

Ch. liv. 007 (Plate LXXI), originally mounted as a Kakemono and bearing a date corresponding to A.D. 897 in its Chinese inscription. It shows the Buddha Tejahprabha, 'the Giver of Light', seated on a chariot which two bullocks draw and surrounded by the genii of the five planets.⁵ Carefully executed both in drawing and in its rich colour scheme, the painting owes a special interest to its subject. This recurs treated with remarkable vigour and inventive skill in one of the largest and finest among the frescoes of the 'Thousand Buddhas' Caves'.⁶ The detailed interpretation and comparison of the two paintings I must leave to experts.

Buddha
Tejah-
prabha
on car.

Nothing can illustrate better the predominant share which the Bodhisattvas claim in popular Buddhist worship as developed under Mahāyāna influences in the Far East than the fact that about one half of all our Ch'ien-fo-tung paintings are devoted to their representation, whether singly or along with attendant divinities. To this great abundance of pictures there does not correspond an equally great multiplicity of iconographic types. However large may be in theory of devout speculation and fancy the number of different Bodhisattvas, we know that in the North-Indian home of the Mahāyāna system popular imagination had already remained fixed upon a small select group of Bodhisattvas. Even these were, in pictorial or sculptural presentation, distinguished in the main merely by different attributes. We find the same limitation applying to the Bodhisattvas of our Tun-huang Pantheon also.

Preponder-
ance of
Bodhisattva
paintings.

But for what these Bodhisattva paintings lack in iconographic variety proportionate to their numbers we have compensation offered to us in two directions. On the one hand, we find in this great array of Bodhisattva representations marked differences of style and treatment, and these allow us to trace more clearly than might otherwise be possible the varied influences of India, China, Central Asia, and also Tibet, which helped to give to Buddhist religious art as represented at Tun-huang its composite character. On the other hand, this class of paintings derives greatly increased interest from the fact that it includes, besides the great mass of conventional reproductions of common types, a considerable number of works of individual character and artistic merit. This is particularly the case with some of the larger paintings of Avalokiteśvara, the most popular of all Bodhisattvas. Nor is it possible to overlook the varied iconographic and artistic interest attaching to those big and sumptuous paintings which show us Avalokiteśvara or Kuan-yin surrounded by his divine attendants, and which have received special treatment by M. Petrucci under the designation of 'Kuan-yin's Maṇḍalas'.⁷ The fact that for the Bodhisattva paintings all three materials of silk, linen, and paper are used helps further to introduce a certain variety of technique into this disproportionately large class of pictures.

Differences
of style and
treatment.

For the purposes of our survey it will be convenient first to illustrate the different styles represented among our Bodhisattva paintings by a classification of the very numerous banners showing single Bodhisattva figures, including those which cannot at present be definitely identified in their iconographic character. Turning next to Bodhisattva paintings other than banners, we shall first review the representations of those relatively few individual Bodhisattvas who apart from Avalokiteśvara are recognizable with certainty. Avalokiteśvara or Kuan-yin's predominance in the Buddhist cult of old Tun-huang is attested by so many paintings that their treatment by separate subdivisions is necessary. These can be conveniently distinguished by the different forms in which Avalokiteśvara is represented, whether in human shape, four or six-armed, etc. Examining these forms in succession, we shall have occasion briefly to mention also the pictures showing them accompanied by varying numbers of attendants, as the central figures of those symmetrically

Classifica-
tion of
Bodhisattva
paintings.

⁵ Cf. for this identification Petrucci, *Annales du Musée Guimet*, xli. p. 134. [See also Mr. Binyon's *Essay, Thousand B.*].

⁷ Cf. below, pp. 867 sqq., and Petrucci, Appendix E, III. viii.

⁶ See Figs. 215, 226, and below, pp. 933 sq.