

with three heads and six arms reclines on the back of Śiva's bull. On the left Maheśvara, of demonic appearance, stands with legs apart upon a crocodile-headed snake; his middle hands grasp pike and cords which hold two half-naked humans.

Below the lotus seat of Avalokiteśvara are seen emaciated *pretas* or beings in hell clutching with outstretched hands at showers of white grains (ambrosia) which Avalokiteśvara pours on them. In front of his lotus seat lies a tank in which stand two stalwart Nāgas upholding the stem of the lotus. They are in human shape, but carry above their heads a crest formed of five snake-heads, their ancient Indian emblem. Besides smaller Nāga figures of the same type the tank holds an infant soul (now almost destroyed) rising from a lotus.

The bottom corners are occupied on each side by a larger group of attendants. The central figure in each case is a four-armed female divinity of beneficent aspect, dressed like a Bodhisattva and seated on a bird. The one on the right rides on a phoenix and is followed by a Buddha. The female deity behind him is of interest, as from the children in her arms she may be recognized as the goddess Hāritī, whom a pious Indian legend represents as a wicked ogress converted into a patroness of children.⁴⁴ The female divinity on the left is riding on a peacock, with two attendants behind her who in the absence of attributes or inscriptions remain unidentified. Lower down on either side are seen standing two Lokapālas, Kings of the Quarters, in armour, and in each of the bottom corners a demonic Vajrapāṇi, six-armed and serpent-decked, straddling against a background of flames. At the feet of each sits a smaller demon with a boar's head. Before the Lokapālas and close to the edge of the tank are seated on the right an emaciated old man in ascetic garb, and on the left a richly-robed nymph offering flowers. Both these figures, described elsewhere as the 'Sage of the Air (?)' and 'Nymph of Virtue', are with particular clearness seen again in Plate XLII.

On the iconographic side the interest of this sumptuous presentation of Avalokiteśvara's 'Maṇḍala' is obvious, were it only for the appearance in it of such Śivaitic deities as Mahākāla and Maheśvara. These aptly illustrate the influence which Hindu mythology, even in its later development, continued to exercise on the Buddhist Pantheon of Central Asia and the Far East. On the artistic side attention is claimed by the skill shown in the ordinance of the whole and the drawing of individual figures. But it is in particular the highly effective colour treatment which makes this picture rank with the most impressive in the Collection.

PLATE XVIII

AVALOKITEŚVARA STANDING, WITH WILLOW SPRAY

It is to qualities very different from those of the preceding picture that the figure of a standing Avalokiteśvara (Ch. 0091), reproduced in Plate XVIII in half the size of the original, owes its special charm. The silk painting has lost portions of its sides and the whole below the knees of the figure, and the colouring throughout has much faded. But the disappearance of paint helps to bring out more clearly the excellence of the design and the very delicate drawing of figure and features. With workmanship showing mastery of a fully established technique in details, the painting combines an air of individual feeling which makes its subject one of the finest single figures amongst our Ch'ien-fo-tung paintings.

Avalokiteśvara stands facing the spectator, with head erect but eyes downcast. His pose, with the weight thrown on the right hip and the body aslant to the left shoulder, is characteristically Indian. The head is that of a young man and shows marked influence of Gandhāra art in its features. The nose is long and straight, the brow high, and the eyes only slightly oblique. The moderately arched eyebrows sweep in a slightly recurved line

⁴⁴ See M. Foucher's brilliant essay on 'La Madone bouddhique' in *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, pp. 285 sqq.