

Below in the left corner there remains the upper portion of the kneeling donor, recognizable as a boy by his features and the way in which his hair is dressed. In his joined hands he holds a lotus flower. His loose-sleeved red coat is sprinkled with a circular flower pattern in yellow and black. Red flowers on tall stems rise on either side of him. The cartouche to the right is left blank, and so, too, the remainder of the space probably intended for a dedicatory inscription.

PLATE XLI

AVALOKITEŚVARA AND TWO OTHER BODHISATTVAS

THE three pictures which this Plate shows, reduced to one-half of the original in the case of the two on the sides and to three-eighths in that of the middle one, are characteristic specimens of those Bodhisattva banners on silk which are very frequent among our Tun-huang paintings.⁸⁸

The banner in the middle (Ch. i. 0013) is completely preserved with its head-piece, streamers, and other accessories, and its painted portion, which alone is reproduced here, retains its colours in excellent condition. Its subject is easily recognized as Avalokiteśvara by the flask and the red lotus bud which he carries in his right and left hand respectively. The Bodhisattva's figure is shown sweeping to the left with trailing draperies and the head slightly bent, gazing down at the lotus.

In features, dress, and general style of work it shares the characteristics of the 'Chinese' Bodhisattva type repeatedly referred to before; but the hollowed back gives a particularly graceful curve to the whole figure. Its special slimness and the wide semicircular line showing the setting of the eyes also deserve notice. The modelling of the flesh by pink shading is well marked. The parted mouth, showing white teeth, is unusual. The colours are very bright, and as the paint is applied very thickly, the opaque white of the girdle and streamers contrasts rather harshly with the strong blue of the stole.

The silk banner on the left (Ch. xxiv. 006) is also in excellent preservation, except for the lost accessories. The Bodhisattva who stands on a bluish-green lotus with hands in adoration remains in the absence of any particular indications unidentified. Figure, attire, and adornment conform to the 'Chinese' type of Bodhisattvas; but the skirt gathered up in front and showing bare legs is not usual. The colour scheme is rich but harmonious and the workmanship in general faultless, though confined to the familiar conventions of the type.

It is different with the fine Bodhisattva of the banner (Ch. i. 002) seen on the right. His figure is one of the most striking represented in the banners, remarkable for the skilful pose combining dignity with rapid movement, for the graceful sinuous lines of body and garments, and the pronounced and distinctly non-Chinese features of the Bodhisattva's face. In view of a figure so distinctive and well defined, it is a matter of regret that there is no clue at present to its iconographic identity.

The Bodhisattva is seen walking away to the left, presenting a three-fourths back-view, with the head in profile over the left shoulder. With the left hand he gathers up the folds of the gracefully coiling stole, while the right, bent back at shoulder level, carries a pink lotus bud on the palm. The erect carriage of the body and its movement with the weight thrown forward on the right foot are admirably expressed. The canopy overhead, with its freely swinging tassels and bells, emphasizes the rapid movement which is suggested also by the feet being placed on two separate lotuses. The nimbus shown merely in outline as an elliptical black ring allows the back of the head and coiffure to be seen through.

The falling loops of the stole and the drapery tied in a knot at the neck hide details of the upper portion of the dress. But below it the waving folds of the glowing scarlet skirt are very skilfully rendered. A close-fitting cap of red, set with gold ornaments,

⁸⁸ Cf. *Serindia*, pp. 861 sqq.