

the donors and their ladies. The Chinese inscriptions attached to them acquaint us with their persons.<sup>41</sup> On the right kneels the father attired as a monk with his three sons kneeling in secular dress behind him. On the left are shown two nuns, members of the family, and behind them two ladies, wives of two of the sons. To the interest presented by the costumes of the secular figures I have had already occasion to allude.<sup>42</sup> The fashion represented in the dress and coiffure of the two ladies is particularly instructive as affording indications for the approximate dating of other paintings which show donatrix figures. The moderate width of the sleeves and the absence of ornaments in the head-dress distinguish this fashion of A.D. 864 very strikingly from that presented by the donatrices in tenth-century pictures. On the other hand, we see on the men's heads the wide-brimmed black hats of the latter side by side with a stiff black cap of a manifestly earlier type.

## PLATE XVII

### AVALOKITEŚVARA IN GLORY

THE large silk painting (Ch. lvi. 0019), reproduced in this Plate on a scale of slightly less than one-fourth of the original, may rank among the richest of the Collection in respect of decorative effect and colouring, and fortunately has survived in very fair preservation. It represents Avalokiteśvara in his thousand-armed and eleven-headed form, surrounded by numerous groups of divinities constituting his 'Maṇḍala'. The scheme is repeated on somewhat simpler lines in another fine painting, shown by Plate XLII. Elaborate as its representation is in ours, its interpretation is facilitated by the Chinese inscriptions attached to all the principal divine figures which appear in attendance on the great Bodhisattva of Mercy. Helped by these inscriptions M. Petrucci has been able to discuss at length the numerous and interesting questions of iconographic detail which are raised by figures in this and similar sumptuous compositions, and to his explanations and to the full description contained in *Serindia* reference may conveniently be made here.<sup>43</sup>

In the centre of the painting we see Avalokiteśvara's large figure surrounded by a nimbus-like disc. This is formed by his outer hands making up the theoretical number of a thousand, and each showing an open eye marked on the palm. Avalokiteśvara's thousand arms, arranged in this fashion, are well known, too, to the later Buddhist iconography of India and meant to symbolize the merciful divinity's desire to save all human beings at the same time. The Bodhisattva is shown seated on a lotus and under a richly tasselled canopy. His inner hands, apart from the four in front, hold a multiplicity of well-known sacred emblems, including the discs of the Sun and Moon, flasks of ambrosia, conch, willow spray, trident, Vajra, the Wheel of the Law, mace, &c. From the centre pair of inner hands a shaft of rainbow light streams upwards. His flesh is yellow, as usual, shaded with pink; his hair blue, of the same shade as the general background. Of the small subsidiary heads, two of demonic appearance are shown by the side of the ears and the rest in three tiers above the tiara.

Among the attendant divinities we see at the top of the canopy the Bodhisattvas of the Sun and Moon seated behind their five white geese and five white horses respectively. In the upper corners appear on finely painted clouds the 'Buddhas of the ten quarters of the Universe', arranged as all the attendant deities in symmetrical groups. Below them are seated pairs of Bodhisattvas with elaborate flower-decked haloes and nimbi. Beneath them come on the right Indra with three attendants, and on the left Brahman with two. All are shown kneeling and wearing Chinese official dress of a rich type. Beneath again are shown two monstrous divinities, both unmistakably Śivaitic. On the right Mahākāla

<sup>41</sup> Cf. M. Petrucci's notes, *Serindia*, p. 1398.

<sup>42</sup> See above, p. 16.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. M. Petrucci, on 'Maṇḍalas de Kouan-yin',

*Serindia*, Appendix E, pp. 1411 sqq.; and for a full description of our painting, *ibid.*, pp. 1077 sqq.