formal Brāhmī characters has been written. The background to the *apsara* is dull pinkish-red.

Bez. xiv. A-D

This painting is from the north wall of the cella and, if the scale of the plan is correct, it extended the entire length of the wall.

For convenience of description the picture may be considered as divided into four vertical sections. Of these, that on the left seems to be related to some scheme farther in that direction, perhaps on the 'return' wall at the west end of the cella. It portrays two *Nāgarājās* wading in the waters of a lotus lake contained between