

northern oases of the Tārīm Basin and at Turfān.<sup>22</sup> The symmetrical juxtaposition face to face of their figures and of their respective *parivāras* foreshadows as it were the most characteristic and unvarying feature of the large Maṇḍala compositions, which are to be noticed presently. In contrast to these two Bodhisattvas, always easily identified, only the short Chinese inscriptions by the side of the four Avalokiteśvaras above could tell us which of the many forms of this most popular Bodhisattva is to be recognized in each figure, all being practically alike in pose and dress except for some minor differences noted in the Descriptive List. In artistic merit this picture, in spite of its careful workmanship and rich colour-scheme, cannot rank equal with the majority of the large Maṇḍalas or with other representations of the Bodhisattva pair in procession which will be presently noted. Yet two observations invest it with distinct iconographic and antiquarian value. On the one hand, the sure manner in which the figures of the lower half are presented proves that by the middle of the ninth century the conventions of the 'Chinese' Bodhisattva type peculiar to so many fine silk paintings of our collection were already fully established. On the other, we can derive chronologically useful indications from the fashions of dress, coiffure, etc., which the figures of the donors and donatrices below display, and which in this case can be exactly dated.

Identity of the principal subjects makes it convenient to mention here some remarkable paintings which, if completely preserved, would, no doubt, have found their place more appropriately among the Paradise Maṇḍalas. They show us processions of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra advancing towards a central figure, now lost, which must have represented in all probability a Buddha. In Ch. xxxvii. 003 and 005 we see two large side-pieces, having curved tops and, even in their broken state, a height of over seven feet; they once must have formed part of one arch-shaped picture of still greater size.<sup>23</sup> The two chief Bodhisattvas, mounted on their respective 'Vāhanas', are surrounded by a gorgeous retinue of attendant Bodhisattvas, Lokapālas, and other celestial followers, while a dark-skinned Indian attendant leads the mount of either, preceded by a pair of musicians. Arranged throughout in close conformity with the symmetrical plan of the Maṇḍalas, the big picture in its extant parts shows fine qualities both of drawing and of colouring, and still retains the effect of an impressive composition. Its arched shape suggests that it may have been intended to be hung against the back of some alcove-like rock-carved chapel or against the top part of the side wall in an antechapel.

Processions  
of Samanta-  
bhadra and  
Mañjuśrī.

The large fragment Ch. iii. 006, showing the progress of Mañjuśrī and his *cortège* in exactly corresponding arrangement, must have belonged to another big picture intended for a similar position. The same is proved by the curved edge for the smaller fragment Ch. xxviii. 002 (Plate LXXVI), in which the flight of two phoenixes, floating clouds, and a nymph, probably meant for an Apsaras rising from them, are painted with much freedom and boldness conveying rapid movement. The roughness of certain details, especially in the foreshortened limbs of the nymph, leaves no doubt that the painter intended his work to be viewed at a distance and high above the spectator.

It is only the prominent place occupied by the procession of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra in Ch. xxxvii. 004<sup>24</sup> which may justify my referring here to this remarkably fine remnant of what evidently was a large painting representing a Maṇḍala of Avalokiteśvara. Of the great central figure, a 'Thousand-armed' form of this Bodhisattva, only the bust remains, and even less of the two large Bodhisattvas flanking it. Above these we see Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra advancing from either side towards the centre with a numerous following in solemn array. A large panel, bearing an

Mañjuśrī,  
Samanta-  
bhadra in  
Avalokite-  
śvara's  
Maṇḍala.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Grünwedel, *Allbuddh. Kultstätten*, pp. 6, 30, 276, 283, 292, 297, 300, 305, 311.

<sup>23</sup> The better-preserved R. side-piece, Ch. xxxvii. 003, is reproduced as a whole in *Thousand B.*, Pl. IV; Pl. V of the

same shows on a larger scale the fine group of musicians advancing before Samantabhadra in xxxvii. 005.

<sup>24</sup> See Pl. LIX and, for a reproduction in colour of the left upper portion of the painting, *Thousand B.*, Pl. III.