

# THE CONCEPT OF AVALOKITEŚVARA AND BUDDHAS IN THE KĀRAṆḌAVYŪHA SŪTRA

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## Abstract

*The objective of this research is to see how the concept of Avalokiteśvara and Buddhas is explained in the Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra. To do so, I shall study and analyze the ideas regarding the Buddhas, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva and Ādibuddha as found in the Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra. The Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra is one of the primary sources of Mahāyāna Buddhism composed in Sanskrit, which has been used as the basis for both teaching and practicing Buddhism in many different Mahāyāna schools. In Tibetan Buddhism, in particular, the Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra is one of the most significant texts, because it is the source from which the syllable “Om Maṇipadme Hūṃ” is derived.*

*It has been found that according to the Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra, through Avalokiteśvara qualities, the Buddha's nature is clearly centred around the perfection of wisdom, as the latter is said to be the origin of all the tathāgatas. To gain the perfection of wisdom, the text says, a bodhisattva has to engage himself in the development of bodhicitta through the contemplation of emptiness (Śūnyatā). Having done so perfectly, he will be liberated from saṃsāra. However, in the Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra, there is more than*

*one way of gaining the perfection of wisdom, another option being obviously the use the mantra dhāraṇī. Practising the mantra dhāraṇī is equivalent to that of the practice of the six pāramitās. The text also explains that practising the recollection of the name of Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva as dhāraṇī will eventually lead to the extinction of saṃsāra.*

*Manifestating oneself in many different forms is another way of bodhisattvas that is stressed as boundless and timeless. Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva has already reached the highest bhūmi by attaining the perfection of wisdom. He can then manifest himself in order to help all sentient beings attain liberation. There is no self-existence as the manifestation quality also comes from the perfection of wisdom. His power for magical interventions in this world is boundless.*

*The text also shows clearly some theistic influences from the Purāṇic Hindu Sanskrit literature by which Avalokiteśvara is portrayed as the one responsible for creating the whole universe.*

## 1. Introduction

One of the key developments within Mahāyāna Buddhism was that of a new doctrine regarding the nature of the Buddha(s); this doctrine most likely emerged sometime after the first century BCE but the exact timing of this is uncertain.

New ideas about the Buddha are, in some ways, very different from the earlier non-Mahāyāna understanding. Their textual basis is mostly to be found in the Mahāyāna Sūtras (also called Mahāvaiṣṭya Sūtras or simply Vaiṣṭya Sūtras – although the exact relationship between

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these terms is not clear). One of the texts where one can find significant and interesting expositions of the nature of a Buddha is in the *Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra* (henceforth '*Kāraṇḍ*' for short). The complete name of this Sūtra is sometimes presented as *Avalokiteśvara- Guṇakāraṇḍa- Vyūha*, which when translated means a detailed description of the basket of qualities of the Avalokiteśvara.

The reason I selected to study the *Kāraṇḍ* is simple. On the one hand, we find explanations of the roles of the Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva described in detail, which is a concept that has had a variety of interpretations from various scholars. On the other hand, we find the remarkable development of the idea of the *Ādibuddha* which is one of the core doctrines of both Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna<sup>2</sup> Buddhism. The word *Ādibuddha*, which is derived from *Ādi* + *Buddha* - when translated - equates to 'the primordial Buddha'. The *Ādibuddha* refers to a self-emanating, self-originating Buddha, present before anything else existed. "According to Winternitz, the verse version of the *Kāraṇḍ*, is based on a theistic view of the world. It relates how, at the beginning of all things, *Ādibuddha*, the 'first Buddha', also called *Svayambhū*, 'the self-existent,' and *Ādinātha*, the 'First lord appeared and created the world through meditation. Out of his spirit arose Avalokiteśvara, who also takes part in the work of creation, creating the gods of his own body" (Winternitz, 1983: 294). Not only is this concept different from early Buddhism but in Mahāyāna Buddhism there is an emphasis on the bodhisattva path, the path to reach perfect

enlightenment, i.e. Buddhahood, as opposed to earlier Buddhism in which the path to attain enlightenment was to follow the *arhat* path through the practice of the trilogy of training i.e. morality, meditation (concentration), and wisdom in order to gain a better understanding of the dharma or the true nature of things that had been discovered by the Buddha (Williams, 1989: 198).

The concept of Buddhas in Mahāyāna Buddhism has been discussed by several scholars who based their various analyses on several Sanskrit texts. However, none of these prominent scholars ever investigated the *Kāraṇḍ* which is one of the most important Mahāyānist Sanskrit texts because in it we can see the further development of the concept of Buddhas.

Apart from the concept of *Ādibuddha* which, on its own, is worth investigating further in the *Kāraṇḍ*, the concept of Avalokiteśvara is also worthy of additional study and is interestingly more developed in the *Kāraṇḍ* than many of the other Mahāyānist Sanskrit texts. As the *Kāraṇḍ* is one of the most important Mahāyānist Sanskrit texts to detail information regarding the Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva it is important to further understand the development of the concept of Avalokiteśvara and Buddhas in the *Kāraṇḍ*. This analysis will attempt to shed additional insight on how the concepts of both Avalokiteśvara and the Buddhas are explained and contrasted with those in earlier Buddhist teachings.

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<sup>2</sup> Vajrayāna (the Diamond Vehicle) Buddhism is also known as Tantrayāna or Tantric Buddhism.

## 2. The Bodhisattva path in the Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra

To study the concepts of Avalokiteśvara and Buddhas, I shall examine the bodhisattva path which through the fulfillment of great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*), aims at the perfection of oneself, - no matter how long it takes to reach *nirvāṇa* - to become an *Arhant Samyaksambuddha* or a Fully Enlightened Buddha. I also will briefly discuss the bodhisattva definition, concept and the relation to *bhakti* and then the bodhisattva path in the *Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra*.

### 2.1 The bodhisattva definition, its concept and the relation to *bhakti*

There have been many different definitions and meanings of bodhisattva assigned by different scholars. Dayal (1932) definitively states that the word *bodhi* means 'enlightenment' but, for the word *sattva*, expands on interpretations previously made by other scholars to obtain a well-defined interpretation (Dayal, 1932: 4). Dayal explains that "most modern scholars have adopted the meaning of *sattva* as 'any living or sentient being' (masculine) (Skt. Dicy. M. W.), 'ein lebendes Wesen' (Skt. Dicy. Pbg), and in the Pāli Dicy, s.v., the word *satta*'s definition is slightly different and may mean 'a living being, creature, a sentient and rational being and person. He argues that *sattva* may be a wrongly Sanskritized form of the Pāli word *satta*, and may really be equivalent to the Skt. word *sakta*, (from the root *sañj*) which means 'clung, stuck or joined or connected with, addicted or devoted to, fond of, intent on' (Skt. M.W.), as this interpretation covers the chief qualities of an aspirant *bodhi*. He describes that the

word *bodhi* is derived from the root *budh* (Skt. Dicy. M.W. ), which means to wake, wake up, be awake; to recover consciousness (after swooning); to observe, heed, attain to; to perceive, notice, learn, understand, become, be aware of or be acquainted with, etc. He therefore concludes that *bodhi-sakta* means 'one who is devoted or attached to awakening'. He points out that the safest method of interpretation is usually to go back to the Pāli interpretation without attaching much importance to the later lexicographers and philosophers. He remarks that the term *satta* in this context does not denote a mere ordinary creature and indicates that the word *satta* is related to the Vedic word 'satvan', meaning 'kelegar', a strong or valiant man, hero, warrior'. In this respect, *bodhisattva* in Pāli could be interpreted as 'heroic beings' or 'spiritual warriors'" (Ibid., p. 4-9). Therefore we shall also investigate the word *bodhi* in Pāli. In the *Ariyāsana-Sutta*<sup>3</sup> it is clearly illustrated that the bodhisattva is not yet enlightened. Therefore, I agree that Williams's (2005) interpretation of the bodhisattva as 'One who is on the way to attainment of perfect knowledge' may be more appropriate. In my opinion, apart from the direct linguistic approach, if we understand the duties of a bodhisattva - which are to help sentient beings attain liberation - then bodhisattva may be translated as 'One devoted to a being's enlightenment'.

The bodhisattva concept in Theravāda is a Buddha that was a bodhisattva in his past life before attaining enlightenment. The bodhisattva path in the Mahāyāna school does not differ from that of Theravāda, in both schools the ascension to becoming a

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<sup>3</sup> Majjhima Nikāya, Volume I, PTS (The Pali Text Society), page 163.

bodhisattva is to follow the path of the Buddha and to attain perfect enlightenment or Buddhahood. Although Mahāyāna emphasizes the bodhisattva path, this does not mean that it ignores the *Arhat* and *Pratyekabuddha* paths. These two paths are also prominently mentioned in the *Yogācārabhūmi śāstra*, the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra*, the *Madhyāntavibhāga*, as well as several other Mahāyāna texts (Rahula, 1978: 72).

Dayal states that the development of the bodhisattva doctrine was influenced by two movements of thought in early Buddhism, the growth of *bhakti* (devotion, faith, love) and the idealization and spiritualization of the Buddha. Dayal explains that the idea of *bhakti* has been an integral part of the Buddhist ideal from the earliest time and *bhakti* was first derived as a religious term within Buddhist texts rather than in Hindu texts. The *Theragathā* speaks of *bhatti*: “so *bhatti nāma ca hoti paṇḍito ñatvā ca dhammesu vivesi assa*”.<sup>4</sup> According to Nariman (1972) it is possibly that Aśvaghōṣa is the one that laid out the tenets of the Buddha *bhakti* system. Aśvaghōṣa came of a Brahman family and had a sound Brahmanic education before converting to Buddhism. As a Buddhist he likely joined the first Sārvāṣṭivāda School which laid great stress on Buddha *bhakti* and thus prepared him for the Mahāyāna. One of his works, the *Buddhacarita*, the story of the Buddha returning home after his enlightenment was composed around 2 C.E.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore; according to Dayal, we can see the *bhakti* system in the evolution of Buddhism as represented in the two Mahāyāna treatises, the

*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (Probably composed in its earliest form in the period 100 B.C.E.–100 C.E.) and the *Sukhāvātīvyūha Sūtra*. In the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*, Guatama Buddha is described as the loving father of all creatures and all pious Buddhists are exhorted to worship and adore him. The *Sukhāvātīvyūha Sūtra* promises rebirth in the Buddha Amitābha’s paradise (*Buddhakṣetra*) to all who should think of him and utter his name with love and devotion. The larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha Sūtra* excludes from this privilege all sinners, who have committed any of the five heinous, or mortal sins (*ānantaryāṇi*) but the *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra* abolishes this restriction and offers a happy rebirth (not *nirvāṇa*) to all creatures as the reward of *bhakti*. It is in this period that *Bhakti* is directed towards the Buddha. According to Beyer, the *Bhagavatgītā* (200 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.) employs *smṛti* and *anusmṛti* terms, words commonly used in Mahāyāna Sūtra as equivalents of the important purānic term *bhakti* (Quoted in Studholme, 2002: 99). The *Kāraṇḍ* is one of the bodhisattva doctrines that was composed around the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of 5<sup>th</sup> C.E. (Studholme, 2002:9-17) and consists of the *bhakti* system because the text emphasizes the recollection (*smṛti* and *anusmṛti*) of Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva for rebirth in the *Sukhāvātī* realm and eventually to liberation of *saṃsāra*.

## 2.2 Bodhisattva path in the *Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra*

The bodhisattva path as described in the *Kāraṇḍ* definitely falls within the aspects of Mahāyāna bodhisattva ideal and its basic principles. Here are the principles of the bodhisattva path as described in the *Kāraṇḍ*.

<sup>4</sup> Bajracharya (2003:9).

<sup>5</sup> J. K. Nariman, January 28, 2011.

<<http://records.photodharma.net/texts/j-k-nariman-asvaghosa-and-the-buddhacarita>>

### 2.2.1 The preliminary devotional practices known collectively as *anuttara-pūjā* or Supreme Worship

The *Kāraṇḍ* does not have an organized system of preliminary devotional practices although we can see the *anuttara-pūjā* elements in the *Kāraṇḍ* as follows:

(1) Worship (*vandanā*) and adoration (*pūjā*) can be seen through the offering of precious and beautiful things to bodhisattvas such as Avalokiteśvara and Dharmabhāṇaka.<sup>a</sup> The *Kāraṇḍ* also mentions the hymn of praising Avalokiteśvara.<sup>b</sup>

(2) Going for refuge (*śraṇa-gamana*). The Avalokiteśvara asks to be the refuge. His role as a refuge in the *Kāraṇḍ* corresponds with the *bodhisattva-kṣānti-lābhāya dhāraṇī*. We also can see the connection through the practicing of contemplation by recalling the name of Avalokiteśvara as bodhisattva *dhāraṇī*.<sup>c</sup>

(3) Confession of sins (*pāpadeśanā*). The *Kāraṇḍ* does not mention the word *pāpadeśanā* but the act of Bali telling Avalokiteśvara about his sinfulness could count as a confession of sins.<sup>d</sup>

(4) Rejoicing in merit (*puṇyānumodā*). In the *Kāraṇḍ*, the Śakyamuni Buddha is personified as rejoicing in merit.<sup>e</sup>

(5) Prayer (*adhyeṣaṇā*) and supplication (*yācanā*). The delayed entering of the final *nirvāṇa* ideal is in contrast to Theravāda Buddhism, as the Buddha does not deny entering *parinibbāna*. The *Kāraṇḍ* does not mention whether the Buddha retains his duties after enlightenment but instead asks Avalokiteśvara not to enter formless (*arūpa*) the *nirvāṇa* realm as long as all sentient beings are not liberated. The

development of this concept could be in support of the Mahāyāna concept of compassion.<sup>f</sup>

(6) Dedication of merits (*pariṇāmanā*) and giving up the body and possessions (*atmabhāvādi-parityāgaḥa*). The *Kāraṇḍ* does not describe *pariṇāmanā* but instead suggests that making merit could be utilized as a protector at the time of death and the uncountable merits made by Avalokiteśvara are of a significant quality to enable this. This may be an attempt to present the model for disciples of the bodhisattva that are filled with merit. Avalokiteśvara says that he never tires of helping sentient beings. His statement indicates *atmabhāvādi-parityāgaḥa* as he gives himself up to help any and all beings. This corresponds to the great compassion of the bodhisattva and also the *dāna pāramitā*, the first of *pāramitās*.<sup>g</sup>

### 2.2.2 The arising of the Thought of Enlightenment (*bodhicīṣotpāda*), the making of a Great Aspiration (*praṇidhāna*) and the receiving of an assurance of Enlightenment (*vyākaraṇa*) from a living Buddha

The second stage of practising starts with the cultivation of *bodhicitta* one of the fundamental features of the bodhisattva path. The *Kāraṇḍ* defines the first arising of *bodhicitta* as being from the meditation of *śūnyatā*.<sup>h</sup>

*Mahākaruṇā* or great compassion supports the development of *bodhicitta* and inures the bodhisattva's higher qualities. The *Kāraṇḍ* mentions the great compassion of Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva and his ability to manifest himself not only for one being but also the capability to generate a mind of great compassion for all sentient beings. *Mahākaruṇā* leads to Buddhahood, along

the goal of bodhisattva path, which makes this path distinctive from the *Arhat* and *Pratyekabuddha* paths.

The *Kāraṇḍ* does not directly mention bodhisattva aspirations but emphasizes the practice of the Six Perfections (*pārāmitā*). One bodhisattva aspiration is the receiving of an assurance of Enlightenment (*vyākaraṇa*) from a living Buddha. In the *Kāraṇḍ*, Maheśvara requests that the Buddha predict his Enlightenment but instead the Buddha assigns Avalokiteśvara to undertake this task himself. This is another reference to similar qualities of Avalokiteśvara to the Buddha as described in the *Kāraṇḍ*.

### 2.2.3 The four *caryās* or courses of conduct, the third and most important of which is the practice of the perfections (*pārāmitā-caryā*)

The practice of the perfections (*pārāmitā-caryā*) is one of the most important *caryās*, so the *Kāraṇḍ* mentions the practice of the six perfections or *ṣaṭpāramitā* and this is the path to reaching the perfection of wisdom, *prajñāpāramitas*. It is the core of becoming a Buddha as the *Kāraṇḍ* demonstrates that the *prajñāpāramitas* is the mother of *tathāgata*.<sup>1</sup>

The *Kāraṇḍ* specifically points out the importance of the practice of the six perfections namely the perfection of generosity, the perfection of morality, the perfection of forbearance, the perfection of diligence, the perfection of concentration and the perfection of wisdom. It also illustrates the seven *pāramita*, skillful means (*upāya* or *upāya-kauślya pārāmitā*) another unique feature of the Mahāyāna bodhisattva trail.

The *Kāraṇḍ* is one of the Mahāyāna texts which stresses the importance of meditation methods. Mahāyāna meditation aspects that are important are the reading of the scripture and the recollection of the theme and contemplation of *śūnyatā* (emptiness).

Beside the contemplation of *śūnyatā*, the *Kāraṇḍ* also contains the idea of ‘hair pore’ which is not common among Buddhists. The *Kāraṇḍ* compares the uncountable merits of Avalokiteśvara as equivalent to the multitude of hair pores on his body. A hair pore resembles a realm that is inhabited by deities or bodhisattvas. Each of the hair pores has a name. One of these hair pores of Avalokiteśvara is named ‘Maḥośadhīḥ’ which is where the bodhisattvas reside and contemplate emptiness (*śūnyatā*). The following is found in the *Kāraṇḍ*:<sup>1</sup>

‘Then bodhisattvas made the (*bodhi*) *citta* arise for the first time from contemplating emptiness. “Ah! suffering, suffering from old age, suffering from death, suffering of being separated from what is dear, suffering from being born in *Avīci* hell, suffering from being born in the city of *Pretas*.” This is the contemplation of liberation from the body. When they sit cross-legged and straight faced, stay in meditation, and that they construct in these mountains.’

Within Avalokiteśvara’s body are the Maḥośadhīḥ hair pores. The bodhisattvas meditate on emptiness and expressions of the contemplation of the fear of birth, life, death and rebirth (*saṃsāra*) which could lead to an understanding that there is no permanent entity and that everything is empty. Meditation on the concept of

emptiness is very important and is what enables the *bodhicitta* to arise.

Moreover, the concept of the hair pores of Avalokiteśvara's body is in-line with the concept of hair pores in the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* concept that one mind can penetrate all things and that the Buddha is an all-penetrating, all-transforming awareness (Williams, 1989: 123).

“To Sudhana's wondering gaze, the interior of the Tower reveals itself as being as wide as the sky...Moreover within there are hundreds of thousands of towers, each one as exquisitely adorned...and each one, while preserving its individual existence, at the same time, offering no obstruction to all the rest...He sees Maitreya and other bodhisattvas entering into *samādhi* [meditative absorption] and emitting from the pores of the hair skin multitudes of transformation bodies of various kinds. He also hears all the teachings of the Buddha melodiously issuing from every single pore of the skin of all the Bodhisattvas. He beholds all the Buddhas, together with their respective assemblies, and is the spectator of their different activities. In one particular high, spacious and exquisitely decorated tower of incompatible beauty he sees, at one glance, the entire trichilocosm...and in each one of the exquisitely decorated towers of the incomparable beauty he sees, at one glance, a decorated tower of incomparable beauty, he sees at one glance the entire trichilioscos...and in each one of these worlds he see Maitreya's descent to earth, his nativity and all the subsequent events of his final existence...He sees, moreover, pillars

emitting a multicolored radiance....” (Ibid., p. 125. (From the summary by Sangharakshita 1985: 229-31)

In the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*, we can see that the hair pore idea is in line with Mahāyāna idea of inter-penetration. Williams (1989) comments on this idea, “the world we see through the Buddha, the *dharmadhātu*, the way things really are, is one of infinite interpenetration. Inside everything is everything else” (Williams, 1989: 124).

Recollection meditation practice utilizes the name of the *Kāraṇḍ*, Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva, and the six-syllable ‘*Oṃ Maṇipadme Hūṃ*’. It is a set of words used for recitation and it is the so called *mantra*. The *Kāraṇḍ* gives nearly equivalent qualities to the three recollections: first is the recollection of the *Kāraṇḍ*'s name; the second is the recollection of Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva; and the third is the recollection of the six-syllable ‘*Oṃ Maṇipadme Hūṃ*’ as the extinction of *saṃsāra*.

There are similar qualities in the *Kāraṇḍ* and the use of the name of the Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva identifies *dhāraṇī*, as the aspect of meditative practice enabling entrance to the Sukhāvātī realm where Amitābha resides and preaches the dharma. It is written that just hearing the name of the *Kāraṇḍ* before dying will allow entry to Sukhāvātī. Similarly by recollecting the name of the Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva, sentient beings will be allowed to hear the dharma in front of Amitābha in the Sukhāvātī realm. These acts correspond to those of Pure Land Buddhism that led sentient beings to the Buddha Pure Land.

In addition the *Kāraṇḍ* also contains Tantric practices, utilizing a *maṇḍala* as a

mental object and a *mantra*. The features of Tantric practice appearing in the *Kāraṇḍ* are the initiation of *maṇḍala* and *mantra* or *mantra dhāraṇī*. The *Kāraṇḍ* represents the *maṇḍala* initiation utilizing the recitation of the six-syllable ‘*Oṃ Maṇipadme Hūṃ*’ mantra. The *Kāraṇḍ* is the recitation of *Oṃ Maṇipadme Hūṃ*, which will lead to rebirth in Sukhāvātī and *samādhis*. In addition the *Kāraṇḍ* gives significance to the *Oṃ Maṇipadme Hūṃ* as its quality is equal to the six *pāramitās* but simply because both are practised does not guarantee automatic accomplishment. It still requires effort. The equivalence of the qualities of the *mantra* and *pāramitās* reflects that the *mantra* is not just the recitation but it is the united method of wisdom. This idea is a common feature of Tantric practice.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. The Worship of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva

In this section I shall examine and discuss the worship of Avalokiteśvara. In discussing the worship of the bodhisattva, I have divided this section into three main parts. Firstly, I shall explain the iconography of Avalokiteśvara by discussing how he is worshiped in various countries. Secondly, I shall examine the portrayal of Avalokiteśvara as described in the *Kāraṇḍ* and, finally how the *Kāraṇḍ* illustrates the status and qualities of Avalokiteśvara.

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<sup>6</sup> Tantra in Tibet: The Great Exposition of secret Mantra-volume I. By Tsong-ka-pa (1987)

### 3.1 The Iconography of Avalokiteśvara

A review of Avalokiteśvara iconography, its chronology and its spread across India, Nepal, China and its entrance into Southeast Asia and Japan are captured in the following summaries of the iconography of Avalokiteśvara:

There is no firm evidence of when the worship of Avalokiteśvara began in India. It is commonly believed that the concept originated in India. One of the earliest examples of the Avalokiteśvara in literature was found in the *Suvarṇa Sūtra* which unfortunately does not have a concrete date assigned to its composition (Getty, 1962: 57-58). The iconography is widespread and diverse across India and is evidence of its long presence and evolution. Also other regions were clearly influenced from India. For example, Chinese Hsuan-Tang mentions, the image of Avalokiteśvara found in Nalanda during the 7<sup>th</sup> century C.E. (Bajracharya, 2003: 71-72).

In Sri Lanka, the characteristics of Avalokiteśvara uniquely developed under the strong Theravādin philosophy as a protective deity or an *Nātha Dēviyō*. From the iconography and epigraphical evidence, the existence of Avalokiteśvara can be dated between the 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E. (Holt, 1991: 76-91).

There are various names and forms of Avalokiteśvara found in Nepal, for example, the *Karuṇāmaya*, *Lokeśvara*, *Matsyendranath*, *Mahasattva*, and many others. Nepal has the largest number of recorded forms of Avalokiteśvara. Some of the more significant forms include *Padmapani* *Lokeśvara*, *Amoghpaśa* *Lokeśvara*, *Sadaksari* *Lokeśvara*,

*Harihariharihavana*                      *Lokeśvara*,  
*Sristikanta*                      *Lokeśvara*,                      *Rakta*  
*Aryavalokeśvara*,                      *Anandi*                      *Lokeśvara*,  
*Sukhavati*                      *Lokeśvara* and *Sahasrabhuja*  
*Lokeśvara*, which are the most prominent iconographic forms of the bodhisattva. These writings historically challenge the notion of the origination in India as it dates the background of Avalokiteśvara in Nepal to the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.E. but this too is unconfirmed (Bajracharya, 2003: 59-63).

In China, the name of Avalokiteśvara first appears as Kuan-shih yin around 147-86 C.E. Later this name was shortened to Kuan-yin because it conflicted with the official name of the Emperor Shin-ming at around 6th century onward (Neville, 1999: 13). Avalokiteśvara first arrived from China in a male form but later transformed into a female form between the 8th-11th centuries C.E. (Blofeld, 1988: 40). The idea of Kuan-yin in female form is similar to the idea of Tara, a beautiful female divinity able to manifest herself in twenty different forms for the purpose of succoring sentient beings. From China Kuan-Yin spread to Japan and much of Southeast Asia and is currently experiencing a resurgence in mainland China. However, Chinese worshipers of Kuan-yin have no idea of her gender transformation from male to female and her origins as a Buddhist Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva.

The cult of Avalokiteśvara in Tibet it seems began in C.E. 649 based on the Mani bka – bum which was written by the King Srong-btsan sgarn-po. There is also the belief that this text was translated in the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and summarized by the fifth Dalai Lama, Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (1617-1682). This Dalai Lama believed that these

texts were written by the Tibetan king, Srong-btsan sgarn-po, and are the words of Avalokiteśvara and the origin of the Tibetan religion. Most historians agree that the Avalokiteśvara cult began with the King Srong-btsan sgarn-po and a small group of his followers. Although there is not sufficient evidence to prove that there was widespread worship of Avalokiteśvara prior to the 11<sup>th</sup> century it is likely that the real spread of the Avalokiteśvara doctrine and cult began later in the 11<sup>th</sup> century as shown in other sources (bstan-pa phyidar).<sup>k</sup> The first great Tibetan figure actively to promote the Avalokiteśvara was Dipamkara–Srinana (982-1054) at nearby the end of his life at the beginning of 1042. The cult of the Avalokiteśvara accelerated in Tibet later in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Today, Tibetan Buddhists continue to believe that the Dalai Lama is the reincarnation of Avalokiteśvara and is a living bodhisattva (Kapstien, 1992: 79-85).

The most common form of Avalokiteśvara in Tibet is white with four-arms. From the twelfth-century compendium of Buddhist iconography, the *Sādhanamāla* calls the white four-armed Avalokiteśvara Ṣaḍakṣari Lokeśvara, ‘Lord of the six syllables’. Ṣaḍakṣari Lokeśvara is the form associated by *Sādhana* with the *Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra* and as his name suggests, the six-syllable mantra, “*Oṃ Maṇipadme Hūṃ*” Ṣaḍakṣari (Kohn, 2001: 11). However, in the *Kāraṇḍ*, the Avalokiteśvara is displayed with a thousand-arms. It is quite surprising that the form of four-armed Avalokiteśvara, which is associated with the *Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra*, is contrasted in the text itself.

In Japan, the Avalokiteśvara is written in a number of different ways with the different spelling including Avalokiteśvara

or Avalokiteśvara. The Japanese translations are derived from the Kannon, Kwannon or Kwanzeon respectively. Kwannon was the first representation of a Tantric form in Japan. The earliest mention of the eleven-headed Kwannon is circa C.E. 570 but the oldest image of Kwannon is located at Nachi and is dated around the late 7<sup>th</sup> or the early 8<sup>th</sup> century. The Chinese influence shows Avalokiteśvara in Japan assuming a female form (Neville, 1999: 13).

In Southeast Asia, the Avalokiteśvara is only well-known in Cambodia and the former Champa Kingdom (today's southern Vietnam) of Indo-China. In Cambodia the Khmer King was believed to be a reincarnation of the Avalokiteśvara. This is clearly represented in the Bayon sculptures of Angkor Thom (Locke, 1980: 411). As opposed to the eleven-headed and thousand-armed depictions of the Avalokiteśvara in other countries, the Cambodian Avalokiteśvara was normally depicted with up to sixteen heads and arms in which it held both tantric and non-tantric symbols in its hands. The relief carvings of the Avalokiteśvara typically show him as bare breasted and in a variety of different positions and with symbols in its hands (Getty, 1962: 72-75). Most importantly the depiction of the Avalokiteśvara's head and adornments are consistent with that of the Buddha images throughout Southeast Asia and often there is a third eye which is seldom found in Tibet or Nepal and never in China or Japan. In other areas of Southeast Asia the Kwan-yin or Chinese version of the Avalokiteśvara has become very popular as the goddess of mercy or goddess of the sea. This influence is clearly from a continuous flow of mainland Chinese immigrants to these geographic regions over the last two centuries.

There is no evidence as to when the worship of Avalokiteśvara began. However, from a textual point of view, the earliest Sanskrit literature that mentions the Avalokiteśvara name is the *Suvarṇa Sūtra*, but the date of this *Sūtra* is uncertain. A possible date is in the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. from the discourse on this *Sūtra* by Kāśyapa Māṭaṅga in India. The earlier form of Avalokiteśvara bears more similarity to a human but later the form of the Avalokiteśvara looks more like the Hindu deities. The features of increased sets of arms, from two to four to a thousand, from one head, to eleven and to a thousand are all examples of the Hindu influence. As discussed earlier the Avalokiteśvara's form has changed over time and geography. In China and Japan his image evolved in female form as well as male form. In Tibet the Dalai Lama is believed to be his reincarnation and the Khmer King refers to himself as having a similar role.

### 3.2 The Portrayal of the Avalokiteśvara found in the *Kāraṇḍ*

The iconography of the Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva portrayed in the *Kāraṇḍ* is eleven-headed, with one hundred thousand arms and one hundred thousand *koṭis* of eyes. These characteristics contribute to the ability of the Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva to see and help all sentient beings in all realms. The portrayal of Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva's form shows the Hindu influence as he has the same number of arms and eyes. There also is a term that is used in both Hinduism as well as Buddhism to explain gods such as 'yogin' and 'viśvarupī' both terms are also used to refer to the Avalokiteśvara in the *Kāraṇḍ*.<sup>1</sup>

The Avalokiteśvara and his many arms have resulted in his being called many different names, such as he who holds the beautiful lotus and so on. All these names relate to the portrayal of the actions of his hands, such as the Padmapani (lotus in the hand). According to early research (Getty, 1962: 59), the earlier form of the Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva has one head and two arms. The period the *Kāraṇḍ* was composed was around the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century to the early part of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The first images of him as an eleven-headed, thousand armed and thousand eyed being were found approximately in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It is possible that the *Kāraṇḍ* has influenced the iconographic representation of the Avalokiteśvara. Except in Tibet, the Ṣaḍakṣari Lokeśvara, the designated moniker for the Avalokiteśvara, has a body portrayed as having four-arms. This is in marked contrast to the iconography influenced by the famous mantra “*Oṃ Maṇipadme Hūṃ*” in Tibet. This seems to have been influenced by the *Kāraṇḍ* in the Ṣaḍakṣari Lokeśvara and is the form associated by *Sādhana* with the *Kāraṇḍ*.

### **3.3 The Status and Qualities of the Avalokiteśvara in the *Kāraṇḍ*.**

The *Kāraṇḍ* praises the Avalokiteśvara for having different qualities and promotes him as a savior of all sentient beings in all different realms including humans, gods and demons from hell and even lower caste beings. The *Kāraṇḍ* illustrates the Avalokiteśvara’s ability to manifest himself in a multitude of different forms in order to liberate all sentient beings and generate many different kinds of *samādhi*. These bodhisattva abilities can be gained only once he reaches the tenth *bhūmi*. We can say that the *Kāraṇḍ* emphasizes the bodhistava *bhūmi* system.

The Avalokiteśvara has the power to manifest himself and to teach sentient beings in whatever form is most suitable to liberate them. This is described below in a passage from the *Kāraṇḍ*.<sup>m</sup>

He (the Avalokiteśvara) teaches dharma with whatever form that can be taught to those beings. He teaches dharma with the form of *Tathāgata* for those whom the form of conversion of being is *Tathāgata*. He teaches dharma with the form of pratyekabuddha for those whom the form of conversion of being is pratyekabuddha...and so forth.

The manifestation into any form best suited to assist in transforming sentient beings is also found in other Mahāyāna texts. The *Lotus Sūtra* is one example, in chapter twenty five, the Avalokiteśvara has the ability of manifestation in order to rescue beings.

The Buddha declared to the bodhisattva Inexhaustible Mind, “good man, if there are beings in the land who can be conveyed to deliverance by the body of a Buddha, then to them the bodhisattva He who observe the sounds of the world preaches Dharma by displaying the body of a Buddha. To those who can be conveyed to deliverance by the body of a pratyekabuddha, he preaches Dharma by displaying the body of a pratyekabuddha.....and so forth. (Quoted in Hurvitz, 1976: 314)

However, if the reader employs a literal translation and interpretation method to understand the meaning of the text then it is likely that the true meaning is not understood and it may appear that the

status of the Avalokiteśvara is higher than that of the Buddha. For example, from the Buddha's statement, "The brilliancy of Avalokiteśvara is not found among the Buddhas". The following is the context which I found in the *Kāraṇḍ*."

Then Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin bodhisattva said to the Blessed One "today is Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva mahāsattva is not coming?" The Blessed One replies that the bodhisattva helps many good men and hundreds of *koṭis* of beings, cause their minds to achieve maturity, every day having brought more beings to this maturity. Oh son of noble family there is no such brilliancy which belongs to the Avalokiteśvara and has never occurred even to those all *tathāgatas*.

A literal interpretation of this statement would lead to the Avalokiteśvara being perceived as having more abilities than the Buddha but it does not mean that the Avalokiteśvara is of a higher status than the Buddha. To understand the precise meaning of the text we should follow the Buddhist Hermeneutic. The four rules of textual interpretation of *The Catuḥpratisaraṇa Sūtra*, as written under the name of refuge (*pratisaraṇa*) suggest (Lamotte, 1984: 200-203):

- (1) The dharma is the refuge and not the person;
- (2) The spirit is the refuge and not the letter;
- (3) The *sūtra* of precise meaning is the refuge and not the *sūtra* provisional; and,
- (4) (Direct) knowledge is the refuge and not (discursive) consciousness.

Thus, to best understand the real meaning, we have to look at it in context. In other *Sūtras* like the *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Sūtra*, there is the concept of beyond comprehension or something immeasurable; therefore the uncountable merit of the Avalokiteśvara is not an exceptional quality of a bodhisattva.

In fact, in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* it is mentioned that the bodhisattvas and monks do not have the same qualities that are possessed by the Buddha. We can see from the story of the Buddha that when he stayed at the Amra Garden in the city of Vaishali accompanied by a multitude of leading monks numbering eight thousand including another thirty two thousand bodhisattvas, the Buddha utilized his power to have them accepted and upheld the correct law to protect the Dharma and understand the Dharma (Quoted in Watson, 1893: 17-18).

They (the 32,000 bodhisattvas) came close to equaling in terms of the freely exercised wisdom of the Buddha, the unparalleled one, his ten powers, his fearlessness and his eighteen unshared properties. Though they had firmly closed the gate to all manner to evil existences, they allowed themselves to be born in the five lower realms, manifesting themselves there so that they might act as great physician kings, adroitly healing the ills of others, doling out whatever medicine suited the ailment, and insuring that the patient took it as prescribed. (Quoted in Watson, 1893: 18)

The *Lotus Sūtra* also illustrates that the Buddha had been preaching Dharma, teaching and converting uncountable

living beings but the *Kāraṇḍ* mentions that the Avalokiteśvara helped hundreds of *koṭis* of beings, which is clearly less than the innumerable numbers of beings that the Buddha has helped. The following is the context found in the *Lotus Sūtra*:

At that time, the World-Honored One, wishing to restate this meaning, proclaimed *gāthā*, saying:

Since I attained Buddhahood,  
Throughout the number of kalpas  
that have passed, Incalculable  
hundred thousands of myriads  
Of millions times *asaṃkhyeyas*,  
Ever have I been preaching  
Dharma, teaching and Converting  
countless millions of living beings.  
(Quoted in Hurvitz, 1976: 242)

The *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Sūtra* and The *Lotus Sūtra* both expound the higher status of the Buddha to that of the Avalokiteśvara. The fact that the *Kāraṇḍ* mentions that Avalokiteśvara's brilliancy that are not found among the Buddhas, should not be taken to mean that the Buddha has less ability but more likely is only used to emphasize the bodhisattva's skilfulness (*upāya*) in one of the bodhisattva practices.

The *Kāraṇḍ* clearly describes the lower status of the Avalokiteśvara when compared to the Buddha. The way in which the Avalokiteśvara pays respect to the Buddha such as by prostrating his head at the feet of the Buddha concretely demonstrates his lower status.

The textual evidence in the *Kāraṇḍ* shows the status of the Avalokiteśvara as Amitābha's assistant who came to help sentient beings, liberate and lead them to the *Sukhāvatī* realm where they can listen

to the Dharma from Amitābha. Through the practice of invoking the deity to be a protector and reciting *mantra* "Om Maṇipadme Hūṃ," it can be said that *Kāraṇḍ* contains aspects of Pure Land Buddhism.

#### **4. The Concept of the Ādibuddha**

In the prose version of the *Kāraṇḍ*, there is clearly no mention of the *Ādibuddha* but the term *Ādideva* is used and has some similar characteristics to that of the *Ādibuddha*. This may be a precursor to the development of the *Ādibuddha* concept. The features and qualities of the *Ādideva* are similar to those of the *Puruṣa Sūkta* in the *R̥gveda*, showing the possible influence of Hinduism. Also, Avalokiteśvara has many of the same characteristics as the *Ādibuddha*, the creator of the world and the other divinities which include the *Ādideva*, namely Maheśvara. In Hinduism, the Buddha is the manifestation of the Narayaṇa but in the *Kāraṇḍ*, Maheśvara is the manifestation of Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva. This is, perhaps, an attempt to compete with Hinduism through a pluralistic system and is the method which is utilized to attack and discredit the doctrine of a god creator. Here is the context found in the *Kāraṇḍ*:<sup>o</sup>

The Blessed One replied – "The moon and sun arisen from his eyes, Maheśvaraḥ from his forehead, Brahma from his body, Nārāyaṇa from his heart, Sarasvatī from his teeth, the wind from his mouth, Dharaṇī from his feet, Varuṇa from his stomach. When these divine beings were born from the body of the Avalokiteśvara he said to the divine name Maheśvara – Maheśvara when the *kaliyuga* arise, You, Maheśvara will appear into the evil

beings realm and you will be called the *primordial god*, the creator and author. All these beings will be deprived from the path to awakening. Then the talk among those worldly common men will be; it is said that the space is his *liṅga*, and the earth is his pedestal. *Liṅga* is the ground of all because they dissolve into him and derive from him.”

Studholme notes that there is the influence of the *Śiva Purāṇa* more clearly seen in the *Kāraṇḍ* as the Avalokiteśvara is addressed as *maheśvara* three times: once by Yamea, the Lord of death, during bodhisattva’s journey into hell, once by Śiva (Studholme, 2002: 38)<sup>p</sup> and once by Umādevī, in the course of their respective conventions. Studholme also states it is connected to the idea of an *īśvara* and is the notion of a supreme *puruṣa*, a great ‘man’ or ‘person’ who both pervades the universe and is responsible for its creation. He also finds that Śiva is referred to as *puruṣa*, along with *īśvara* and *maheśvara* in the *Śiva Purāṇa* (Ibid., p.38.). Even though the *Kāraṇḍ* has *purāṇic* influence his interpretation of this text appears to contradict and attack the *purāṇic* doctrine of a primordial creator god (Ibid., p.45).

Although the term *Ādibuddha* does not appear in the *Kāraṇḍ*, prose version, it is mentioned in the *Guṇakāraṇḍ* which is the verse version of the *Kāraṇḍ*, composed later (around the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE) (Bowker, 1997: 18).<sup>q</sup> It has a more developed concept of the *Ādibuddha*, as the embodiment of *Śūnyatā*, who is transformed into the Avalokiteśvara in order to create and protect the world.

Here is the context of the *Ādibuddha* found in the *Guṇakāraṇḍ* (Lokesh).

Thus so his great merits are too many to calculate / Even all great sages are unable to count. / Due to (his qualities) he who is world-protector, / The teacher of the world, the Lord of the world, / The ruler of all worlds, the glorious noble Avalokiteśvara. / The one who is born from the *primordial* Buddha himself, / Who is the world-lord, Maheśvara, / The producer of the universe, the sustainer of three worlds. / Who has Perfect knowledge, he is the sun of the wisdom of awakening. / All rulers of the world, gods, Asura, Yakṣa, Kinnara / Rākṣas, Garuda, and Nāga have worshipped and praised him always.

The Avalokiteśvara is born from the *primordial* Buddha himself and he appears in the *Guṇakāraṇḍ* as *primordial*’s son. The text is not addressing him as *Ādibuddha* at all.

I do not think that the *Guṇakāraṇḍ* has influenced the idea of *Ādibuddha* as a god creator. In fact the *Ādibuddha* appears as the personification of *śūnyatā*. The following is the context found in the *Guṇakāraṇḍ* (Lokesh).

In this way, there was great emptiness, as even the five elements had not come into existence. As light indeed, the spotless primordial Buddha came into existence. The great embodiment in three secondary aspects, the universal form, came about. That self-arisen Great Buddha, Primordial Protector, Great Lord, placed himself in the *Samādhi* called ‘Emission of the World’. Then, his own son, with divine form and bearing beautiful limbs, The Embodiment of good, with pure limbs, adorned by good

marks, shining with the beauty of merit, the over-lord of all the worlds, he also placed himself in the *Samādhi* called the ‘Origin of the World’.

This may be an attempt to more fully develop the *Ādibuddha* concept as identified by Günter Grönbold as existing in the much earlier texts. The first reference to the word *Ādibuddha* is in the Tibetan canon, the *Mahāyāna-sūtralaṅkāra* by Maitreya-nātha, around the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century, but it cannot be proven that the system of *Ādibuddha* existed at that time (Hammar, 2005: 93-95). Hammar, studied the *Kālacakra*, which is a Vajrayāna Buddhist text, and tried to define the concept of *Ādibuddha* that appears in the text. He explains that even though the concept of *Ādibuddha* is transcendent beyond worldly nature, it can also be interpreted as a way of expressing *Śūnyata*, the void (emptiness), or *tathāgatagarbha*, the small seed inherent in all human beings. Hammar’s research on the *Ādibuddha* connects the concept of the primordial Buddha with that of the fourth body of the Buddha, *sahajakāya*. The Fourth body’s essential attribute is considered to be the concept of the supreme unchanging bliss, *paramākṣarasukha*. Beside this, the fourth body, called either *sahajakāya*, or *śuddhakāya* or *svābhāvīkākāya* is connected with the pure, unchanging mind which is beyond all things. Also, the *Sahajakāya* being is beyond *prajñā* (wisdom) and *upāya* (method). In addition, the *Ādibuddha* is also explained as *bindu*, the indestructible or unchangeable nature, which is in the heart *cakra* of the human body. This human quality is similar to the concept of *Ādibuddha* as the supreme unchanging (Ibid., p. 88-140). From Hammar’s work on the *Kālacakra Tantra*, we can see that

the *Ādibuddha* concept has become more developed and systematic than the concepts alluded to in the earlier text.

If we follow Brandon’s (1970) theory the earliest evidence of the concept of *Ādibuddha* is found in the *Mañjuśrī-nāma-sarṅgīti*, a book that may possibly date back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century C.E. (Brandon, 1970: 29). In the *Mañjuśrī-nāma-sarṅgīti*, Manjusri is a synonym for the collective wisdom of all the Buddhas, and it is called *Ādibuddha*. The *Ādibuddha* of *Guṇakāraṇḍ*, the verse version, which was composed after the *Kāraṇḍ*, prose version and around the same time as the *Mañjuśrī-nāma-sarṅgīti*, based on my own research, could be the author trying to promote the Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva as the *Ādibuddha* in order to be more compatible with the Manjusri bodhisattva.

To further trace the development of the concept of the *Ādibuddha* in the *Kāraṇḍ*, it is likely that the best method of research is to study the *Kāraṇḍ* in Tibetan which could also derive benefits from its on-going living history.

## **5. Conclusion of the Concept of Avalokiteśvara and Buddhas in the Kāraṇḍ**

The *Kāraṇḍ* portrays the Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva with eleven-heads, one hundred thousand arms and one hundred thousand *koṭis* of eyes. These characteristics support the ability of the Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva to see and help all sentient beings in all different realms. The iconography of the Avalokiteśvara supports the principal qualities of the Avalokiteśvara, especially his great compassion. Through his great compassion, he has been making a huge

amount of merit in order for all sentient beings to reach liberation. He has the ability to manifest himself in a multitude of different forms to liberate sentient beings, which is only gained when the bodhisattvas achieve the tenth *bhūmi*. The recollection of his name will lead to the extinction of the life cycle. Even though the Avalokiteśvara has great power, he still has to follow the bodhisattva path to become a Buddha. This is achieved by practising the cultivation of *bodhicitta* and the first arising *bodhicitta*, through the meditation of *śūnyatā* (emptiness), and the practice of the six perfections of wisdom which is the mother of *tathāgata*.

The Avalokiteśvara's conducts reflect the concept of the Buddha and it can be understood that the Buddha's nature is concerned with the perfection of wisdom and the perfection of wisdom is the origin of the *tathāgata*. To gain the perfection of wisdom, the bodhisattva has to engage in *bodhicitta* through the contemplation of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and he will be liberated from *saṃsāra*.

However, in the *Kāraṇḍ*, there is more than one way of gaining the perfection of wisdom, including the *mantra dhāraṇī*. The result of practising the *mantra dhāraṇī* is equivalent to that of the practice of the six *pāramitās*, and both methods are shown to be equivalent. Practicing the recollection of the name of Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva as *dhāraṇī* leads to the extinction of *saṃsāra*. This same result is also gained once the perfection of wisdom has been made to arise and brought forth to completion.

Manifestation is a quality of the Buddhas that is boundless and timeless. The Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva has reached the highest *bhūmi* by attaining the

perfection of wisdom. He can therefore manifest himself, in any form, in order to help all sentient beings attain liberation. There is no self-existence as the manifestation capability comes from the perfection of wisdom. The magical interventions in this world are boundless and he can cause things to interpenetrate. The *dharmadhātu*, the way things really are, is the world of infinite interpenetration – the world as seen by the Buddha. According to Ultimate Insight, everything is in everything else. Therefore the Buddha nature is everywhere and the bodhisattva can process the Buddha nature. This is why the bodhisattva path becomes the way to attain Buddhahood or supreme enlightenment.

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## Appendix

<sup>a</sup> Vaidya, p. 298, II. 13-16.

atha sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhī  
bhagavantam etad avocat–yathā  
jñaptaṁ bhagavatā| atha  
sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhī bodhisattvo  
mahāsattva anekair  
bodhisattvapaśadgṛhasthaiḥ pravrajitaiḥ  
dāraḍārikādibhiḥ saṁprasthitaḥ|  
tasya dharmabhāṇakasya pūjākarmaṇe  
divyāni chatrāni divyāni  
upānāhānimaulikūṇḍala  
sragdāmakeyūrāhārārdhahāratnahār  
skandhopariṣvajānikapṛṣṭha uttaryāni

<sup>b</sup> Vaidya, p. 262, I. 28-30.

atha sa yamo dharmarājoh yena  
avalokiteśvaro bodhisattvo mahāsattvas  
tenopasaṁkrāntaḥ | upasaṁkramya  
bhagavataḥ pādau śirasābhivandya stotra  
viśeṣaṁ kartum ārabdhaḥ | namo’stv  
avalokiteśvarāya, maheśvarāya,  
padmaśriye, varadāya, vaśaṁkarāya, ...

<sup>c</sup> Vaidya, p. 268, I. 4-9.)

api ca kulaputra sarve tathāgatā daśabhyo  
vāgbhiḥ evaṁ vācama bhāṣanta te sattvāḥ  
sukhitā loke bhavanti, ye  
avalokiteśvarasya bodhisattvasya  
mahāsattvasya nāmadheyam  
anusmarantite  
jarāmaraṇavyādhiśokaparidevaduḥkhadaur  
manasyebhyaḥ parimuktā bhavanti, te  
āpaścimasāṁsārikāṁ duḥkhaṁ  
nānubhavanti, te śuklapāṇḍarapaṭā iva  
rājahaṁsāḥ plutavāyuvegā iva gacchanti  
sukhāvātīlokadhātum amitābhasya  
tathāgatasya saṁmukhaṁ  
dharmaśravaṇāya |

<sup>d</sup> Vaidya, p. 271, I. 12-13.

api ca| bhagavan, niśīdasva asminn āsane,  
anugrahaṁ kuru, pāparatānāṁ  
jātyandhabhūtānāṁ

paradāragamanaprasaktānāṁ  
prāṇātipātodyuktānāṁ  
paraprāṇāhiṁsakānāṁ

<sup>e</sup> Vaidya, p. 303, II. 23-28.

athāvalokiteśvaraḥ sukhāvātīlokadhātor  
niṣkramya yena jetavanavihāras tena  
saṁprasthitaḥ| anupūrveṇa jetavana-  
vihāraṁ saṁprāptaḥ| atha tasmin  
jetavanavihāre praviṣṭo bhagavataḥ pādau  
śirasābhivandya ekānte sthitaḥ | tadā  
kalaviṁka rutasvarābhinirghoṣeṇa  
bhagavān ārocayati– āgatas tvaṁ  
kulaputra? kṛtaḥ te sattvaparīpākaḥ ?

<sup>f</sup> Vaidya, p. 266, I. 21-27

tadā aryāvalokiteśvarasya  
guṇodbhāvanāṁ kurute–kīdrśī tvayā  
avalokiteśvara karmabhūmirmiṣpādītā sadā  
preteṣu avicāvupapanneṣu?  
kālasūtrauravopapanneṣu sattveṣu, hāhe  
tapane pretāyane mahānarake, agnighaṭe  
mahānarake, śālmalimahānarake,  
andhakāle mahānarake, śītodake  
mahānarake–evaṁ cānyeṣvapi?  
mahānarake ye upapannāḥ sattvāsteṣāṁ ca  
karmabhūmiṁ dr̥ṣṭvā tatra mayā  
sattvaparīpāko me kṛtaḥ kartavyaśca |  
kṛtvā sarve ca anuttarāyāṁ  
samyaksaṁbodhau pratiṣṭhāpayitavyāḥ |  
na ca tāvat tvayānuttarā  
samyaksaṁbodhirabhisamboddhavyā,  
yāvatsamantāddaśabhyo digbhyaḥ  
sarvākṣaṇopapannāḥ sattvā arūpaviśeṣe  
nirvāṇadhātau na pratiṣṭhāpitā bhaveyuh ||

<sup>g</sup> Vaidya, p. 277, I. 28-31. and p. 278, I. 1-2.

yadā avalokiteśvaro bodhisattvo  
mahāsattvaḥ prativasati, tadā  
darśanamātrāt sarvayakṣarākṣasāḥ  
paramahr̥ṣṭa- tuṣṭāḥ pramudita hr̥dayā  
bhavanti | atha te’valokiteśvarasya  
purastād dhāvanti, nirdhāvanti, dhāvitvā  
pādayoh praṇipaty saṁbhāṣayanti–mā

tvam̐ bhagavan śrāntaklānto yas tvam̐  
cirakālena dr̥ṣṭaḥ, yas tvam̐ asyām̐  
tamondhakārāyām̐ bhumau viharasi | sa  
kathayati–anekāni kartavyāni me | na ca  
mayaika- sattvasyārthe ātmabhāvaḥ  
pariniṣpāditaḥ | api tu sarvasattvānām̐  
antike mayā  
mahākaruṇācittatotpādayitavyā ||

<sup>h</sup> Vaidya, p. 302, II. 9-13.

ye te prathamacittotpādikā bodhisattvas te  
śūnyatānimittam̐ cintayanti| aho duḥkham,  
jarā duḥkham, maraṇam̐ duḥkham,  
iṣṭapriyasaṁprayogaviyogo duḥkham,  
avīci upapannānām̐ duḥkham,  
pretanagaropapannānām̐ sattvānām̐  
duḥkham| idam̐ kāye saṁvegam̐  
anuvicintya tadā te paryaṅkam̐ ābhujya  
r̥jukāyam̐ praṇidhāya pratimukhām̐ smṛtim̐  
upasthāpya teṣu parvatarājeṣu viharanti|

<sup>i</sup> Vaidya, p. 299. II. 27-29.

atha sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhī tam āha–  
katham̐ vayam̐ ṣaḍakṣarīm̐  
mahāvīdyārājñīm̐ labhemahi yena vayam̐  
kṣipravarā bhavāmaḥ ? dharmabhāṅakas  
tam uvāca–tadyathāpi nāma  
sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin  
prajñāpāramitānirjātāḥ sarvatathāgatāḥ|  
tatprajñāpāramitā sarvatathāgatānām̐ ca  
netrīty ākhyāyate |

<sup>j</sup> Vaidya, p. 302, II. 9-13.

ye te prathamacittotpādikā bodhisattvās te  
śūnyatā nimittam̐ cintayanti| aho  
duḥkham, jarā duḥkham, maraṇam̐  
duḥkham, iṣṭapriyasaṁprayogaviyogo  
duḥkham, avīcyupapannānām̐ duḥkham,  
pretanagaropapannānām̐ sattvānām̐  
duḥkham| idam̐ kāye saṁvegam̐  
anuvicintya tadā te paryaṅkam̐ ābhujya  
r̥jukāyam̐ praṇidhāya pratimukhām̐  
smṛtim̐ upasthāpya teṣu parvatarājeṣu  
viharanti

<sup>k</sup> During the second half of the tenth century, the King of Ngari, Tsenpo Khorey (*bTsan-po Kho-re*), abdicated his throne in favor of his brother, Song-ngey (*Srong-nge*), and became a monk. He is known to posterity as Lha Lama Yeshey-wo (*Lha bla-ma Yes-shes ‘od*).

Wanting to reverse the decline of Buddhism in Western Tibet, Yeshey-wo sent twenty-one young men to Kashmir in 971 to learn Sanskrit and study Buddhism. Of these, only Rinchen-zangpo (*Rin-chen bzang-po*, 958 – 1051) and Legpay-sherab (*Legs-pa’i shes-rab*) survived the journey, eventually developing into renowned translators. While studying in Kashmir and the famous monasteries of northern India, they sent back to Tibet several learned Indian scholars. These scholars represented several Indian Buddhist schools, though primarily the tantra tradition of Mahayana.

Yeshe-wo continued to invite Indian masters to Tibet. Among them was Dharmapala (*Dha-rma pa-la*), who together with the Indian disciples who accompanied him, started the second Mulasarvastivada monk ordination line in Tibet. The ordinations they conferred mark the beginning of a period in Tibetan history known as the “Later Flourishing of the Teachings” (*bstan-pa phyi-dar*). [The prior period became known, by contrast, as the “Earlier Flourishing of the Teachings” (*bstan-pa rnying-ma.*), March 12, 2013.

<[http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/ebooks/unpublished\\_manuscripts/survey\\_tibetan\\_history/chapter\\_2.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/ebooks/unpublished_manuscripts/survey_tibetan_history/chapter_2.html)>

<sup>l</sup> Vaidya, p. 290, II. 11-21.

tadā teṣāṃ romavivarāṇāmantato'hamapi  
kiṃ gamiṣyāmi ? āha–kulaputra, mayāpi  
tasya romavivaraṃ vīkṣamāṇena  
parimārgayamāṇena na dṛśyate |  
sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin kulaputra, ayaṃ  
māyāvī asādhyah sūkṣma evamanudṛśyate  
| nirañjano rūpī mahāpī (?)  
śatasahasrabhujah koṭīśatasahasranetro  
viśvarūpī ekādaśaśīrṣah mahāyogī  
nirvāṇabhūmivyavasthitaḥ sucetano  
mahāprājñah bhavottāraḥ kulīno'nādarśī  
prājño nirdeśas- tathācchāyābhūtaḥ  
sarvadharmeṣu, evameva kulaputra  
avalokiteśvaro bodhisattvo na śruto na  
kenacid dṛśyate | tasya svabhāvakā  
anyathārtagatā\* na paśyanti, prāgeva  
samantabhadrādayo'nye ca bodhisattvāḥ |  
acintyo'yaṃ kulaputra avalokiteśvaro  
bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ prātihāryāṇi  
samupadarśayati | anekāni ca bodhisattva  
koṭīniyuta śatasahasrāṇi paripācayati,  
sattvāṃśca tān bodhimārga pratiṣṭhāpayati  
| pratiṣṭhāpayitvā sukhāvātīlokadhātum  
anugacchati | amitābhāsyā tathāgatasya  
antike dharmamanuśṛṇoti ||

\* Willaims (2005:312). The highest number in the older system of numbers (viz. a Krore or ten millions)

<sup>m</sup> Vaidya, p. 268, I. 18-20.

yena yena rupeṇa vaineyāḥ sattvāḥ, tena  
tena rupeṇa dharmāṃ deśayati | tathāgata  
vaineyānāṃ sattvānāṃ tathāgata rupeṇa  
dharmāṃ deśayati | pratyekabuddha  
rūpeṇa dharmāṃ deśayati | .....

<sup>n</sup> Vaidya, p. 264, I. 19-22

atha sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhī  
bhagavantam etad avocat–bhagavan,  
adyāpi Aavalokiteśvara nāgacchaty  
avalokiteśvaro bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ?  
Bhagavān āha – anekāni kulaputra  
sattvakoṭīniyutaśatasahasrāṇi paripācayati  
| dine dine sa āgatya paripācayati | nāsti

kulaputra īdrśaṃ pratibhānaṃ  
tathāgatānāṃ api yādṛśaṃ  
āryāvalokiteśvarasya mahāsattvasya ||

<sup>o</sup> Vaidya, p. 265, I. 1-8. Bhagavān āha–  
cakṣuṣoścandrādityāvutpannau,  
lalāṭānmaheśvaraḥ, skandhebhyaobrahmāda  
yaḥ,  
hrdayānnārāyaṇah, daṃṣṭrābhyāṃ  
sarasvatī, mukhato vāyavo jātāḥ, dharaṇī  
pādābhyāṃ, varuṇaścodarāt | yadaite devā  
jātā āryāvalokiteśvarasya kāyāt,  
athāryāvalokiteśvaro bodhisattvo  
mahāsattvo maheśvaraṃ  
devaputrametadavocat–bhaviṣyasi tvam  
maheśvaraḥ kaliyuge pratipanne |  
kaṣṭhasattvadhātusamutpanna ādideva  
ākhyāyase sraṣṭāraṃ kartāram, te  
sarvasattvā bodhimārgaṇa viprahīṇā  
bhaviṣyanti, ya īdrśapṛthagjaneṣu sattveṣu  
sāṃkathyāṃ kurvanti || ākāśaṃ  
liṅgamityāhuḥ pṛthivī tasya pīṭhikā |  
ālayaḥ sarvabhūtānāmlīlayālīṅgamucyate ||  
1 ||

<sup>p</sup> The Avalokiteśvara referred to as  
*maheśvara devaputro* by Śiva. It is  
confusing as the text says that  
Avalokiteśvara created *maheśvara*.

<sup>q</sup> The text was probably composed around  
7<sup>th</sup> century CE. The *Ādibuddha* is  
portrayed as the personification of pure  
*śūnyatā*, who transforms himself into the  
Avalokiteśvara in order to create the  
world, and who as the Avalokiteśvara,  
then projects himself onto the world stage  
as both the historical Buddha and as  
various Hindu deities, for the purpose of  
teaching different people according to  
their needs. The creation theme of the  
*Kāraṇḍavyūha* was not developed by later  
texts, however, and the *Ādi Buddha* is now  
connected more specifically with the  
*Tathāgatas* than with the world. In Tibet

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he is the original 'enlightened mind' (Skt., *jñānakāya*), the fusion of wisdom and emptiness; the five *jinās* of the *maṇḍala* are conceived as his *skandhas*, and all Buddhas and their doctrines are seen as aspects of his nature.