

xvii) which can definitely be dated as belonging to the first quarter of the eighth century. This silk picture, unfortunately fragmentary, shows various secular scenes, and the coiffures and costumes of the ladies in them correspond very closely to those of the lady representing the soul in our painting. Instead of being later, the fashion depicted belongs to the earlier T'ang period.

Among the large pictures showing Avalokitesvara grouped with attendant divinities, the silk painting very rich in colours, seen in Fig. 101, deserves prominent notice. It illustrates a mixed style of painting in which Chinese workmanship is combined with elements contributed by Indian prototypes, Iranian and Central-Asian influences and Tibetan taste. We see here Avalokitesvara with a thousand arms seated within a central disc, and outside it a number of attendant divinities symmetrically grouped. The halo around the Bodhisattva, who is shown with a single head but multiple arms, is formed by a multitude of hands. The palm of each of these is marked with an open eye to symbolize that Avalokitesvara is omnipresent with watchful eye and ready hand, able and willing to save all his worshippers at the same time.

In the upper half of the background we see discs enclosing the haloed Bodhisattvas of Sun and Moon, while below them rather stiff blossoms and sprays descend through the light blue sky. The lower half of the background contains beautifully drawn figures, conventionally designated as those of the 'Sage' and the 'Nymph of Virtue', both seated on lotuses and in adoring attitudes. Below them again there stride in violent movement two demonic figures, with fiery hair and grotesque features. Their close kinship to the