

The Glorification of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in Kāraṇḍavyūha

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Abstract : *Ārya Kāraṇḍavyūha* means detail description of the making of a basket. Its Tibetan significance is very clear by rendering *Za ma tog bkod pa*. The text was translated into Tibetan by the 8th century A.D. when the eminent *Lo cha ba*, Tibetan translator *Ye shes sde* rendered it into Tibetan. Prior to that the book was translated into Chinese in different names since 3rd century A.D. to the 4th century A.D. The *Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra* is a very important *Mahāyāna Vaypullya Sūtra* out of nine. *Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra*, belongs to the *Vyūha* categories of Buddhist *Mahāyāna Sūtras*. The text is one of the most important *Vyūha-sūtra* from the climax of the large text of the *Avataṃśataka Sūtras*. By the 3rd century B.C. *Mahāyāna Sūtras*, developed in different dimension. The *Avalokiteśvara - guṇa - kāraṇḍavyūha - sūtra* or known briefly as the *kāraṇḍavyūha - sūtra* is devoted to the glorification of *Avalokiteśvara* in its entirety. The *sūtra* reports that *Avalokiteśvara* is also said to have create the world , and all the Hindu gods with it. He places the Hindu gods in their places ; they rule by his permission. One of the most important *Bodhisatta* in *Mahāyāna* is *Avalokiteśvara* . He is regarded among *Mahāyānists* as 'the *Bodhisattva* of great compassion ' who always available to succor and help out all suffering sentient beings . More importantly , not only *Mahāyānists* worship this important *Bodhisattva*, even non - *Mahāyānists* and non - *Buddhists* also widely respect him. *The objective of this research is to see how the glorification of Avalokiteśvara is explained in the Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra.*

Key Words: *Kāraṇḍavyūha, Avalokiteśvara, Mahāyāna, Sukhavātī, Ādibuddha, Sūnyatā, Amitābha.*

Introduction

Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra, belongs to the *Vyūha* categories of Buddhist *Mahāyāna Sūtras*. The text is one of the most important *Vyūha-sūtra* from the climax of the large text of the *Avataṃśataka Sūtras*. By the 3rd century B.C. *Mahāyāna Sūtras*, developed in different dimension. The *Kāraṇḍavyūha* is devoted mainly to the glorification of the *Buddhas*, the *Buddha-kṣetras* and *Bodhisattvas*. *Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra* is a significant *Sūtra* because it aims at uniting these two facets of these spiritual practices of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. The *Kāraṇḍavyūha* is an early *Mantrayāna sūtra* that is the source of the mantra *oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ*. The *sūtra* is thus of particular importance, as this mantra now holds a central role in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, especially throughout the lay population.

This sūtra also records Avalokiteśvara's transformation into the principal figure of the Buddhist pantheon, greater than all other buddhas, let alone bodhisattvas. In this sūtra, Avalokiteśvara is a resident of Sukhavatī and acts as a messenger and gift bearer for Amitābha, even though he is also described as superior to all buddhas and therefore paradoxically has both a subservient and dominant status.

Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra has two versions of this work, an older one in prose and a younger one is Verses. The writing style of the text is fully in Purāṇa - type ; the language and the style of the text is just like of the Purāṇa later days. In both there is the glorification of the miracles of Avalokiteśvara, who looks down i. e. who looks with endless compassion on all beings. In both the versions of the Kāraṇḍavyūha, the basic idea is the same.

In the cult of Avalokiteśvara, during the course of expunction of Mahāyāna as a popular Buddhism, Avalokiteśvara became the compassion in manifestation. Gradually Avalokiteśvara, who is believed to be a human being dedicated for the altruistic cause, was defined later on. A cult in favour of Avalokiteśvara developed and the metrical version of Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra might be younger in śloka. The prose version elaborates how Avalokiteśvara could enter into six realms of wheel of life. It stands on a theistic approach as a manifestation of Ādibuddha. In the Buddhist thought idea of the Ādibuddha appears to the later innovation after the development of Nairātmyavāda and emanation of Sūnyatā. Ādhibuddha is regarded as Svayambhū or 'self - originated'. Among them (Nāthgayi) is regarded as Ādinātha. In the Buddhist pantheon he is also occupied a prominent position. He, therefore, created universe through meditation as M. Winternitz referred. In this regard it may be mentioned that the theistic Buddhism with Ādibuddha developed after the inclusion of the Tantra among the Buddhists. Āvalokiteśvara appeared in the threshold in popular Buddhism and theistic Buddhism.

In due course Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra became a popular text as an ancillary to Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra. There are parties in the prose presentation of the both Sūtras. In this regard M. Winternitz observes : "We have no evidence to prove that the thematically Buddhism with Ādibuddha, as god and creator existed in India before the 10th century A. D. and the fact remains that the Tibetan translation, made probably in 616 A. D. in the Kanjur, rests upon the prose - version that does not know the section on Ādibuddha and that the poetical version was then not yet unknown. In the 4th century there were Buddhists who believed in Ādibuddha as creator. On the other hand the cult of Avalokiteśvara is already known to the Chinese pilgrim Fa Hien (about 400 A. D.). He himself prayed to this Bodhisattva for deliverance, when he was caught in a storm in course of his voyage from Ceylon to China. The oldest pictures of Avalokiteśvara go back to the 5th century completed in 270 A. D." M. Winternitz 1929 : 217.^[1] Buddhism in Tibet gave a more emotional epoch in which an increasing number of Buddha and Bodhisattva figures developed, offering a more tangible object to the devout devotees , thereby relegating the importance of the historic Buddha.

In the Buddhist Sanskrit texts we have many names of eminent bodhisattvas viz., Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, Samantabhadra, Gagaṇa-gaṇja, Vajrapāṇi, Vajragarbha, Sarvanivaraṇa Viṣkambhī, Kṣitigarbha, Vyūharāja, Indrajālī, Ratnagarbha, Mahāsthāma-prāpta and the like, but only a few are prominent. Mahāsthāma-prāpta is one of the two active ministers in the Buddha Amitābha's paradise called Sukhāvātī. Vajragarbha is the prominent bodhisattva in the Daśabhūtnika Sūtra while in the Saddharma

Puṇḍarīka Sūtra Sāmantabhadra plays the role of the protector of preachers. Further Vajrapāṇi is described as the chief of Buddha's servants. All are but described as ordinary bodhisattvas excepting Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara who occupy the prominent place in the hierarchy of bodhisattvas.

Before discussing in detail how and when was the concept of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva originated, it is important for us to have some knowledge about this Bodhisattva. The name Avalokiteśvara is composed of two parts : Avalokiteśvara and Īśvara (also Avalokiteśvara and śvara). The first half of the words come from the sanskrit √lok (to see or to look) , with the prefix ava (down, of, way) - which could mean here 'to look down (from above) in the sense of surveying the world. The second half of the word, Īśvara means 'the lord ' . Then, the two terms Avalokita and Īśvara together can be rendered as 'The Lord who (survey the world) ' . However, schools of Buddhism have translated the name in many different ways..^[2] Thus, we have 'The Lord of what we see ' . 'The revealed Lord ' , 'The Lord whom we see ' , or 'The Lord with compassionate glances ' .

In addition to this matter, the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra (ch. 24) describes him as 'The Lord whose face looks in every direction ' (samantamukha).^[3] While, the Karaṇḍavyūha - Sūtra, the Sūtra which is devoted to the glorification of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva in its entirety, prescribes him as the Bodhisattva who is regarded with compassion all beings ' suffering from the evils of existence.^[4] Collectively we might Conclude that Avalokiteśvara is the embodiment of compassion toward all sentient beings.

According to Mahāvastu Avalokiteśvara denotes wisdom, i.e., the essence of Buddha's Enlightenment.^[5] Saṅghavarman (third century), Dharmarakṣa and other early translators translated the name Avalokiteśvara which has been found in the fragments of the manuscripts of the Saddharma Puṇḍarīka brought by Count Otani's expedition from East Turkestan, into Chinese as Kuan-shih-yin meaning Kuan (looks on), shih (the 'region' of sufferers), yin (whose voices of many tones i.e., the sufferings of the beings and their asking salvation) touch the heart of the pitiful Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. The Chinese equivalent of the form Avalokiteśvara (Kuan-tzu-tsai) appeared also in Yuan Chwang's writings in the seventh century.

In the Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra Avalokita is far superior to the other great Bodhisattvas, with the single exception of Mañjuśrī, who is probably his equal. But here Avalokiteśvara is the "Saviour". It is better to think of him than to do honour to

thousands of Buddhas. He assumes the form of Buddha, Bodhisattva, Vajrapāṇi or any other of the great Ones, as the case may be, the more easily to fulfil his task of mercy.

In the Dharmasaṅgīti Sūtra, Avalokita plays a most important part. Here he extols charity, the great compassion, the only function of the Bodhisattvas to which one must give oneself up entirely without the fear of committing sin. If the exercise of charity involves wrong-doing, it is better to suffer the pains of hell than to deprive a creature of the hope he has placed in you. Here Avalokiteśvara is unquestionably the first in rank of the Bodhisattvas.

In both the Sukhāvātī and Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtras, all bodhisattvas are not of equal status, there are different grades of bodhisattvas. In the heaven of Amitābha, the two bodhisattvas, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāma-prāpta are almost as great and luminous as the Buddhas. But Avalokita is more majestic, this is due to his vow to bring all beings, without exception, into the Happy Land. While his glorious body illumines many worlds, he traverses them all in different forms, sometimes real, sometimes magical. Like Amitābha he has parts of himself incarnated here and there. It is he rather than Amitābha who is the lord of Sukhāvātī as he never forgets for a moment his role as a provider of the Sukhāvātī. He is also called Sukhāvātīsvara.

In the Kāraṇḍa-Vyūha Sūtra, Avalokiteśvara is represented as being superior to the Buddhas and to Sāmanta-bhadra; no Buddha possesses clairvoyance equal to his, all the Buddhas taken together cannot estimate his worth. No other being besides him has such a marvellous body, which the Buddhas have difficulty in seeing and each pore of which contains thousands of Buddhas, saints of all kinds and entire worlds. And it is from the body of Avalokiteśvara, that the inferior gods issue, the Sun and the Moon come out of his eyes, Maheśvara comes from his forehead, Brahmā from his shoulder etc.

In addition to being a demiurge, Avalokiteśvara is also a saviour; from his fingers flow rivers which cool the hells and feed the pretas (ghosts); he terrifies all demons.^[6]

There is no astonishment at this extraordinary mastery over men and beings, Avalokiteśvara is the great "login; He possesses the hexa-syllabic

knowledge "Om Maṇipadme Hūṃ".^[7] „ It belongs to Avalokita alone and he reveals it to whosoever he pleases. It is Avalokiteśvara's special gift to the world as it leads to liberation.

In the Mani Kābum.^[8] , it is related that ' "once upon a time, after giving himself up to earnest meditation, Amitābha caused a white ray of light to issue from his right eye, which brought Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva into existence. It goes on to say that Amitābha blessed him, whereupon the Bodhisattva brought forth the prayer s "Om Maṇipadme Hūṃ". Avalokiteśvara, the Measured Light of the Sun and Moon, is thus the reflex of spiritual son of Amitābha, Buddha of infinite Light.

All the attributes of Brahmā and Īśvara are bestowed on Avalokiteśvara. He has a hundred thousand arms and several millions of eyes. (The Sun and Moon have sprung from his eyes , Brahmā and other gods from his shoulders, Nārāyaṇa from his heart, and Sarasvatī from his teeth). He has innumerable pores (romavivara), which are intangible like space. In each pore there are many gods, Buddhas, mountains of gold and silver etc. Pious worshippers can be reborn in these pores and attain felicity.^[9]

Avalokiteśvara is much greater than the Buddha in merit, intelligence and sphere of influence. His merit is incalculable like drop of rain falling continually for a year.^[10] He is the father and mother of all. The devotee, who recites his name, is freed from pain; the man or woman, who worships him with one flower, is reborn as deva.

More interestingly, the Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra reports that Avalokiteśvara is also said to have create the world, and all the Hindu gods with it. He places the Hindu gods in their places they rule by his permission. ".^[11] However, in the Sūtra he doesn't mention that he is a god but rather declare that 'I'm no god, but a man, and have become a Bodhisattva, having compassion on the abandoned and wretched, and a teacher of the way of enlightenment. ".^[12] Undoubtedly, the foregoing statements make Avalokiteśvara become a cosmic being which very similar to the Brahmanical creator god Brahmā. In fact, his images usually bear Brahmā's attributes, i. e., the lotus, the rosary and often the vase and the book also. Furthermore, it is stated in the same sūtra that Avalokiteśvara is greater even than Buddhas in merit, intelligence and in his sphere of influence. One cannot measure his merit, just as one cannot count the drops of rain falling continuously for a year. He is like a father and mother to all. The devotee who recites his name is freed from all pain and any body either a man or a woman, who worships him even with a single flower, is reborn as a god.^[13]

Avalokiteśvara, as a personification of great Compassion, abrogates and nullifies the law of karma. The beings in the purgatories of Avīci and Preta who are tormenting, are purged of all defilements as Avalokiteśvara visits the realms. He makes it a cool and pleasant place. Plenty of food and drink are provided for them. Many beautiful pools gushad forth with wonderful lotuses. The surroundings look amazingly beautiful. They regain their normal figures." The beings who are liberated from these regions, are reborn in the paradise of Sukhāvātī.

In the country of Magadh, the beings were leading a torturous life. Hunger and thirst made them cannibals. He helps by raining down water, rice, cereals, clothes and other things.

In Beneras^[14], the innumerable insects were seething with disgust and filth. The Great Liberator appears and there is a great devotional upsurge. He assumes the form of a bee and preaches to worms and insects in their humble abode. He instills in them faith. They seem to hear the buzzing sound (ghun-ghunāyamānaṃ śabdā) "Salutation to Buddha", They are reborn as bodhisattvas in Sukhāvātī.

The text further mentions that in one of his wanderings Avalokiteśvara went to Ceylon, which was then inhabited by demonesses (rākṣasīs)^[15]. The proseletysing spirit of Avalokiteśvara becomes manifest here, Avalokiteśvara's unsurpassed beauty enkindled lustful thought in the rākṣasīs and they besought him to be their husband. He agreed on condition that they would do whatever he ordered. Then he taught them the Noble Eightfold Path and much besides converted them.

Again he appears in Ceylon as the winged horse Balāha^[16] in order to carry away, and save' from perishing the shipwrecked merchants enticed by the giant sorceresses. He rescues them and takes them back to India.

There is no firm evidence of when the worship of Avalokiteśvara began in India. It is believed that the concept originated in India. One of the earliest examples of the Avalokiteśvara in literature was found in the Suvarṇa Sūtra which unfortunately does not have a concrete date assigned to its composition (Getty, 1962: 57-58). A possible date is in the 1st century C.E. from the discourse on this Sūtra by Kāśyapa Mātaṅga^[17] in India. Kāśyapa Mātaṅga who discoursed on this sūtra before introducing Buddhism into China, in the first century A.D. In Northern India his worship became popular toward the third century, and reached its climax in the seventh century. Fa-hsien and Hsuan-Tsang speak of him with much reverence in the accounts of their travels in India.

As the most popular divinity in the Mahāyāna Buddhist pantheon, Avalokiteśvara is the object of much veneration in Nepal and Tibet. In fact his worship extends to Japan. His worship was introduced into Tibet in the middle of the seventh century, when he was proclaimed by the Buddhist priests incarnate in the king sRong-btsan-sgam-po. He soon became looked upon as the representative of Buddha, and guardian of the Buddhist faith until Maitreya should appear.^[18]

The earlier form of Avalokiteśvara bears more similarity to a human but later the form of the Avalokiteśvara looks more like the Hindu deities. The features of increased sets of arms, from two to four to a thousand, from one head, to eleven and to a thousand are all examples of the Hindu influence. As discussed earlier the Avalokiteśvara's form has changed over time and geography. In China and Japan his image evolved in female form as well as male form. In Tibet the Dalai Lama is believed to be his reincarnation and the Khmer King

refers to himself as having a similar role. The iconography is widespread and diverse across India and is evidence of its long presence and evolution. Also other regions were clearly influenced from India. For instance, Chinese Hsuan-Tang mentions, the image of Avalokiteśvara found in Nalanda during the 7th century C.E. (Bajracharya, 2003: 71-72).

In Sri Lanka, the characteristics of Avalokiteśvara uniquely developed under the strong Theravādin philosophy as a protective deity or an Nātha Dēviyō. From the iconography and epigraphical evidence, the existence of Avalokiteśvara can be dated between the 7th – 10th centuries C.E. (Holt, 1991: 76-91).

There are various names and forms of Avalokiteśvara found in Nepal, for instance, the Karuṇāmaya, Lokeśvara, Matsyendranath, Mahasattva, and many others. Nepal has the largest number of recorded forms of Avalokiteśvara. Some of the more significant forms include Padmapani Lokeśvara, Amoghpaśa Lokeśvara, Sadaksari Lokeśvara, Hariharivahana Lokeśvara, Sristikanta Lokeśvara, Rakta Aryavalokeśvara, Anandi Lokeśvara, Sukhavati Lokeśvara and Sahasrabhuja Lokeśvara, which are the most prominent iconographic forms of the bodhisattva.

In China, the name of Avalokiteśvara first appears as Kuan-shih yin around 147-86 C.E. Later this name was shortened to Kuan-yin because it conflicted with the official name of the Emperor Shin-ming at around 6th century onward (Neville, 1999: 13). Avalokiteśvara first arrived from China in a male form but later transformed into a female form between the 8th-11th centuries C.E. (Blofeld, 1988: 40). The idea of Kuan-yin in female form is similar to the idea of Tara, a beautiful female divinity able to manifest herself in twenty different forms for the purpose of succoring sentient beings. From China Kuan-Yin spread to Japan and much of Southeast Asia and is currently experiencing a resurgence in mainland China. However, Chinese worshipers of Kuan-yin have no idea of her gender transformation from male to female and her origins as a Buddhist Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva.

The cult of Avalokiteśvara in Tibet it seems began in C.E. 649 based on the Mani bka – bum which was written by the King Srong-btsan sgarn-po. There is also the belief that this text was translated in the middle of the 12th century and summarized by the fifth Dalai Lama, Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (1617-1682). In this regard, Fifth Dalai Lama says that these texts were written by the Tibetan king, Srong-btsan sgarn-po, and are the words of Avalokiteśvara and the origin of the Tibetan religion. Most historians agree that the Avalokiteśvara cult began with the King Srong-btsan sgarn-po and a small group of his followers. Although there is not sufficient evidence to prove that there was widespread worship of Avalokiteśvara prior to the 11th century it is likely that the real spread of the Avalokiteśvara doctrine and cult began later in the 11th century as shown in other sources (bstan-pa phyi-dar).^[19] The first great Tibetan figure actively to promote the Avalokiteśvara was Dipamkara–Srinana (982-1054) at nearby the end of his life at the beginning of 1042. The cult of the Avalokiteśvara accelerated in Tibet later in the 12th century. Today, Tibetan Buddhists continue to believe that the Dalai Lama is the reincarnation of Avalokiteśvara and is a living bodhisattva (Kapstien, 1992: 79-85).

The most common form of Avalokiteśvara in Tibet is white with four-arms. From the twelfth-century compendium of Buddhist iconography, the Sādhanamāla calls the white four-armed Avalokiteśvara Ṣaḍakṣari Lokeśvara, 'Lord of the six syllables'. Ṣaḍakṣari Lokeśvara is the form associated by Sādhana with the

Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra and as his name suggests, the six-syllable mantra, “Om Maṇipadme Hūṃ” Ṣaḍakṣari (Kohn, 2001: 11). However, in the Kāraṇḍ, the Avalokiteśvara is displayed with a thousand-arms. It is quite surprising that the form of four-armed Avalokiteśvara, which is associated with the Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra, is contrasted in the text itself.

In Japan, the Avalokiteśvara is written in a number of different ways with the different spelling including Avalokiteśvara or Avalokitaśvara. The Japanese translations are derived from the Kannon, Kwannon or Kwanzeon respectively. Kwannon was the first representation of a Tantric form in Japan. The earliest mention of the eleven-headed Kwannon is circa C.E. 570 but the oldest image of Kwannon is located at Nachi and is dated around the late 7th or the early 8th century. The Chinese influence shows Avalokiteśvara in Japan assuming a female form (Neville, 1999: 13).

In Southeast Asia, the Avalokiteśvara is only well-known in Cambodia and the former Champa Kingdom (today's southern Vietnam) of Indo-China. In Cambodia the Khmer King was believed to be a reincarnation of the Avalokiteśvara. This is clearly represented in the Bayon sculptures of Angkor Thom (Locke, 1980: 411). As opposed to the eleven-headed and thousand-armed depictions of the Avalokiteśvara in other countries, the Cambodian Avalokiteśvara was normally depicted with up to sixteen heads and arms in which it held both tantric and non-tantric symbols in its hands. The relief carvings of the Avalokiteśvara typically show him as bare breasted and in a variety of different positions and with symbols in its hands (Getty, 1962: 72-75). Most importantly the depiction of the Avalokiteśvara's head and adornments are consistent with that of the Buddha images throughout Southeast Asia and often there is a third eye which is seldom found in Tibet or Nepal and never in China or Japan. In other areas of Southeast Asia the Kwan-yin or Chinese version of the Avalokiteśvara has become very popular as the goddess of mercy or goddess of the sea. This influence is clearly from a continuous flow of mainland Chinese immigrants to these geographic regions over the last two centuries.

Avalokiteśvara found in the Kāraṇḍ The iconography of the Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva portrayed in the Kāraṇḍ is eleven-headed, with one hundred thousand arms and one hundred thousand koṭis of eyes. These characteristics contribute to the ability of the Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva to see and help all sentient beings in all realms. The portrayal of Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva's form shows the Hindu influence as he has the same number of arms and eyes. There also is a term that is used in both Hinduism as well as Buddhism to explain gods such as 'yogin' and 'viśvarupī' both terms are also used to refer to the Avalokiteśvara in the Kāraṇḍ.^[20]

The Avalokiteśvara and his many arms have resulted in his being called many different names, such as he who holds the beautiful lotus and so on. All these names relate to the portrayal of the actions of his hands, such as the Padmapāṇi. According to early research (Getty, 1962: 59), the earlier form of the Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva has one head and two arms. The period the Kāraṇḍ was composed was around the end of the 4th century to the early part of the 5th century. The first images of him as an eleven-headed, thousand armed and thousand eyed being were found approximately in the 6th century. It is possible that the Kāraṇḍ has influenced the iconographic representation of the Avalokiteśvara. Except in Tibet, the Ṣaḍakṣari Lokeśvara, the designated moniker for the Avalokiteśvara, has a body portrayed as having four-arms. This is in marked contrast to the iconography influenced by the famous mantra “Om Maṇipadme Hūṃ” in Tibet. This seems to have been influenced by the Kāraṇḍ in the Ṣaḍakṣari Lokeśvara and is the form associated by Sādhana with the Kāraṇḍ.

The Kāraṇḍ praises the Avalokiteśvara for having different qualities and promotes him as a savior of all sentient beings in all different realms including humans, gods and demons from hell and even lower caste beings. The Kāraṇḍ illustrates the Avalokiteśvara's ability to manifest himself in a multitude of different forms in order to liberate all sentient beings and generate many different kinds of samādhi. These bodhisattva abilities can be gained only once he reaches the tenth bhūmi. We can say that the Kāraṇḍ emphasizes the bodhisttava bhūmi system.

The Avalokiteśvara has the power to manifest himself and to teach sentient beings in whatever form is most suitable to liberate them. This is described below in a passage from the Kāraṇḍ.^[21] He (the Avalokiteśvara) teaches dharma with whatever form that can be taught to those beings. He teaches dharma with the form of Tathāgata for those whom the form of conversion of being is Tathāgata. He teaches dharma with the form of pratyekabuddha for those whom the form of conversion of being is pratyekabuddha...and so forth.

The manifestation into any form best suited to assist in transforming sentient beings is also found in other Mahāyāna texts. The Lotus Sūtra is one example, in chapter twenty five, the Avalokiteśvara has the ability of manifestation in order to rescue beings.

The Buddha declared to the bodhisattva Inexhaustible Mind, “good man, if there are beings in the land who can be conveyed to deliverance by the body of a Buddha, then to them the bodhisattva He who observe the sounds of the world preaches Dharma by displaying the body of a Buddha. To those who can be conveyed to deliverance by the body of a pratyekabuddha, he preaches Dharma by displaying the body of a pratyekabuddha.....and so forth. (Quoted in Hurvitz, 1976: 314)

However, if the reader employs a literal translation and interpretation method to understand the meaning of the text then it is likely that the true meaning is not understood and it may appear that the status of the Avalokiteśvara is higher than that of the Buddha. For example, from the Buddha's statement, “The brilliancy of Avalokiteśvara is not found among the Buddhas”. The following is the context which I found in the Kāraṇḍ.^[22]

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin bodhisattva said to the Blessed One “today is Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva mahāsattva is not coming?” The Blessed One replies that the bodhisattva helps many good men and hundreds of koṭis of beings, cause their minds to achieve maturity, every day having brought more beings to this maturity. Oh son of noble family there is no such brilliancy which belongs to the Avalokiteśvara and has never occurred even to those all tathāgatas.

The Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Sūtra and The Lotus Sūtra both expound the higher status of the Buddha to that of the Avalokiteśvara. The fact that the Kāraṇḍ mentions that Avalokiteśvara's brilliancy that are not found among the Buddhas, should not be taken to mean that the Buddha has less ability but more likely is only used to emphasize the bodhisattva's skilfulness (upāya) in one of the bodhisattva practices.

The Kāraṇḍ clearly describes the lower status of the Avalokiteśvara when compared to the Buddha. The way in which the Avalokiteśvara pays respect to the Buddha such as by prostrating his head at the feet of the Buddha concretely demonstrates his lower status. The textual evidence in the Kāraṇḍ shows the status of the

Avalokiteśvara as Amitābha's assistant who came to help sentient beings, liberate and lead them to the Sukhāvātī realm where they can listen to the Dharma from Amitābha. Through the practice of invoking the deity to be a protector and reciting mantra "Om Maṇipadme Hūṃ," it can be said that Kāraṇḍ contains aspects of Pure Land Buddhism.

Buddhist legend^[23] claims that Avalokiteśvara manifested himself 333 times on earth for the purpose of saving mankind, and that all the manifestations were human, with the exception of the miraculous Balāha, and masculine with the exception of the female forms of Kuan-yin^[24] in China and Kwan-non in Japan.^[25]

Iconography and the manuals on incantation demonstrate that the god is identified with all the deities, both mild and cruel. The Chinese pilgrims had given us their testimony before the archaeologists examined the iconographic monuments. ' They seem to belong to the third or fourth century. Avalokiteśvara is represented in the very old reliefs where a Lotus-bearer Padmaapāṇi (after- wards the equivalent of Avalokita) appears with four or seven Bodhisattvas surrounding a Buddha or below a Buddha.^[26]

Amitāyurdhyāna speaks of the statues in which the characteristics of god are represented. The giant statues of Avalokita and groups in which he is facing Maitreya, Tārā and Mañjuśrī and probably also Mahāsthāma, deserve mention. They give us a sculptured representation of the texts which describe in detail the attitude, colour and qualities of gods. The information of the Buddhist pilgrims on this point is confirmed and explained by Foucher in his work.^[27]

In the later Buddhist pantheon the most venerated image in all Tibet is the figure of Avalokiteśvara which is abundant in poses. Avalokiteśvara becomes the tutelary deity of Tibet and his adoration holds out the prospect of re-birth in the paradise presided over the Amitābha. In the sculptural composition individual con- ceptions began to appear. The Tibetans represented this deity in many forms and aspects and hence this perplexing multiplicity of his manifestations in Tibet.

Avalokiteśvara (Tibetan sphyan-ras-gzigs) usually bears the complementary title of Padmapāṇi and he appears here with his consort Tārā. He is represented here with his hands in namaskāra mudrā, his symbols are mall (rosary) and padraa (pink* lotus). His colour is white but in Nepal he is painted red.^[28] He is the spiritual son- of Amitābha, Buddha of InfiniteLight, who blessed him, whereupon the Bodhisattva brought forth the prayer (mantra) 'Om Maṇipadme hūṃ. The

figure of Avalokiteśvara was generally placed on a hill-top, which may account for his being called the Lord that looks down from on high' and which according to Beal, is probably a relic or revival of the old worship of the hill-gods. Tradition connects him with mountain called Poṭālā, mentioned in the Avataṃsaka Sūtra; and of which there are three in India. In the seventh century Hsuang Tsang refers to Avalokiteśvara as having manifested himself on mount Poṭālā in Southern India.^[29]

Although his first representations in India resembled Brahmā, with the hands in Brahmāñjalī mudrā (devotional attitude), his functions were those of Viśṇu - Preserver and Defender. But he has also much in common with Śiva, for the colour of both is white and Avalokita may carry the trident with a serpent coiled about it Śiva's symbol.

Avalokiteśvara is sometimes represented with five heads,^[30] in which case he resembles Śiva as Mahādeva with five heads. He has another form, eleven heads in all with the head of Amitābha on top. He is often represented in Yab-Yum attitude with his Śakti but there are examples where he holds the Yum on his knee in archaic manner as Śiva holds Pārvatī.

In his earliest form he is represented with one head and two arms and either sitting or standing. His hands may be in 'prayer' mudrā, or the right in 'Charity' and the left in 'argument' mudrā. His most popular non-Tantra form is Padmapāñī.

In the earliest representations of Avalokita, the hair is drawn up in a high uṣṇīśa, but in later images he wears the five-leaved crown, in the centre leaf of which is usually a small image of his spiritual father Amitābha. In the paintings, however, according to Foucher, the image is usually omitted, and if standing, the left hand is invariably in vara (charity) mudrā.^[31] Let us now turn to the Tantric texts^[32] in which we have also got different forms of Avalokiteśvara.

- The first Tantra form of Avalokiteśvara appeared in Northern India about the middle of the sixth century A.D., and differs from the non-Tantra form in that there are four arms instead of two* The god is dressed in princely garments and many ornaments. The hair is drawn up on the head, mitreshaped, and the uṣṇīśa is often surmounted by a flaming pearl. There is generally a small image of his spiritual father, Amitābha, in his head-dress, especially, when, later, the five-leaved Bodhisattva crown was added. The god is represented seated with the legs closely locked and with the two original hands either against his breast in namaskāra mūdra (prayer), resembling the attitude of Brahmā when repeating the Vedas or in Dharmacakra mudrā. The hands however may clasp a jewel, symbolical of the maṇi of his mantra - Oṃ maṇipadme^[33] hūṃ or hold a conch-shell but these

forms are very rare. The other' two hands hold the rosary and either the lotus or book.

There is another form with one head and four, arms, but standing. The upper arms are against the breast in namaskāra mudrā, the lower are in dhyāna mudrā and hold the pātra (begging-bowl).

Avalokiteśvara may have four heads and twenty-four arms. There is a head on either side of the central head, and above them is the head of a Buddha, may be his Manual - Buddha, Śākya - Muṇi, for he holds his Dhyāni - Buddha, Amitābha over his heads by his upper arms, in añjali Mudrā.

There are many variations of these different Tantra forms of Avalokiteśvara, and one of them called Amoghapāśa, hold* a special emblem, the pas'oi (lasso). He has one head and from six to eight arms, and besides his special symbol, the lasso, he holds the rosary, trident, ewer, etc. and may wear a tiger-skin. He is sometimes accompanied by the Green Tārā, Hayagrīva, and Bhṛikuṭi.

There is another form of Amoghapāśa with one head and twenty arms - which is seated. The normal arms are against his breast, in namaskāra mudrā, the arms under-neath lie on the lap, the right hand holding the lasso, the left the rosary. The two upper hands are close to the head and hold the cymbals, the next pair holds lotus buds, the next Vajra and ghaṇṭā, and all the rest hold various symbols belonging to Avalokiteśvara.

Avalokiteśvara is represented in a dogmatic form called Nāmhasaṅgita. In this form he has one head, twelve arms, and is seated with the legs firmly locked. He wears all the Bodhisattva ornaments. His Uṣṇīśa, behind the five-leaved crown, is surmounted by a half Vajra, above which the hands of the uppermost pair of arms make the 'Lotus-mudrā'. It can be designated as the 'Padma' mudrā. B. Bhattacharyya^[34] quotes a sadharia from Dharmakośa Sangraha that applies in every detail to this deity with the exception of the above mudrā, which according to the Sādhaka should be Añjali.^[35] The deity in the sādhanā is called Namasangrta.

In this manifestation Avalokiteśvara is known as Ārya Pāla (Tibetan hp'ags-pa sryan-ras-gzigs, Japanese Ju-ichi-men (eleven heads =* Kwan-non). *Avalokiteśvara, In this manifestation with eleven heads is Samantamukha or the All-sided One i.e., the god who looks in every direction to save all creatures.

There are several versions of the legend explaining his eleven heads but they all resolve themselves into the following : Avalokiteśvara, the All-Pitying One, descended into hell, converted the wicked, liberated them and conducted them to Sukhāvātī, the paradise of the spiritual father, Amitābha.

There runs a story in Mani Kābum which is briefly described here. The legend claims that his head split into ten pieces from grief and despair on discovering the extent of wickedness in the world and the utter helplessness of saving all mankind. Amitābha caused each piece to become a head, and placed the heads on

the body of his spiritual son, Avalokiteśvara, in three tiers of three, with the tenth head on top and his own image above them all* Thus the On-Looking Lord was endowed with thirty-two eyes instead of two, to see all suffering, and eleven brains instead of one, to concentrate on the best means of saving mankind.

Monier Williams claims that the three tiers of heads indicate that Avalokiteśvara looks down on the three worlds : world of desire, world of true form and world of no form. According to Sitel, the three grouped of heads represent the triad Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, and Vajrapāṇi. Statues were found in Magadha which combine these three gods and there are descriptions of this form in the Nepalese Sādhanā.^[36] Griffis claims that these three gods were originally divinity, and that the qualities attributed to this deity of Mercy, Wisdom and Force , were personified later in the forms of Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi.

Conclusion

The Kāraṇḍ portrays the Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva with eleven-heads, one hundred thousand arms and one hundred thousand koṭis of eyes. These characteristics support the ability of the Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva to see and help all sentient beings in all different realms. The iconography of the Avalokiteśvara supports the principal qualities of the Avalokiteśvara, especially his great compassion. Through his great compassion, he has been making a huge amount of merit in order for all sentient beings to reach liberation. He has the ability to manifest himself in a multitude of different forms to liberate sentient beings, which is only gained when the bodhisattvas achieve the tenth bhūmi. The recollection of his name will lead to the extinction of the life cycle. Even though the Avalokiteśvara has great power, he still has to follow the bodhisattva path to become a Buddha. This is achieved by practising the cultivation of bodhicitta and the first arising bodhicitta, through the meditation of śūnyatā (emptiness), and the practice of the six perfections of wisdom which is the mother of tathāgata. The Avalokiteśvara's conducts reflect the concept of the Buddha and it can be understood that the Buddha's nature is concerned with the perfection of wisdom and the perfection of wisdom is the origin of the tathāgata. To gain the perfection of wisdom, the bodhisattva has to engage in bodhicitta through the contemplation of emptiness (śūnyatā) and he will be liberated from saṃsāra. The Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva has reached the highest bhūmi by attaining the perfection of wisdom. He can therefore manifest himself, in any form, in order to help all sentient beings attain liberation.

Notes and References

1. The Buddhist text whether belonging to Theravādi in Pāli, Mahāsāṅgika in Prākṛt, Sarvāstivādi in Sanskrit. Sarvāstivādins used Sanskrit, the Mahāsaṅghikas Prākṛt, the Sammitiyas Apabhṛṃśa and the Sthaviravādins in (i. e. Theravādins) Paishāci. Commonly preserved that the Buddha used to give deliberations on various topics like Danakatha, Punnakatha, and Jātakakathā etc. The same tradition continued probably in India up to Christian era. Winternitz - 1929 : 217.

2. Della Santina , 2003 : pp. 203 - 4.; Ven. Payasīlo Thera , 1991 : pp. 2 3.

3. Watson, 1993 : p. 290.

4. Della Santina , 2003 : p. 210.

5. Mahāvastu, II, p. 294.

6. Bhattacharya, Buddhadev; (Ed), Kāraṇḍyavyūha-sūtra, p.51.

अथार्यावलोकितेश्वरो बोधिसत्त्वो महासत्त्वस्तं च सत्त्वनिकायं दृष्ट्वा महाकरुणाचित्तमुत्पाद्य दशभ्यो हस्ताङ्गुलीभ्यो दश वैतरणीर्निष्क्रामयति। दशभ्यः पादाङ्गुलीभ्यो दश वैतरणीर्निष्क्रामयति। अतिकरुणाभिभूतचेतसा अवलोकितेश्वरस्य बोधिसत्त्वस्य महासत्त्वस्य तेषां सत्त्वानामन्तिके सर्वरोमकूपेभ्योऽष्टाङ्गवारिपरिपूर्णा महानद्यो निष्क्रामन्ति। यदा च ते प्रेतसत्त्वास्तदुदकमास्वादयन्ति, तदा ते विपुलकण्ठा भवन्ति, परिपूर्णगात्राश्च भवन्ति। तेन चैते दिव्यरसरसाग्रोपेतेनाहारेणसंतर्पिताश्च भवन्ति।

7. Bhattacharya, Buddhadev; (Ed), Kāraṇḍyavyūha-sūtra, p. 96.

भगवानाह-कुलपुत्र सा षडक्षरी महाविद्या त्ववलोकितेश्वरस्य परमहृदयम्। यश्च परमहृदयं जानाति स मोक्षं जानाति।

8. A Tibetan historical work attributed to the Tibetan king Srong - btsan - sgam - po --- tr. Schlegelweit -- Buddhism in Tibet , p. 77. 84., Rockhill , p. 212.

9. Bhattacharya, Buddhadev; (Ed), Kāraṇḍyavyūha-sūtra, p. 53.

भगवानाह- चक्षुषोश्चन्द्रादित्यावुत्पन्नौ, ललाटान्महेश्वरः, स्कन्धेभ्यो ब्रह्मादयः, हृदयान्नारायणः, दंष्ट्राभ्यां सरस्वती, मुखतो वायवो जाताः, धरणी पादाभ्याम्, वरुणश्चोदरात्।

10. Bhattacharya, Buddhadev; (Ed), Kāraṇḍyavyūha-sūtra, p. 58.

अपि नाम कुलपुत्र द्वादशमासिकेन संवत्सरेण चतुर्महाद्वीपेषु रात्रिदिवमविच्छिन्नं देवो वर्षति, तच्छक्यमेकैकं बिन्दुं गणयितुम्। न तु कुलपुत्र अवलोकितेश्वरस्य शक्यं मया पुण्यसंभारं गणयितुम्।

11. Williams , 2005 : pp. 202 - 203.

12. Ibid.

13. Della Santina, 2003 : p. 212.14. Kāraṇḍa-Vyūha Sūtra, Chapter XV.

15. Ibid, Chapter XIV.

16. This story is told in the Jātaka No. 196, but here the winged charger is identified with the Buddha in a previous birth. In the Kāraṇḍa-Vyūha Sūtra, however, Avalokiteśvara takes his place as the horse, and amongst others , saves the caravan leader, who is Gautama Buddha in a previous birth.

17. Kāśyapa Mātāṅga is sometimes confounded with Kāśyapa Buddha. He returned with the emperor Mingti's mission to China in A.D. 67 and is believed to have been one of the disciples of Gautama Buddha in previous incarnation. M. Maspero — Le songe et l'Ambassade de l'empereur Ming, B.E.F.B.O. Yol. X, 1910; P. Bose — The Indian Teachers in China, p. 37.

18. The Sa-sKya Pa played a big role in the development of the reincarnation dogma adopted by the Yellow Church. After the death of each Grand Lama the dead man is supposed to be reincarnated usually after the passage of forty-nine days in the body of a new-born baby, which of course, first has to be found. The reincarnation declares that the special protective deity of Tibet, Avalokiteśvara, is constantly reincarnated in the chain of priest princes beginning with dGe-dun grub-pa, and they all bore the title rGyal (Victor) or rGyal-dhang, which later became known as in the Mongolian title Dalai Lama.

19. During the second half of the tenth century, the King of Ngari, Tsenpo Khorey (bTsan-po Kho-re), abdicated his throne in favor of his brother, Song-ngey)(Srong-nge), and became a monk. He is known to posterity as Lha Lama Yeshey-wo (Lha bla-ma Yes-shes 'od). Wanting to reverse the decline of Buddhism in Western Tibet, Yeshey-wo sent twenty-one young men to Kashmir in 971 to learn Sanskrit and study Buddhism. Of these, only Rinchen-zangpo (Rin-chen bzang-po, 958 – 1051) and Legpay-sherab (Legs-pa' i shes-rab) survived the journey, eventually developing into renowned translators. While studying in Kashmir and the famous monasteries of northern India, they sent back

to Tibet several learned Indian scholars. These scholars represented several Indian Buddhist schools, though primarily the tantra tradition of Mahayana. Yeshe-wo continued to invite Indian masters to Tibet. Among them was Dharmapala (Dharma-pala), who together with the Indian disciples who accompanied him, started the second Mulasarvastivada monk ordination line in Tibet. The ordinations they conferred mark the beginning of a period in Tibetan history known as the “Later Flourishing of the Teachings” (bstan-pa phyi-dar). [The prior period became known, by contrast, as the “Earlier Flourishing of the Teachings” (bstan-pa rnying-ma.), March 12, 2013. <http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/ebooks/unpublished_manuscripts/survey_tibetan_history/chapter_2.html>

20. Vaidya, p. 290, ll. 11-21.

tadā teṣāṃ romavivarāṇāmantato'hamapi kiṃ gamiṣyāmi ? āha – kulaputra, mayāpi tasya romavivaraṃ vī kṣamāṇena parimārgayamāṇena na dṛśyate | sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin kulaputra, ayamāyāvī asādhyah sūkṣma evamanudṛśyate | nirañjano rūpī mahāpī (?) śatasahasrabhujah koṭīśatasahasranetro viśvarūpī ekādaśāśī rṣah mahāyogī nirvāṇabhūmivyavasthitaḥ sucetano mahāprājñah bhavottāraḥ kulī no'nādarśī prājño nirdeśas- tathācchāyābhūtaḥsarvadharmeṣu, evameva kulaputra avalokiteśvaro bodhisattvo na śruto na kenacid dṛśyate | tasya svabhāvakā anyathā rtagatā* na paśyanti, prāgeva samantabhadrādayo'nye ca bodhisattvāḥ | acintyo'yaṃ kulaputra avalokiteśvaro bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ prātihāryāṇi samupadarśayati | anekāni ca bodhisattva koṭīniyuta śatasahasrāṇi paripācayati, sattvāṃśca tān bodhimārge pratiṣṭhāpayati | pratiṣṭhāpayitvā sukhāvātī lokadhātum anugacchati | amitābhasya tathāgatasya antike dharmamanuṣṅhoti || * Willaims (2005:312). The highest number in the older system of numbers (viz.a Krore or ten millions)

21. Vaidya, p. 268, l. 18-20. yena yena rupeṇa vaineayāḥ sattvāḥ, tena tena rupeṇa dharmāṃ deśayati | tathāgata vaineayānāṃ sattvānāṃ tathāgata rupeṇa dharmāṃ deśayati | pratyekabuddha rūpeṇa dharmāṃ deśayati |

22. Vaidya, p. 264, l. 19-22 atha sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhī bhagavantam etad avocat – bhagavan, adyāpi Aavalokiteśvara nāgacchaty avalokiteśvaro bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ? Bhagavān āha – anekāni kulaputra sattvakoṭīniyutaśatasahasrāṇi paripācayati | dine dine sa āgatya paripācayati | nāsti kulaputra īdṛśāṃ pratibhānaṃ tathāgatānāṃ api yā dṛśāṃ āryāvalokiteśvarasya mahāsattvasya ||

23. Saddharma - Puṇḍarīka - pp. 410-411, where he is manifested as Vajrapāṇi.
24. Serindia, Pl. Lxxi; Stein Collection No. 47 which was recovered from the caves of the Thousand Buddhas, Tun-huang, Chinese Turkestan, stands out as an accomplished and striking design of Avalokiteśvara as the Guide of the souls. The inscription reads : 'Bodhisattva who leads the way' . Mr. Wailey considers the phrase equally applicable to Avalokiteśvara; Serindia, Pl. Lix, Stein Collection, No. 32. It describes the Maṇḍalas of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara where the figure of this bodhisattva is really majestic; Leigh Ashton, & Basil Gray -Chinese Art, p. 238. The wooden statue of Kuan-Yin (Goddess of Mercy) which belonged to Yuan dynasty is now preserved in the Metropolitan Museum. The rhythmical flow of the drapery and the compassionate expression of the face are the chief output of the Buddhist sculpture of post-T'ang date.
25. The worship of Avalokiteśvara was introduced into Japan in the beginning of the seventh century.
26. Grunwedel - Buddhist art in India, pp. 196-201; A fine sculptural composition of Avalokiteśvara is seen at Āuraṅgābad, Kānherī, Ajantā and Ellorā cave-monasteries and the best specimen of it is found in the Āuraṅgābad cave, No. VII. It sets forth Avalokiteśvara as saviour from all deadly dangers and the dangers are graphically represented as arson, murder, captivity and slavery, forest-fire, shipwreck, disease and death.
27. Foucher - Iconographie Bouddhique, p. 110; Beal — Buddhist records, ii, 247; J.R.A.S., 1900, p. 42.
28. A. Foucher — Iconographie Bouddhique, p.99.
29. Watters - Travels of Hsuang - Tsang, pp. 215-224.
30. Moor — The Hindu Pantheon, Pl. XV.
31. Foucher - Iconographie Bouddhique, p. 98.
32. Sādhanamālā and Niṣpannayogābalī are the two texts. The oldest copy of Sādhanamālā is still preserved in the Cambridge University Library. It was written in 1165 A.D. In this text are given the description of 312 gods and goddesses in different poses, the mantras, the rituals and their applications. The other book is Niṣpannayogābalī whose authorship is ascribed to Abhoyakargupta who flourished in 1130 A.D. This book furnishes the description of about 600 images which deserve special mention.
33. Bacot Collection — Musee Guimet, Paris.
34. B. Bhattacharyya --- Buddhist Iconography, p. 148.
35. Foucher — Iconographie Bouddhique, Partie I, p. 69.
36. Foucher — Iconographie Bouddhique, Partie II, Illustr., p. 33.