

Plates LX and LXI as it now appears after having been carefully cleaned at the British Museum by the artistic hands of Mr. R. F. Fry from a thin but closely adhering crust of fine sand. It presents several points of exceptional interest. The excellent preservation of the colours enables us to appreciate the pictorial merit of the work; the sacred figures represented on obverse and reverse possess particular interest for the student of Northern Buddhist iconography, as relatively early and approximately datable specimens of pictorial types which hitherto have been known only from textual descriptions or else later representations, mainly of Tibetan origin. Finally, the blending of Indian and Western influences in the art of old Khotan is illustrated by the different styles which a comparison of the obverse and reverse reveals even on cursory inspection. In the former we see a three-faced and four-armed divinity seated cross-legged on a cushion which is supported by two couchant bulls. The flesh of the divinity is shown dark blue throughout, excepting in the two side heads, of which the one on the R. proper, coloured white, bears an effeminate look, while the one opposite is dark yellow with the expression of a demon. The rich diadem of the main head, with its side ornament resembling a half-moon, the third eye on the forehead, the tiger-skin forming the *dhōṭī* or loincloth, and finally the bulls shown as Vāhanas are all so many emblems recalling the Brahmanic Śiva.

It is these which seem to justify our identification of the figure with one of the many forms of Avalokiteśvara. The close connexion which exists in the iconography of Indian Buddhism between this Bodhisattva and the foremost god of the Brahmanic trinity has long ago been pointed out⁶. The attributes held in the four hands, among which the Vajra, shell (*śaṅkha*), and wheel (*cakra*) can clearly be recognized, and, perhaps, also the drum (*ḍamaru*), may yet help to an exact determination of the particular form of the Bodhisattva intended. All of them, as well as the blue colour, the rich ornaments of the body, and other peculiarities already mentioned, can be traced in the detailed descriptions of various Avalokiteśvara forms which M. Foucher has recently made accessible from certain *Sādhana* texts⁷. But neither among the forms for which the essential descriptive details are excerpted there, nor among those represented in the series of old miniatures which form the subject of M. Foucher's masterly study in the first part of his *Iconographie bouddhique*, is there any combination of all the characteristic features of our picture. Nor can this be surprising in view of the almost infinite multiplication of forms which mythological fancy within Indian Buddhism from an early period created for this and other chief Bodhisattvas.

There is nothing in the picture of the obverse that does not directly presuppose the reproduction of Indian models. The contrast offered by the figure painted on the reverse is hence all the more striking. Were it not for nimbus and vesica, and in particular the four arms with the emblems in some of them, it would be difficult to believe that we have here before us the representation of a Buddhist divinity. So completely does a quasi-secular treatment in essentially Persian style prevail in the figure and its accessories. We see the Bodhisattva—for as such we must evidently accept this sumptuously dressed sacred personage—seated cross-legged on an elaborately embroidered cushion. The head, with distinctly Persian features, shows long black hair falling down to the shoulders and a thick short beard. It is surmounted by a curious yellow head-dress, which resembles a Persian tiara with a double point falling over in spirals. Over a close-fitting yellow undergarment decorated with large flowers the figure wears a tight coat of equally rich material in dark green. From a narrow belt

Identifica-
tion of
Bodhisattva
figured on
obverse.

Bodhisattva
on reverse
of D. VII. 6.

⁶ See Foucher, *Iconographie bouddhique de l'Inde*, i. pp. 172 sqq.; ii. p. 39; Grünwedel, *Mythologie des Buddh.*, p. 132.

⁷ For an Avalokiteśvara of blue colour, see Foucher, *Iconographie bouddhique*, ii. p. 38; for the tiger-skin, the half-moon, drum, Vajra, *ibid.*, pp. 30, 32, 34, 38.