

Bodhisattva Avalokite • vara in the *Gandavy has tra*^{*}

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Abstract

In the present paper the Avalokite • vara chapter of the *Ga • • avy has tra* will be examined. In this text, Avalokite • vara appears as one of the 53 benevolent friends or *kaly • • amitras* of Sudhana, the protagonist of the s tra and prototype of all aspirants for bodhisattvahood. Avalokite • vara ' s role in the *Ga • • avy ha* is rather that of a teacher and not of the “ superbodhisattva ” , almighty savior, as in the later Mah y na. He teaches the method of great compassion, the aim of which is to free all sentient beings from any kind of fears in order to lead them into the supreme perfect awakening, thus being adopted in the didactic scheme of the *Ga • • avy ha*. The relevant passages and terminological lists are presented and analyzed. The author develops the hypothesis that the Avalokite • vara chapter of the *Ga • • avy ha* reflects a very early phase of the development of the concept and image of the bodhisattva Avalokite • vara when the cult of the latter had not yet taken shape and widely spread in the Buddhist world and he clearly remains in the shadow of the three other archetypical bodhisattvas Samantabhadra, Mañju • r , and Maitreya. The present writer does not exclude the possibility that the figure of Avalokite • vara might have been developed on the basis of syncretism of the Buddhist teaching of compassion and the cult of some local protective deity. The question of location of the mount Potalaka as the residence of Avalokite • vara is also discussed.

On the basis of a glimpse comparison with a number of other sources (*Lotus Sūtra*, *Sukhavatvyāha*, *Heart Sūtra*, *Śāraṅgamasūtra*), the author concludes that in the *Gaṇḍavyāha* Avalokiteśvara represents the active way of education and meditation as he does in the *Heart Sūtra*, while in the *Lotus Sūtra* and *Sukhavatvyāha* the aspect of passive faith and devotion is dominant. In the *Śāraṅgamasūtra*, being a later source, the combination of those two is elaborated.

Key words: 1. *Gaṇḍavyāhasūtra* 2. Avalokiteśvara 3. Mount Potalaka
4. Great Compassion 5. Way of Education 6. Way of Faith

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Introduction

Although there are plenty of works on the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara published in Western languages and much more in Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian languages, the origin of this

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noble and magnificent figure, however, has still remained obscure. The image of

Avalokiteśvara first appears in the ancient Indian Buddhist iconography of the second to third centuries C.E., in reliefs of the temples and *stūpa* complexes in Gandhāra, as a companion of the Buddha. Later, in the fifth or sixth century, it is already found throughout India as an

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independent figure and object of cult. It is natural, however, to consider that there must have been a certain evolution of the concept before it found its way into religious art. Thus, the beginning of the Avalokiteśvara cult may be dated back at least a century or two earlier, that is the period between the first century B.C.E. and the first century C.E. which coincides what is

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commonly accepted as the time when early Mahāyāna emerged in India.

The written sources seem to confirm this assumption. In the *Lotus Sūtra* and the larger

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Sukhavāvyaśāstra, both supposedly dating back to the first or second century C.E., we meet bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara already in his full glory described in the former as the almighty savior of sentient beings from all dangers and disasters, and in the latter as the main attendant of the Buddha Amitāyus in the latter's Buddha-field. Thus, these two texts reflect the phase in the development of Buddhist religion when the Avalokiteśvara cult and worship had already reached its peak. The concept and figure of Avalokiteśvara as given in later sources (*Amitayurdhyanasūtra*, *Heart Sūtra*, *Śūraṅgamaśāstra*, *Karaṅḍavyūha* et al.) are

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definitely based on those two earlier scriptures. None of those texts, however, casts any light on the possible origin of Avalokiteśvara.

The list of the early literary sources containing materials on the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara could, however, not be complete without the *Gaṇḍavyāsaśāstra*, another early Mahāyāna sūtra which is, for reasons unknown to me, quite rarely cited in this connection. Even when it is mentioned then merely as one of the main sources in which the mysterious mount Potalaka, the

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residence of Avalokiteśvara is described. Much more interesting and meaningful doctrinal issues contained in the Avalokiteśvara chapter of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, however, are almost completely ignored or overlooked by modern authors.

In this paper, I will introduce and analyze the content of the Avalokiteśvara chapter of the

Ga • • avy ha. This is one of the earliest sources revealing the concept and figure of the great bodhisattva and thus its examination and the comparison with other textual sources may allow us to see the problem of the origin and meaning of the concept and figure of Avalokite • vara in the [7]

early Mah y na literature in a new light.

The *Gandavy has tra* as a Source

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Ga • • avy has tra, in Chinese Buddhism best known under the title *Ru fajie pin* (入法界品) [9]

as the last chapter of the voluminous *Huayan jing* (華嚴經 or *Avata • sakas tra*), is, like the *Lotus S tra*, in terms of literary form and composition a compendium of didactic religious tales, composed as such, most likely, for the purpose of presenting as completely as possible all the doctrinal issues circulating at the time in the Buddhist world of India interpreted within the new framework of the Mah y na. The compositional unifying thread is the story of the merchant ' s son Sudhana (*Shancai tongzi* 善財童子), an aspirant for the bodhisattvahood, who, following bodhisattva Mañju • r ' s (*Wenshushili pusa* 文殊師利菩薩) instruction, travels round India and visits various teachers called ' benevolent friends ' (*kaly • amitras, shan zhishi* 善知識), fifty-three altogether, in order to ask them about the bodhisattva conduct (*bodhisattvacary , pusa xing* 菩薩行). Each of them gives Sudhana specific instructions to contemplate, and finally these were integrated in the meditation of the vision of Maitreya ' s (*Mile pusa* 彌勒菩薩) magic mansion (*k • ag ra*), leading Sudhana into the realization of the totality of the bodhisattvahood embodied in the figure of the great bodhisattva Samantabhadra (*Puxian pusa* 普賢 [10]

菩薩).

Bodhisattva Avalokite•vara in the Role of a *kaly namitra*

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In the *Ga • • avy ha*, Avalokite • vara appears as one of Sudhana ' s benevolent friends, the twenty-eighth in the order visited by him. His status as a teacher is equal to the other *kaly • amitras* monks, nuns, householders, merchants, kings, goddesses etc. who represent a

cross-section of the intellectual elite in India at that time plus some mythological figures who, according to the understanding of Mahāyāna Buddhists, naturally belonged to the same circle being ideal archetypical teachers created in meditation but acting as real gurus in the minds of [12]

devoted adepts.

Avalokiteśvara's contribution to Sudhana's bodhisattva education is thus also equal to that of other "average" *kalyāṇa-amitras*, in that it explores just one aspect of the bodhisattva conduct, here the one based on the concept of 'great compassion' (*mahākaruṇā*, *dabei* 大悲). Like the other benevolent friends, Avalokiteśvara acknowledges, after revealing his teaching, that of all the methods within the vast scope of a bodhisattva's conduct he can only teach this particular one and is not able to impart the attitude and knowledge of the great bodhisattvas who are like Samantabhadra in their entirety.

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This shows clearly that at least when the *Gaṇḍavyākṣaṣṭra* was composed, in the religious and scholarly circles involved in this text-building process, Avalokiteśvara had not yet risen to the level of universally worshipped bodhisattvas as had Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, and Maitreya who appear in the *śāstra* as "superbodhisattvas" integrating all aspects of the bodhisattva [14]

conduct. The authors of the *Gaṇḍavyākṣaṣṭra* perceived him rather as a locally venerated Buddhist saint or deity, in any case a being on a much lower level than the three bodhisattvas just mentioned. So, we may suppose that the Avalokiteśvara presented in the *Gaṇḍavyākṣaṣṭra* was only starting his "career" as a great bodhisattva in the advancing Mahāyāna movement. Due to the present lack of supportive data at our command, we only may speculate on the role the *Gaṇḍavyākṣaṣṭra* might have played in the development of the cult of Avalokiteśvara by including him as a bodhisattva into their soteriological system. It still seems to me that the hypothesis that the *Gaṇḍavyākṣaṣṭra* may have played a crucial role in this process must not be excluded.

As mentioned before, bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara appears in the *Gaṇḍavyākṣaṣṭra* in the common range together with other mundane and divine *kalyāṇa-amitras* from whom he did not differ formally by status or special virtues. Even more, the Avalokiteśvara chapter is one of the

shortest among the *kaly • amitra* chapters lagging behind many others in terms of volume and richness of doctrinal explanation. This again demonstrates that the figure of Avalokite • vara was not very prominent in the eyes of the authors of the *Ga • • avy ha*, and so they did not make an extra effort to develop a grandiose story around his personage as they have done, for example, in the cases of most of the night goddesses and especially of bodhisattva Maitreya.

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The literary form and style of the Avalokite • vara chapter follow the general pattern applied throughout the *Ga • • avy ha* with few minor deviations. The pattern includes some standard structural units in fixed order: Sudhana ' s arrival at the place of the *kaly • amitra*; description of the surroundings and the retinue as well as the appearance of the *kaly • amitra* (this is the most optional unit often being absent but present in the Avalokite • vara chapter); Sudhana pays homage and asks for instruction; the *kaly • amitra* ' s praise for Sudhana ' s resolve to attain supreme perfect awakening (*anuttar samyaksa • bodhi, anouduolo sanmiao sanputi* 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提), introduction of his or her method and the giving of instruction; the *kaly • amitra* acknowledges his or her limited ability and virtue which is not equal to those of the great bodhisattvas; guiding Sudhana to the next benevolent friend. One or more verse sections may or may not be added. For the Avalokite • vara chapter, the verse section poses an extra text-historical problem as it definitely is a later extrapolation, by style, language and doctrine significantly different from the prose section.

Mount Potalaka: Religious and Historical Dimensions

In the Avalokite • vara chapter, Sudhana ' s arrival is described in the following way:

*atha khalu sudhana • • re • • hid rako...anup rve • a yena potalaka • parvatas tena-
upasa • kramya potalaka • parvatam abhiruhya avalokite • vara • bodhisattva •
parim rgan parigave • am no ' drak • d avalokite • vara • bodhisattva •
pa • cimadikparvata-utsa • ge utsasara • prasrava • a-upa • obhite
n lataru • aku • • alakaj tam • du • dvalatale mah vanavivare vajjaratna-
• il y • parya • ka • baddhv upavi • • a • n n ratna • il -talani • a • • a-*

*aparim • abodhisattvaga • apariv • ta • dharma • de • ayam na • sarva-
jagatsa • grahavi • aya • mah maitr mah karu • mukha-udyota • n ma*
[16]
dharmapary ya • sa • prak • ayantam |

(“ Then, the merchant ’ s son Sudhana... arrived in due order at mount Potalaka, and climbing mount Potalaka he looked around and searched everywhere for the bodhisattva Avalokite • vara. Finally he saw the bodhisattva Avalokite • vara on a plateau on the western side of the mountain in a clearing of large woods abounding in young grass, adorned with springs and waterfalls, and surrounded by various trees. He was sitting cross-legged on a diamond rock surrounded by a multitude of bodhisattvas seated on rocks of various jewels. He was expounding the dharma-explanation called ‘ the splendour of the door of great friendliness and great compassion ’ belonging to the sphere of taking care of
[17]
all sentient beings. ”)

As we see, the location here is described in a rather trivial way as a beautiful but still worldly place leaving the impression of a very commonplace mountain slope on this earth, not of a virtual Buddha-field born in meditation which usually is made of diamonds, jewels and other precious materials. With the exception of the diamond and jewel rock seats of Avalokite • vara himself and his bodhisattva retinue, no wondrous detail is to be found. In other words, the introduction of Avalokite • vara in his mountain residence does not differ significantly from that of other hermits in the *Ga • • avy ha*, *Megha • r*, *S ggamegha* or *Bhi • mottaranirgho • a*, for example. This again speaks in favour of the hypothesis that the authors of the s tra most likely had a really existing place in their mind when they described mount Potalaka and Avalokite • vara as a local Buddhist saint or mountain deity and not yet the universally honoured great bodhisattva who is the embodiment of great compassion.

In the verse sections, however, more details were added to the description of Avalokite • varas ’ s abode. The verses at the end of the previous *Ve • • hila* chapter mention

that mount Potalaka is located ‘ in the middle of the king of stormy

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waters ’ (• *ir jalar jamadhye*), an important feature which surely had a great impact on the creation of later myths and legends connecting Avalokite • vara ’ s residence with the ocean

[19]

or even describing it as an island. The two following lines describe the surroundings in the mountain generally in the same way as it is done in the prose section but stressing its jewel

ground: *ratn maya • taruvara • kusuma-abhik r • am udy napu • kiri • iprasrava • a-*

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upapetam || (“ Made of jewels, surrounded by trees, scattered with flowers, gardens, ponds and streams. ”)

[21]

In the verse section in the middle of the Avalokite • vara chapter, the ocean or other kinds of “ stormy waters ” are not mentioned any more. The abode of the bodhisattva, however, is

described as a ‘ jewel mountain ’ (*ratnaparvata*) and Avalokite • vara ’ s place there as a

‘ cave ’ (*kandara*) on the ‘ diamond slope of the mountain adorned with jewels ’ (*vajramaye girita • e ma • iratnacitre*). A list of mythological creatures such as ‘ gods ’ (*deva*),

‘ demigods ’ (*asura*), ‘ serpent-demons ’ (*bhujaga*), ‘ centaurs ’ (*kinnara*), and

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‘ demons ’ (*rak • asa*) is added as part of his retinue. The epithets ‘ wise ’ (*dh ra*) and ‘ hermit ’ (• • *i*) are used for Avalokite • vara in the verses. Since the verse section is

considered to be a later interpolation, we become witness to the changes occurring in the description and the transference of an originally realistic and natural place of beauty to a

supramundane adamantine realm. Even more, a direct hint at Avalokite • vara ’ s own Buddha-

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field is found in the verse section.

Ancient and modern authors have made attempts to localize mount Potalaka in the real

geographical space of India. The most famous passage in this regard, cited and examined again

and again by scholars is, that of the Xuanzang ’ s (玄奘) description of mount Potalaka

[24]

(*Budaluojia shan* 布坦洛迦山) in his *Records on the Western World* (*Datang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記):

[25]

“ To the east of the Malaya mountains [*Molaye shan* 秣剌耶山] is Mount Po-ta-lo-kia [*Budaluoja shan* 布坦洛迦山] (Pôtalaka). The passes of this mountain are very dangerous; its sides are precipitous, and its valleys rugged. On the top of the mountain is a lake; its waters are clear as a mirror. From a hollow proceeds a great river which encircles the mountain as it flows down twenty times and then enters the southern sea. By the side of the lake is a rock-palace of the Dê vas. Here Avalôkitê • vara [*Guanzizai pusa* 觀自在菩薩] in coming and going takes his abode. Those who strongly desire to see this Bôdhisattva do not regard their lives, but, crossing the water (*fording the streams*), climb the mountain forgetful of its difficulties and dangers; of those who make the attempt there are very few who reach the summit. But even of those who dwell below the mountain, if they earnestly pray and beg to behold the god, sometimes he appears as Tsz ’ -tsai-t ’ ien [*Zizaitian* 自在天] (Î • vâra-dê va), sometimes under the form of a yôgi [*tuhui waidao* 塗灰外道] (*a Pâ • • upata*); he addresses them with benevolent words and then they obtain their wishes according to their desires.

“ Going north-east from this mountain, on the border of the sea, is a town; this is a place from which they start for the southern sea and the country of S • ng-kia-lo [*Sengjialuo guo* 僧迦羅國] (Ceilon). It is said commonly by the people that embarking from this port and [\[26\]](#) going south-east about 3000 li we come to the country of Si • hala. ”

We do not know whether Xuanzang really visited this place or whether his record is based only [\[27\]](#)

on what he heard from the locals. Still, in his record the mount Potalaka is described as a real place in South India and we are informed that the approximate location of the Potalaka is “ to the east of the Malaya mountains ” not far from the sea. That must be somewhere in modern Tamilnadu in South-West India, not far to the north from the southern tip of India.

We also learn from Xuanzang ’ s *Records* that in the first half of the seventh century a kind of mixed Avalokite • vara- • varadeva (• iva – ?) cult was practised at this mountain. However, we

do not know whether this was in harmony with mainstream Mahāyāna practice at that time or whether we deal with a more or less independent rudimentary local cult. Still, what Xuanzang [28]

says seems to support the theory of Avalokite • vara- • iva connections. The *Ga • • avy ha* itself also gives some indirect hints in favour of this theory as the next *kaly • • amitra* Sudhana was guided to from mount Potalaka by another bodhisattva accompanying Avalokite • vara, Ananyagāmin, was the god Mahādeva (*Datian* 大天) who resided in the great temple in the city [29]

of Dvāravatī.

Here it should be a matter of interest to refer to the modern Japanese scholar Shu Hikosaka's work. On the basis of his study of Buddhist scriptures, ancient and medieval Tamil language literary sources, as well as field survey, he proposes the hypothesis that, the ancient mount Potalaka, the residence of bodhisattva Avalokite • vara described in the *Ga • • avy ha* and Xuanzang's *Records*, is the real mountain Potikai or Potiyil situated at Ambasamudram in Tirunelveli district, Tamilnadu, lat. 8° 36', long. 77° 17'. With 2072.6 m, it is the highest [30]

mountain in the Tinnevelly range of Ghats. In his work, Shu also develops an interesting theory concerning the etymology of the name Potalaka. According to him, the original Tamil name Potiyil is a derivation from *bodhi-il*, where *bodhi* is a loan from Pāli languages meaning 'Buddhism and Buddhists', and the Tamil word *il* means 'place, residence'. Thus the whole name indicates 'the residence of Buddhists or Bauddha ascetics'. The word *kai* in Potikai is [31]

colloquial Tamil and has the same meaning as *il*". In Sanskrit and Prākṛit Mahāyāna texts another change took place the *il* was translated back as *loka*, 'the world or place'. Thus [32]

Potalaka is a corrupted form of *Buddha-loka*, 'the place of Buddhists'. Shu also says that mount Potiyil/Potalaka has been a sacred place for the people of South India from time immemorial. With the spread of Buddhism in the region beginning at the time of the great king Aśoka in the third century B.C.E., it became a holy place also for Buddhists who gradually became dominant as a number of their hermits settled there. The local people, though, mainly remained followers of the Hindu religion. The mixed Hindu-Buddhist cult culminated in the

formation of the figure of Avalokite • vara. The worship of • iva P • • upata, however, [33]

remained popular too and blended with that of Avalokite • vara.

If Shu is right, the possible historical logic of the development of the concept and image of Avalokite • vara may have been as follows. (1) In pre-Buddhist times, Mount Potiyil/Potalaka was revered as a sacred place, the abode of deities and protective ghosts, by the local people. We do not know its original ancient name. (2) With the spread of Buddhism in South India, the place became popular among Buddhists as many of their hermits settled there. (3) Gradually the association with Buddhism became dominant and the new name Potiyil/Potalaka or “ Place of Buddhists ” was popularly used. (4) As Buddhists preached compassion, the new teaching merged with the old worship of a protective deity into a new cult. The conscious efforts of the Buddhist settlers, who possibly were responsible for the creation and introduction of the title [34]

Avalokite • vara too, may have been the decisive factor that launched this process. (5) Gradually, the concept and figure of Avalokite • vara became universally known and worshipped by all Buddhists and found its way into texts and iconography while mount Potalaka was mythologized in the course of time. (6) The triumph of Hinduism in the second half of the first millennium C.E. led to the merger of the cult of Avalokite • vara with that of Hindu gods, e.g. [35]

• iva.

The *Ga • • avy ha* seems to reflect the earliest phase of the new cult of Avalokite • vara; the *Lotus S tra*, *Sukh vat vy ha*, *Amit yurdhy nas tra*, and *Heart S tra* its culmination in the Mah y na tradition, and the • ra • gama, *Kara • • avy ha* as well as Tantric texts [36]

(*Dh ran s* and *S dhanas*) its late developments. Xuanzang ’ s notes, however, seem to describe the situation when Buddhism was already declining in India and Hindu motives became dominant again in the cult of Avalokite • vara at its original place.

Appearance of Avalokite•vara

Now let us return to the analysis of our text. As we saw, no details about Avalokite • vara ’ s

appearance were given in the above passage except mention of his cross-legged posture. Instead, some preliminary references regarding the content of his teaching with a focus on the concept of compassion are provided there.

After Sudhana had paid homage, the bodhisattva, however, makes a gesture through which some details of his noble and grandiose appearance became visible.

*atha khalu avalokite • varo bodhisattvo j amb nadasuvar • avar • a •
vicitra-aprameyaprabh j lav havy hameghapramuñcana •
dak • i • a • b hu • pras rya lak • a • a-anuvyañjanavis • tavividhvimala-
amitak yacittaprahā dasa • jananara • miprat nasa • kusumita •*

[37]

p • i • sudhanasya • re • • hid rakasya m rdhni prati • • h pya evam ha... |

(“ Then bodhisattva Avalokite • vara extending his right hand with the splendour of the purest gold, releasing clouds of arrays of perfect networks of immeasurable light, and putting his palm which was like a blossom with tendrils, adorned with marks and tokens, distinctive, taintless, producing immeasurable beams of lights which cool mind and body, on Sudhana ’ s head said ... ” [The routine praise of Sudhana ’ s resolve to attain supreme perfect awakening follows.]

Such a description of the bodhisattva ’ s appearance, however, is not specific to Avalokite • vara since the *Ga • • avyāha* uses similar elements for several other *kalyāṇa • amitras*. The golden colour of a saint ’ s body described in the sūtra is an obligatory detail. Emanation of light is also a routine way to express the extraordinary power of the buddhas, bodhisattvas and

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kalyāṇa • amitras to create “ virtual realities ” in the meditative states of their minds.

Thus we hardly discover in the *Ga • • avyāha*, with the exception of the verses of the *Fourty-Huayan*, any germ of the rich iconographic material in later descriptions of several forms of Avalokite • vara found in the *Sūdhana*s unless we suppose that the description of the

bodhisattva ’ s palm as ‘ like a blossom with tendrils ’ could be the prototype of the form of [\[39\]](#)

Avalokite • vara/Guanyin holding lotus.

Based on the above analysis we may conclude that for the authors of the *Ga • • avy ha* the description of the surroundings and the appearance of Avalokite • vara was of far less importance compared with the revelation of the doctrine. Thus the next portion of the prose text where the teaching attributed to Avalokite • vara is presented offers us much more of interest. We already have read in the passage above that the bodhisattva was teaching the “ dharma-explanation called ‘ the splendor of the door of great friendliness and great compassion ’ belonging to the area of taking care for all sentient beings. ” ‘ Great friendliness ’ (*mah maitr , daci*大慈), ‘ great compassion ’ (*mah karu • , dabei*大悲) and ‘ taking care for all sentient beings ’ (*sarvajagatsa • graha, sheshou yiqie zhongsheng*攝受一切眾生) are given here as the key words of Avalokite • vara ’ s doctrine. The bodhisattva ’ s instructions are given to the merchant ’ s son Sudhana in the form of several lists of related statements. In the following sections, all these lists will be presented in their Sanskrit original together with translation and some analysis.

Avalokite•vara’s Method of Great Compassion:

An Analysis of Related Lists

We start our observation with the presentation of Sudhana ’ s virtues as they were perceived and described by Avalokite • vara. Though one may say that this list actually does not belong to the very doctrine of Avalokite • vara, in the wider context of the didactic scheme of the *Ga • • avy ha* it still must be taken into consideration as a part of it since the text considers the maturity and readiness of the adept to receive certain teachings as a matter of crucial importance. Thus the virtues listed may be considered as a paradigm for a Mah y na adept ripe enough to receive and practice the doctrine of great compassion. Avalokite • vara in the role of Sudhana ’ s benevolent friend therefore first ascertains the mental attitude and level of maturity of the disciple, and only then reveals his own “ method ” to him. The following eighteen items thus describe the attitude and attainment of the merchant ’ s son Sudhana in the moment when he met

bodhisattva Avalokite • vara.

List 1

1. *anupama-ud ra-
acintyamah y nasa • prasthita* ‘ set out for the incomparable, lofty, inconceivable Great Vehicle ’
2. *j tam lakavividhadu • kha-upadruta-
apрати • ara • asarvajagatparitr • a- • aya* ‘ disposed to save all sentient beings who have no protection and are oppressed by various sufferings rooted in inborn conditions ’
3. *sarvaloka-atikr nta-anupama-apramey
sarvabuddhadharma-adhyak • ata-abhil • in* ‘ seeking for direct access to all supramundane, incomparable, immeasurable buddha-dharmas ’
4. *mah karu • vega- vi • • a* ‘ filled with the energy of great compassion ’
5. *sarvajagatparitr • amati* ‘ intent to save all sentient beings ’
6. *samantabhadradar • anacary -abhimukha* ‘ tuned toward the conduct of Samantabhadra ’
7. *mah pra • idh nama • • alapari • odhanacitta* ‘ intent on purifying the sphere of great vows ’
8. *sarvabuddhadharmameghasa • dh ra • a-
abhila • itaku • alam la-upacaya-at • pta-
• ayakaly • amitra-
anu • san samyakprav • tta-
mañju • r jñ nas garasa • bh ta* ‘ born from the ocean of knowledge of Mañju • r , perfectly set out for the instructions of benevolent friends, eagerly accumulating wholesome roots, seeking to gather clouds of all buddha-dharmas ’
9. *gu • akamala- kara* ‘ being the mine of the lotuses of virtue ’
10. *buddha-adhi • • h napratil bha-
abhimukha* ‘ approaching toward attainment of the authority of the Buddha ’
11. *sam dhi- lokavegapratilabdha* ‘ having attained the energy of the light of concentration ’
12. *sarvabuddhadharmameghasa • dh ra • a-
abhila • itacitta* ‘ seeking to keep in mind clouds of all buddha-dharmas ’
13. *buddhadar • anapr tipras davega-
prahar • itam nasa* ‘ with a mind delighting in the energy of gratitude and joy while seeing the Buddha ’

14. *acintya-apram* • *asucaritavega-abhi* • *yanditacetas*

‘ the mind flowing over with the energy of inconceivable, immeasurable good conduct ’

15. *gu* • *apratipattivega* • *uddhapu* • *yajñ nako* • *a*

‘ being a treasury of pure meritorious knowledge by the energy of complete virtue ’

16. *svayamabhijñ mukhasarvajñajñ nam* *travegaparasa* • *dar* • *a-abhipr ya*

‘ wishing to show others the energy of the measure of omniscient knowledge accessible by one ’ s own ultimate knowledge ’

17. *mah karu* • *vegavipannam la*

‘ firmly rooted in the energy of great compassion ’

18. *tath gatajñ na* [\[40\]](#) *lokavega*

‘ intent to keep the energy of the light of the knowledge of Buddha ’

sa • *dh ra* • *amati*

All the features in this list, obviously understood as the characteristics of a bodhisattva (or rather these of one who still is on the way to the bodhisattvahood), are repeated in various wordings and combinations again and again in the teachings of different *kaly* • *amitras* throughout the *Ga* • • *avy ha*. However, a comparative study of them remains outside the scope [\[41\]](#)

of the present article. For preliminary analysis, we may systematize those eighteen items into the following basic tasks the bodhisattva-to-be must have accomplished: (1) devotion to the selected way and methods, i.e. the buddha-dharma and Mah y na as well as the bodhisattva conduct and vows [1., 6., 7., 10., 13., 14.]; (2) development of an altruistic and compassionate resolve and energy [2., 4., 5., 17.]; (3) increasing knowledge through Buddhist education in order to get access to all buddha-dharmas, i.e. doctrines and ways of their explanation and realization [3., 8., 12., 15., 16., 18.]; (4) cultivation of *sam dhi* (*sanmei*三昧) or a concentrated state of mind [11.]; (5) being the mine of virtue [9.] which is more or less meant to include all the items mentioned in [\[42\]](#)

the list. It is significant to point out the frequent use of the word “ energy ” or “ impetus ” (*vega*) describing a necessary and pervasive component of the adept ’ s attitude and practice.

After characterising Sudhana, Avalokite • vara introduces his very doctrine or method for educating bodhisattvas, namely ‘ entry into the bodhisattva conduct called immediate entry into [\[43\]](#) the great compassion ’ (*mah karu • mukha-avilamba n ma bodhisattvacary mukha*). Right away the didactic rationale is given to explain the purpose to which this method is targeted:

Statement 1

etacca kulaputra mah karu • mukha-avilamba • bodhisattvacary mukha • sarvajagadasa • bhinnasattvapariṣ kavīnayanaprav • tta •

[\[44\]](#)

samantamukhasrotavijñaptisattvasa • grahavinayaparyupasth nam

(“ And, son of the good family, this entry into the bodhisattva conduct called immediate entry into the great compassion continuously encompasses all sentient beings with the precepts of bringing sentient beings to maturity and serving them with the precepts of taking care, and makes them known the flow of the universal entries. ”)

Bringing sentient beings to maturity (*parip ka*), ‘ taking care ’ (*sa • graha*) of them, and ‘ precept ’ (*vinaya, vinayana*) are the key terms here and in the didactic conception of the *Ga • • avy ha* in general. All activity of a bodhisattva aims at bringing sentient beings to maturity and taking care of them by applying certain precepts for this purpose. Generally, we may interpret those two activities as an expression of “ education ” in the Buddhist sense of the word, enabling sentient beings to attain ‘ supreme perfect awakening ’ (*anuttar samyaksa • bodhi*) and ‘ omniscience ’ (*sarvajñat*) being the ultimate aim of this education as stated countless times in the *Ga • • avy ha*.

Education as a complex of precepts for maturing must first of all include the methods to release sentient beings from various negative states and take them out of unfavourable conditions, i.e. from inner and outer obstructions. This is what Avalokite • vara ’ s teaching and method particularly points out (see List 4 below).

The next statement, however, informs us that this method is based on nothing else but all Buddhas (Thus-Gone, *tath gata, rulai*如來) and is to be implemented in the sphere of the affairs of all beings, thus, serving as the link between Buddhahood and the worldly realm of sentient beings.

Statement 2

*so ' ham kulaputra mah karu • mukha-avilambabodhisattvacary mukhe
prati • • hita • sarvatath gat n • ca p dam l n na vical mi*
[\[45\]](#)

sarvasattvak rye • u ca abhimukhasti • • h mi

(“ So, I, son of the good family, being established into the entry of the bodhisattva conduct called immediate entry into the great compassion, do not distance myself from the feet of all Buddhas and stay face to face to the affaires of all sentient beings. ”)

Four groups of distinctive means or ways of actions are then listed in order to explain how Avalokite • vara ’ s method actually benefits sentient beings through involvement in their field of action with the purpose of taking care (*sa • g • h • ati, sheshou*攝取) of them.

List 2

<i>d na</i>	‘ generosity ’
<i>priyavadit</i>	‘ kind speech ’
<i>arthakriy</i>	‘ beneficial actions ’
[46]	‘ universal benefit ’
<i>sam na-arthat</i>	

[\[47\]](#)

The further ten means to bring sentient beings to maturation (*parip cayati, chengshu*成熟), are listed (all the items in the text are in the instrumental case):

List 3

<i>r pak yavidar • ana</i>	‘ being visible in bodily form ’
<i>acintyavar • asa • sth nar padar • ana- vi • uddhy ra • mij la-utsarge • a-api sattv n prahl dya</i>	‘ cooling sentient beings with the emission of a network of beams of light thus purifying inconceivable visible appearances and established forms ’
<i>yath - • ayagho • a-ud h ra</i>	‘ utterance in a voice according to [their] disposition ’
<i>yath -abhimata- ry pathasa • dar • ana</i>	‘ showing observances according to [their] inclinations ’
<i>vividha-adhimuktisabh ga- dharmade • an</i>	‘ teaching dharma in accordance to [their] distinctive devotion ’
<i>n n r pavikurvita</i>	‘ transfiguring into various forms ’
<i>ku • aladharmas-upacayaprav • tta- sattvacittasa • codan</i>	‘ urging beings to involve their minds with the accumulation of wholesome dharmas ’
<i>• aya-anur pavicitra-aparim • a- nirm • asa • dar • ana</i>	‘ showing immeasurable projections of different appearances according to [beings ’] disposition ’
<i>n n j ti- upapannasattvasabh gar pa- sa • dar • ana</i>	‘ showing appearances that are the same as those of the sentient beings obtained according to [their] various classes ’
[48]	
<i>eka- v saniv sa</i>	‘ living together in the same abode ’

The four items of ‘ taking care ’ (List 2) may be classified as belonging to the sphere of “ everyday ” social life and summarised as nothing but a careful and attentive attitude towards others and corresponding actions. The ten items for ‘ maturing ’ sentient beings (List 3), however, are more metaphysical by nature expressing the ability of advanced bodhisattvas to create ‘ transfigurations ’ (*vikurvita, shenbian*神變), i.e. to appear at will in various bodily forms according to sentient beings ’ ‘ mental dispositions ’ (*yath - • aya*) or their different ability to perceive and accept them as such and receive the guidance they offer. The concept of

‘ transfigurations ’ , interpreted by some modern scholar as the bodhisattvas ’ actions of [\[49\]](#)

“ magic ” or “ thaumaturgy ” but still understood by the author rather as a way of portraying the concept of ‘ skillful means ’ (*up yakau • alya, fangbian*方便), is one of the corner-stones of the metaphysics of the *Ga • • avy ha*. It is thus no wonder that it is also adopted here in the description of Avalokite • vara ’ s method.

The tenth item of List 3 may be taken as an integration of the social and metaphysical aspects of ‘ taking care ’ and ‘ maturing ’ respectively since both verbs are used in this case (*eka- v saniv sena-api sattv n sa • g • • • mi parip cay mi*).

The next section of the exposition of Avalokite • vara ’ s method must be considered as a central one. Here the list of 19 negative states of mind of sentient beings defined as ‘ fears ’ (*bhaya, bu*怖 or *kongbu*恐怖) is presented including a general state of ‘ suffering and [\[50\]](#)

depression ’ (*du • khadaurmanas*). The bodhisattva has set out to free all beings from those fears having taken a vow to protect all sentient beings and purifying his method.

Statement 3

tena may kulaputra ida • mah karu • mukha-avilamba • bodhisattvacary mukha • [\[51\]](#)

pari • odhayat sarvajagatprati • ara • apra • idhir-utp dita •

(“ I, son of the good family, purifying this entry into the bodhisattva conduct called immediate entry into the great compassion have taken the vow to offer protection to all sentient beings. ”)

Several verbal derivatives with the meaning of ‘ freeing ’ , ‘ annihilation ’ etc. are used in the Sanskrit text as the final part of parallel compound words. Those are formed following the pattern: *sarvasattva* + fear + verbal derivative in the dative case and thus mean together with the above statement “ ...have taken the vow to offer protection to all sentient beings for ending

(annihilating etc.) such-and-such fear in all sentient beings. ” However, these verbal derivatives probably have no specific terminological value but simply express the style of the authors of the s tra: to use as many synonyms as possible to present an important idea, perhaps in order to exert stronger influence on the mind of the readers (or listeners) by creating more associations in their mental space. Thus, in all Chinese versions all the synonyms are rendered with one and the same word 離 ‘ remove ’ (in *Sixty-, Eighty- and Fourty-Huayan*) or *yuanli* 遠離 ‘ to keep far away ’ (in *Luomo*). Below the full list of the fears is presented with the respective Sanskrit verbal derivative adduced in each case. The comparative lists of the ‘ fears ’ of all four Chinese versions are presented in the additional table.

List 4

<i>prap tabhaya</i>	‘ fear of degradation ’	(<i>vigama</i> ‘ ending ’)
<i>sa • tr sakabhaya</i>	‘ fear of horrors ’	(<i>pra • amana</i> ‘ pacifying ’)
<i>sa • mohabhaya</i>	‘ fear of ignorance ’	(<i>vinivartana</i> ‘ ceasing ’)
<i>bandhanabhaya</i>	‘ fear of bondage ’	(<i>samuccheda</i> ‘ annihilating ’)
<i>j vita-uparodha-upakramabhaya</i>	‘ fear of attacks on their lives ’	(<i>vy- -avavartana</i> ‘ turning away ’)
<i>upakara • avaikalyabhaya</i>	‘ fear of insufficient means to support life ’	(<i>apanayana</i> ‘ removing ’)
<i>j vik bhaya</i>	‘ fear of living ’	(<i>vy-upa • amana</i> ‘ stopping ’)
<i>a • lokabhaya</i>	‘ fear of bad reputation ’	(<i>samatikrama • a</i> ‘ overcoming ’)
<i>s • s rikabhaya</i>	‘ fear of sa • s ric states ’	(<i>upa • amana</i> ‘ calming ’)

<i>par • acch radyabhaya</i>	‘ fear of surrounding crowds ’	(<i>vigama</i> ‘ ending ’)
<i>mara • abhaya</i>	‘ fear of death ’	(<i>vy-atikrama</i> ‘ neglecting ’)
<i>durgatibhaya</i>	‘ fear of miserable conditions ’	(<i>vinivartana</i> ‘ ceasing ’)
<i>tama-undhak ravi • amagati</i>	‘ danger of creating darkness ’	(<i>apraty-ud- vartya-avabh sakara • a</i> ‘ not resisting to making light ’)
<i>vi • abh gasamavadh nabhaya</i>	‘ fear of contact with poison ’	(<i>aty-antavigama</i> ‘ ending completely ’)
<i>priyaviprayogabhaya</i>	‘ fear of separation from the pleasant ’	(<i>nirodha</i> ‘ keeping off ’)
<i>apriyasa • v sabhaya</i>	‘ fear of co-existence with the unpleasant ’	(<i>apanayana</i> ‘ removing ’)
<i>k yaparip • bhaya</i>	‘ fear of physical pains ’	(<i>visa • yoga</i> ‘ separating ’)
<i>cittaparip • anabhaya</i>	‘ fear of mental pains ’	(<i>nirmok • a • a</i> ‘ releasing ’)
[52] <i>du • khadaurmanas</i>	‘ suffering and depression ’	(<i>up y sasamatikrama</i> ‘ overcoming skillfully ’)

List 4a

[53]	[54]	[55]	[56]
<i>Luomo</i>	<i>Sixty-Huayan</i>	<i>Eighty-Huayan</i>	<i>Fourty-Huayan</i>
嶮難惡道恐怖	險道恐怖	險道怖	險道怖
熱惱恐怖	熱惱恐怖	熱惱怖	熱惱怖
愚癡恐怖	愚癡恐怖	迷惑怖	迷惑怖

繫縛恐怖	繫縛恐怖	繫縛怖	繫縛怖
殺害恐怖	殺害恐怖	殺害怖	殺害怖
-	-	-	王官怖
貧窮恐怖	貧窮恐怖	貧窮怖	貧窮怖
不活恐怖	不活恐怖	不活怖	不活怖
諍訟恐怖	諍訟恐怖	惡名怖	惡名怖
-	-	於死怖	於死怖
大眾恐怖	大眾恐怖	大眾怖	-
-	-	-	諸病怖
-	-	-	懈怠怖
死恐怖	死恐怖	-	-
墮四惡道恐怖	惡道恐怖	惡趣怖	-
諸趣恐怖	諸趣恐怖	-	-
-	-	黑闇怖	黑暗怖
不同意恐怖	不同意恐怖	-	-
-	-	遷移怖	遷移怖
愛不愛恐怖	愛不愛恐怖	愛別怖	愛別怖
一切惡恐怖	一切惡恐怖	怨會怖	怨會怖
逼迫身恐怖	逼迫身恐怖	逼迫身怖	逼迫身怖
逼迫心恐怖	逼迫心恐怖	逼迫心怖	逼迫心怖
愁憂恐怖	愁憂恐怖	憂悲怖	憂悲愁歎怖
懈怠恐怖	-	-	-
邪婬貪色恐怖	-	-	-
生老病死憂悲苦惱	-	-	-
所求不得	-	-	所求不得怖
愛別離苦	-	-	-
怨憎會苦	-	-	-

為脫一切眾生苦畏海	-	-	-
-	-	-	大眾威德怖
-	-	-	流轉惡趣怖

The lists in the Sanskrit text and the different Chinese versions are not completely identical. In all Chinese versions a few items are absent, and some to be found in *Luomo* and *Fourty-Huayan* have no equivalents in the Sanskrit text. There are also minor differences in the order of items. However, since most items in all lists coincide, we may conclude that all five versions are most likely based on different recensions of one and the same archetypical text.

In the next section, Avalokite • vara explains how the protection (*prati • ara • a, qiuhu yiqie zhongsheng* 救護一切眾生) against ‘ fears ’ he has promised and taken a vow to offer really works through three kinds of means he has established for sentient beings. He says:

Statement 4

*anusm • timukha • ca me sarvaloke ’ dhi • • hita • sarvasattvabhayavy-upa • aman ya |
svan macakra • me sarvaloke ’ bhivijñapta • sarvasattvabhayavigam ya |
sarvajagadananta- k • tibheda • amatho me k ye ’ dhi • • hito*
[\[57\]](#)
yath k lajagatprativijñaptaye |

(“ I have established the method of recollection in the whole world in order to calm all fears of sentient beings. I have made thoroughly known the sphere of my name to the whole world in order to end all fears of sentient beings. I have established the pacification of all sentient beings in infinite distinctive forms in my body which I reveal to sentient beings at the proper time. ”)

Avalokite • vara ’ s three means of ‘ recollection ’ , ‘ making know the sphere of name ’ and ‘ pacification sentient beings in his body ’ most likely describe a kind of three-fold combined

meditational practice with the concept and figure of the bodhisattva Avalokite • vara as its basis. We do not know whether *anusm • ti* (*nian* 念) here means recollection of the image of the great bodhisattva only, or the faculty, psychic power of remembering, mindfulness, and contemplation as such. Devotional, cultic interpretation may prefer the first, philosophical-psychological interpretation the second. The text leaves both ways open. But, as it is said, the bodhisattva has ‘ established the method (*mukha, men* 門) of recollection in the whole world ’, so the philosophical interpretation seems to be more valid. This means, in order to become free from all kinds of fears, sentient beings must continuously develop the faculty of recollection by remembering the horrors of fears, and counteracts them getting inspiration in the noble figure of Avalokite • vara whom they also have continuously to keep in their mind.

‘ Making thoroughly known on the sphere of my name to the whole world ’ may similarly have two meanings: first, urging adepts to recite Avalokite • vara ’ s name or his mantra (as it became widely practiced later), and second, hinting the wider area of verbal instructions (texts) to be learned, and so based on thorough knowledge to remove all fears. Since the term used in this passage is *svan macakra* (‘ the sphere of my name ’) and not *svan ma* (‘ my name ’), we may again assume that the second interpretation was more valid in the original context of the

[\[58\]](#)

Ga • davy ha.

‘ Establishing pacification of all sentient beings in his body ’ may mean the higher, integrative level of the *sam dhic* practice, a kind of identification of the practitioner with the great bodhisattva, the former having accomplished all instructions of the latter and, as a result, freed him or herself from all fears and other mental obscurations. The timing is also mentioned here as an important item meaning, most likely, that the great bodhisattva actualizes in the practitioner ’ s mind only when his or her learning and practice have reached a certain advanced level or when the situation needs it.

In the following statement, this advanced level is described as ‘ supreme perfect awakening ’, the universal aim of all Buddhists, and ‘ attainment of all buddha-dharmas ’, the latter to be understood as the omniscience (*sarvajñat*), a term appearing regularly together with “ supreme

perfect awakening ” in the *Ga • • avy ha*. This aim, however, can only be reached if one applies the three means (*up ya*) of contemplation described in the Statement 4.

Statement 5

*so ' ha • kulaputra, anena-up yena sattv n sarvabhayebhya • parimocya
anuttar y • samyaksa • bodhau cittam utp dya avivarty n karomi*

[\[59\]](#)

buddhadharmapratil bh ya |

(“ Thus, son of good family, releasing sentient beings from all fears and setting their mind on supreme perfect awakening by those means, I cause them not to fall back from the attainment of all buddhadharmas. ”)

The last list in the chapter describes the virtues of the great bodhisattvas which Avalokite • vara declares, he is not able to know or talk about since he has only attained and accomplished one single method, not all aspects of the bodhisattva conduct.

Statement 6

*etam aha • kulaputra mah karu • mukha-avilambasya bodhisattvacary mukhasya
I bh |ki • may • akya • samantabhadr • • bodhisattv n • ... cary •*

[\[60\]](#)

jñ tu • gu • n v vaktum |

(“ I, son of the good family, have attained this entry of the bodhisattva conduct called immediate entry into the great compassion. How could I know the conduct of bodhisattvas like Samantabhadra or talk about their virtues ... ”)

This is an important moment as Avalokite • vara defines the bodhisattvas on a par with

Samantabhdra, thus acknowledging the supremacy of the latter compared to himself. This feature surely reflects the attitude of the authors of the *Ga • • avy ha* who regarded Samantabhadra as the highest archetype of the bodhisattvahood in its completeness while Avalokite • vara merely represents one single aspect of it. The list contains the following items of mainly general character describing the virtues of these bodhisattvas.

List 5

<i>sarvabuddhapra • idh nama • • alavi • uddha</i>	‘ who have purified the sphere of the vows of all buddhas ’
<i>samantabhadrabodhisattvacary gati • gata</i>	‘ who are going along the way of the conduct of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra ’
<i>ku • aladharmā-abhisa • sk ra-avyavacchinnasrota</i>	‘ who are uninterruptedly performing wholesome dharmas ’
<i>sarvabodhisattvasam dhi • rotrasad sam hita</i>	‘ who are always concentrated on hearing all sam dhis of bodhisattvas ’
<i>sarvakalpasa • v sacary -avivartyasrota</i>	‘ who are irreversibly carrying out the conduct dwelling through all eons ’
<i>sarvatra adhvanay -anugatasrota</i>	‘ who are constantly reaching everywhere ’
<i>sarvalokadh tv- vartaparivartasrotaku • ala</i>	‘ who are familiar with the changing currents of all worlds ’
<i>sarvasattva-aku • alacittavy-upa • amakarasrota</i>	‘ who are continuously decreasing the bad minds of all sentient beings ’
<i>sarvasattvaku • alacittasa • vardhanasrota</i>	‘ who are continuously increasing the good minds of all sentient beings ’
	[61]
<i>sarvasattvasa • s rasrotovinivartikarasrota</i>	‘ who are continuously working to turn away all sentient beings from the currents of sa • s ra ’

Avalokite•vara Chapter in the Didactic Scheme of the *Gandavy ha*

Let me now once again summarize the method of the dharma of great compassion as revealed in

the Avalokite • vara chapter to demonstrate its structural cohesiveness in the larger didactic scheme of the *Gaṇḍavyāsa*.

The practical, functional purpose of the method is ‘taking care of’ (*saṅgraha*) and ‘maturing’ (*paripācana*) sentient beings by using certain ‘precepts’ (*vinaya*). These three items may be put together into the working meta-term “education” which is a unifying factor of all methods introduced in the śāstra and the guiding principle of the ‘bodhisattva conduct’ (*bodhisattvacārya*). Avalokite • vara’s specific ‘method’ or ‘entry’ (*mukha*) in particular relies on ‘great compassion’ (*mahākaruṇā*), an issue widely accepted and [\[62\]](#) discussed within the universal framework of bodhisattva education.

The first section of the scheme is the description of the adept’s ability and attainment (List 1), which may be defined, in the terms of the *Gaṇḍavyāsa*, as the store of ‘wholesome roots’ (*kuśalamūla*), enabling him to receive and understand the instructions of the *kalyāṇamitras*.

Avalokite • vara introduces and explains his method in the second section (Statements 1 and 2), repeating again that it works through the precepts (*vinaya*) of taking care of sentient beings and bringing them to maturity, that its very source and foundation are all the buddhas and the sphere of carrying it out are the ‘affairs of all sentient beings’ (*sarvasattvākārya*).

The third section gives details about how the method really works as an educational means (*upāya*). They are divided into two groups: the means of ‘taking care’ (*saṅgraha*) (List 2) and the means of ‘maturing’ (*paripācana*) (List 3). The items in the List 3 are understood as an elaboration of the important metaphysical and soteriological concept of ‘transfigurations’ or ‘manifestations’ (*vikurvita, nirmāṇa*) of various appearances (*varāṇā*) and bodily forms (*rūpākāya*) etc. by advanced bodhisattvas in order to educate sentient beings.

The fourth section exposes the essential content of Avalokite • vara’s teaching as a practical method by presenting a list of negative mental states defined as ‘fears’ (*bhaya*) (Lists 4 and 4a) which cause ‘suffering and depression’ (*duḥkhaśaurmanas*) and are to be eliminated by the application of this method. In the Statement 3, the latter is defined as

‘purifying’ (*pariśodhana*) the method which means ‘taking the vow to protect all

beings ’ (*sarvajagatprati • ara • apra • idhi*) and carrying out this altruistic devotion.

The fifth section introduces a threefold devotional meditation (Statement 4) which includes ‘ recollection ’ (*anusm • ti*), ‘ making known the sphere of his [Avalokite • vara ’ s] name ’ (*svan macakram abhivijñaptam*), and ‘ establishing the pacification of all sentient beings in his body ’ (*sarvajagad... • amatho me k ye ’ dhi • • hita •*). This method is not detailed further leaving it open for different interpretations.

The sixth section establishes the ultimate purpose of the method (Statement 5) which consists in ‘ setting the [beings ’] mind on supreme perfect awakening ’ (*anuttar y m • samyaksa • bodhau cittam utp dya*) ‘ cause beings not to fall back from the attainment of buddha-dharmas ’ (*avivarty n karomi buddhadharmapratil bh ya*). This is the ultimate aim of [\[63\]](#)

all methods of Buddhism, its soteriology or lysiology.

Finally, the seventh section (Statement 6 and List 5) acknowledges that the revealed method of the bodhisattva Avalokite • vara still represents only one possible way leading the adept to bodhisattvahood, but is not ultimate bodhisattvahood itself. The latter is understood in the *Ga • • avy ha* as the integration of all methods which is available only to those great bodhisattvas who are matured to the level of Samantabhadra.

The scheme containing all the basic elements of the concept of bodhisattva Avalokite • vara and his soteriological functions is elaborated in texts contemporary with the *Ga • • avy ha* as well as later Mah y na scripture, especially the four s tras mentioned at the beginning of this article. In the final part of this paper I will draw some very brief comparisons.

Few Comparisons with Other Sources:

Educational and Devotional Ways

The philosophical-metaphysical statements found in the List 3 correspond to the theory of the numerous bodily forms of bodhisattva Avalokite • vara as revealed in the *Samantamukha* chapter [\[64\]](#)

of the *Lotus S tra* and further developed in the • ra • gamas tra (*Shoulengyanjing* 首楞嚴 [\[65\]](#)

三昧經)。 In both texts, all of the 33 and, respectively, 32 bodily forms Avalokiteśvara may take in our *Saḥaloka* can be interpreted in the terminology of the *Gaṇḍavyāha* as [66]

‘ transfigurations ’ (*vikurvita*) and ‘ projections ’ (*nirmita*). In the *Karaṇḍavyūha* [67] (*Dasheng zhuangyan baowang jing* 大乘莊嚴寶王經) a list of twenty transfigurations is found.

All three lists include four Buddhist categories of perfect beings (buddhas, bodhisattvas, *rāvakas*, and *pratyekabuddhas*), several categories of human beings, both men and women, as well as gods and other mythological creatures. In the *Karaṇḍavyūha*, Avalokiteśvara says that he transforms himself into thirty-two bodily forms “ for the purpose of visiting all countries in [68]

saśvara (to convert and liberate living beings). ” In the *Lotus Sūtra* it is said that the ability of transforming his bodily form is ‘ the area of skillful [69]

means ’ (*upayakauśalya*) of the bodhisattva-mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara because he offers protection, safety, or literally, ‘ fearlessness ’ (*abhaya*) to all sentient beings:

*eṣā kulaputra avalokiteśvaro bodhisattvo mahāsattvo bhūtānāmsattvānām
abhayaṃ dadati | anena karaṇḍavyūhaṃ abhayaṃ dada iti sa jñāyata iha saha y
[70]*

lokadhātavaḥ |

(“ Son of good family! This great bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara offers fearlessness to frightened beings. Doing so he is known here in the Saha-world as the Giver of Fearlessness. ”)

The last statement harmonizes well with the theory of the *Gaṇḍavyāha* as presented in Statement 3 and List 4. Both the *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Karaṇḍavyūha* seem to be based on the soteriological schemes elaborated in the verse section of the Avalokiteśvara chapter of the [71]

Gaṇḍavyāha. The great difference between the two schemes, however, is found in terms of method. The *Gaṇḍavyāha* is talking about ‘ taking vows ’ and ‘ purification the method ’

said to lead bodhisattvas causatively from the defiled mind to nirvāṇa:

tasmā cchāriputra aprapṭitvā bodhisattvasya prajñāpāramitāyā viharaty-
acittavaraśca | cittavaraśca nāstīti dātṛsto viparyāsātīkrānto niḥś-

[75]

nirvāṇam aprapṭaśca |

(“ Therefore, śāriputra, because the bodhisattva is free from attainment and relies on the transcending awareness, he dwells in the non-obstructed mind. Because his mind has no obstructions he is not trembling, has overcome the delusions and finally attained nirvāṇa. ”)

The second way reached its peak in the *Sukhāvastvāsūtra* where Avalokiteśvara appears as the companion of the Buddha Amitayus together with another bodhisattva, Mahāsthāmaprāptā as Buddha explains to Ananda: “ There are two bodhisattvas who are the most esteemed. The radiant light of their majestic presence shines everywhere over the three-thousandfold, great-thousandfold world. ...One is called Avalokiteśvara, Who Watches Over the Cries of the World, and the other, Mahāsthāmaprāptā, Possessed of Great Vigor. These two bodhisattvas cultivated the bodhisattva practice in this, my Buddha-realm, and when their lives came to an end, they will reborn by magical transformation in that Buddha-field of the Buddha

[76]

Amita. ”

In the *śāraṅgama*, the devotional aspect is combined with the complex of meditation on sound, thus here no longer understood as the mere hearing of the bodhisattva’s name being the way out of suffering but as a specific meditative technique of concentrating on and analyzing of the perception of sound. To explain it, Avalokiteśvara says: “ Since I myself do not meditate on sound but on the meditator, I cause all suffering beings to look into the sound of their voices in

[77]

order to obtain liberation. ”

Of course, to view the development of the concept and figure of Avalokiteśvara narrowly

through the lens of such a dualistic view is an obvious oversimplification since in each text cited we find statements in favor of both ways. In the *Gaṇḍavyākṣaṭṭra*, Statement 4 no doubt contains both meditational and devotional aspects. In the verse section that was classified as mainly representing the devotional aspect, we find a statement where Avalokiteśvara's method of liberation (*vimokṣamukha*) is called 'the matrix of the knowledge of clouds of compassion of all

[78]

Victors' (*sarvajināna-karuṇa-ghanajñānagarbha*), thus emphasizing the knowledge. A similar statement is found in the stanzas of the *Lotus Sūtra*:

• *ddhibalap ramigato vipulajñāna-upaya • ik • ita • | sarvatra da • advi • jage*
[79]

sarvak • etre • u a • e • a d • • yate ||

(" With the power of accomplishment going beyond he practices the extensive knowledge and skill going everywhere in the ten directions and being entirely seen in all fields. ")

In the Avalokiteśvara chapter of the *Gaṇḍavyākṣaṭṭra*, we do not find any hint at Buddha Amitāyabha or his connection with Avalokiteśvara, but there are stanzas in the verse section which say that pious devotees who make offerings and remember Avalokiteśvara's name have direct access to Avalokiteśvara's own Buddha-field and thus can see all buddhas in the ten

[80]

directions and listen their dharma-teaching. These verses apparently reflect some influence from the *Sukhāvataśśāstra* "school" on the *Gaṇḍavyākṣaṭṭra*. The interaction between those two, however, may have happened in the opposite direction as well since we find statements on Amitāyabha-Avalokiteśvara connections in the concluding verses of the Samantabhadra chapter of the earlier versions of the sūtra (*Sixty-and Eighty-Huayan*) and few hints at Amitāyabha and his Buddha-field in the *Samantabhadracaryāpraśastī* verses (Sanskrit text and *Fourty-*

[81]

Huayan).

In association with Avalokiteśvara, though, a mysterious bodhisattva called Ananyagamin

[82]

(“ Not Going Elsewhere ”) appears in the *Ga • • avy ha*. He arrives at mount Potalaka by air from the East, from the buddha-field of the Thus-Gone Samanta • r sa • bhava in the world-system called • r garbhavat and, after Avalokite • vara, becomes Sudhana ’ s 29th *kaly • amitra* teaching him the bodhisattva liberation called ‘ speeding forth in all direction ’ (*samantamukhanirjavana*). Before instructing Sudhana he warned him that this bodhisattva liberation is beyond comprehension of all beings “ who are not under the tutelage of spiritual benefactors [*kaly • amitras*], who are not under the attention of buddhas, who have no accumulated roots of goodness [*ku • alam la*], who have not purified their intentions, who have

[83]

not attained the faculties of enlightened beings, who do not have the eye of wisdom. ” The content of it, in brief, is that this method enables bodhisattvas to penetrate all buddha-fields, within each conscious instant (*cittak • a • a*), in all ten directions, to see all buddhas and make offerings to them, and also to have access to all sentient beings and teach them Dharma according to their inclinations and interest. Ananyag min is thus fulfilling the very same function Avalokite • vara does only expressed in different terms and another vision.

The question about the identity of this bodhisattva, who is completely unknown from other sources remains. Is Ananyag min ’ s chapter a rudimentary passage of an unknown, vanished Indian “ Pure Land ” tradition or is it an artificial creation by the authors of the *Ga • • avy ha* who tried to add a “ cosmic ” dimension to Avalokite • vara? Could Ananyag min be the

[84]

prototype of Mah sthamapra pta or T r or any other Avalokite • vara ’ s “ consort ” ?

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[1]

The most recent comprehensive studies to mention are: Y ü 2001, and Dung 2001, both works including extensive bibliography on the topic referred. Leighton (2003: 169) summarizes the topic: “ Scholarly speculations on the origins of Avalokiteshvara as a Mah y na bodhisattva range from suggestions of Persian antecedents to the theory that Avalokiteshvara was a personification of Shakyamuni ’ s compassionate gaze. Some forms of Avalokiteshvara are thought to be derived from forms of the Indian deity Shiva. Other scholarly speculations attributes her historical origin to ancient sun-worship cults. ” (See also footnote 28.)

[2]

On the image of Avalokite • vara in early Gandh ra art see, e.g., Rhi 2003: 165-170. On the dating of the beginning of Avalokite • vara Cult in North India based on the study of inscriptions, see, e.g., Schopen 1987: 119-120, and Holt 1991: 30.

[3]

There exist a large number of special works in the modern Buddhist scholarship discussing the problems of the origin and early history of the Mah y na. A comprehensive compendium of the problems and the current state of the study with rich bibliography is given by Ruegg (2004); see also Harrison 2003, and Aramaki 2003. The early emergence of the Mah y na was, however, disputed by Schopen (1987: 124-125).

[4]

According to Nakamura (1989: 186), the central part of the *Lotus S tra* “ had already been in existence at the end of the first century A.D., and the s tra was completed about the end of the second century A.D... ” He also assures us that the Larger *Sukh vat vy ha* was in existence before 200 A.D. (1989: 205).

[5]

Contradictory dates are given by scholars regarding the possible time of the the creation of the *Amit yurdhy na*. Nakamura says, it was most probably produced at the end of fifth century (Nakamura 1989: 208); Holt, however, reports that it was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese as early as in the third century (Holt 1991: 34). Nakamura (1989: 160) dates the *Heart S tra* in the period between 150 and 200 C.E., but Conze (1978: 1, 11) states that short *prajñ p ramit s tras*,

including the *Heart S tra*, belong to the period between 300 to 500 C.E. Lopez (1988) also supports the later origin of the *Heart S tra* (see footnote 74). The • ra • gama and *Kara • • avy ha* belong to a later period, either the 5th or the 6th century (Nakamura 1989: 319; Holt 1991: 46).

[6]

See, e.g., Leighton 2003: 191; Niyogi 2001: 57.

[7]

As the 24th chapter of the *Lotus* that is fully dedicated to Avalokite • vara seemingly belongs to the later stratum of the text, and the *Ga • • avy ha* most likely already existed by the end of first century C.E. (see footnote 13), we have strong reasons to assume that the latter is, indeed, the earliest extant Mah y na s tra revealing the figure and doctrine of Avalokite • vara.

[8]

In this article, the critical edition of the *Ga • • avy has tra* by P. L. Vaidya is used as the source-text (Vaidya 1960), henceforth indicated in the footnotes by Gv, followed by the respective page and line numbers.

[9]

The full title of the *Avata • saka* is *Mah vaipulyabuddh vata • sakas tra* (*Dafanguang fohuayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經) “ The Great Expanded S tra of the Flower Garland of the Buddhas ” . There exist three versions of it in Chinese. The earliest one is the *Sixty-fascicle Huayan jing* translated by Buddhahadra (*Fotuobatuoluo* 佛馱跋陀羅) in 418-20; *Ru fajie pin* is found there in fascicles 44-60 (T 278: 9, 676a-788b). Next, called the *Eighty-fascicle Huayan jing* was translated by • ik • nanda (*Shichanantuo* 實叉難陀) in 695-695; *Ru fajie pin* is found in fascicles 60-80 (T 279: 10, 319a-444c). The latest version is the *Fourty-fascicle Huayan jing* translated by Prajñ (Banruo 般若) in 796-798 and consisting only of the *Ga • • avy ha* portion under the subtitle *Ru busiyi jietuo jingjie Puxian xingyuan pin* (入不思議解脫境界普賢行願品) (T 293: 10, 661a-851c). There exist also two fragmentary translations of the *Ga • • avy ha*. *Luomojia jing* (羅摩伽經) in three fascicles was translated by • rama • a Shengjian (聖堅) between 388 and 412 (T 294: 10, 851c-876a); and *Dafanguang fohuayan jing* in one fascicle translated by Divakara (*Dipoheluo* 地婆訶羅) in 680-s (T 295: 10, 876b-878c); the latter, however, does not contain the Avalokite • vara chapter. The phonetic translation of the title *Ga • • avy ha - Jiannapiaohe* (健孛驃訶) - appears in Fazang ' s (法藏) *Huayan jing tanxuan ji* (華嚴經探玄記) (T 1733: 35,121a) and Chengguan ' s (澄觀) *Dafanguang fohuayan jing shu* (大方廣佛華嚴經疏) (T 1735: 35, 524b) obviously referring to the whole collection of the *Avata • saka*; see also Grohmann 1997: 52. The *Eighty-Huayan* is translated into English by

Thomas Cleary, the *Ga • • avy ha* occupying a separate volume (Cleary 1989).

The Chinese title *Ru fajie pin* is supposed to render Sanskrit **Dharmadh tuprave • anaparivarta* (“ Chapter of the Entering into the Realm of Dharma ”) but no Sanskrit version of the *Ga • • avy ha* under this title has survived. We may only hypothetically presume that the title

Dharmadh tuprave • ana was used in some earlier versions of the s tra, circulating in Central Asia as an independent texts, or as a part of a pre-400 C.E. *Avata • saka* recension which was brought to China not later than the beginning of the fifth century, the time from which the first complete translation by Buddhahadra dates. The subtitle for the *Fourty-Huayan Ru busiyi jietuo jingjie*

Puxian xingyuan pin is the rendering of Sanskrit title

Acintyavimok • agocaraprave • anasamantabhadracary pra • idh na (“ Entering into the Area of Inconceivable Liberation and the Vow of the Conduct of Samantabhadra ”) under which the s tra seemingly was circulating in South India from where it was brought to China at the end of the eighth century (see, e.g., Jan 1959). The oldest surviving Sanskrit manuscript is Nepalese and dates from the end of the twelfth century. It bears the title *Ga • • avy has tra*. The most comprehensive English overview of the different Sanskrit versions and Chinese translations of the *Ga • • avy ha* is found in G ó mez 1967: xviii-xxxii; see also Hirakawa 1993: 279-282.

[\[10\]](#)

D. T. Suzuki is the author of the first philosophical interpretation of the *Ga • • avy ha* in English (Suzuki 1968: 146-226; Suzuki 1985: 68-221). A pr é cis of the contents of the *Ga • • avy ha* is given in Warder 1980: 424-429. G ó mez (1977) presents an intriguing interpretation of the concept of bodhisattva in the *Ga • • avy ha*. My own preliminary vision of the study of the scripture is laid down in Läänemets 2003.

[\[11\]](#)

In the *Luomo* and *Sixty-Huayan* Avalokite • vara appears under the name *Guanshiyin* (觀世音); in the *Eighty-Huayan* and *Fourty-Huayan* the name is rendered as *Guanzizai* (觀自在).

[\[12\]](#)

In the case of the *A • • as hasrik Prajñ p ramit* , for example, the s tra text itself was composed to function as a teacher in the mind of a reader, as Mäll (2005: 88-95) demonstrates. I think, many textual situations in the *Ga • • avy ha* may have been composed with similar purpose; the specific feature of this text, however, is that doctrinal issues are never revealed independently but only as part of the instruction of a particular *kaly • amitra* who represents a group whose members

are literary personages and archetypical teachers at the same time. Possibility that historical figures may have been behind the personages of some benevolent friends of the *Ga • • avy ha* should also not be excluded but it is impossible to prove.

[13]

The exact date of the *Ga • • avy ha* is still a matter of discussion. Gómez (1967: lxviii-lxxiv), on the basis of the analysis of direct and indirect sources and referring to some archaeological material has set up both a *terminus ad quem* and a *terminus ad quo* for the *Ga • • avy ha* that are respectively the second half of the third century C.E. and the “ period shortly after the beginning of our era. ” Nakamura (1989: 195) says: “ The *Ga • • avy ha* is likely to have been composed in the early reign of the *Ku • • a* dynasty, i.e., 1-100 A.D. ”

[14]

The eulogy in Mañju • r ’ s address found in the Maitreya chapter contains, for example, the following superlative items: *sa kulaputra bodhisattvako • niyuta • atasahasr • • pra • idh navi • e • a • sa • vidyate yo mañju • riya • kum rabh tasya | vist r • a • kulaputra mañju • riya • kum rabh tasya cary nirh ra • | apram • o mañju • riya • kum rabh tasya pra • idh na-abhinirh ra • | apratiprasrabdho mañju • riya • kum rabh tasya sarvabodhisattvagu • avi • e • a-abhinirh ra • | m t mañju • r • kum rabh to buddhako • niyuta • atasahasr • m | avav dako mañju • r • kum rabh to bodhisattvako • niyuta • atasahasr • m | udyukto mañju • r • kum rabh ta • sarvasattvadh tuparip kavinay ya |*

(“ Son of good family! The most distinguishing vows of hundreds of thousands decillions of bodhisattvas ever known, are those of the youthful prince Mañju • r . Extensive, son of good family, is the accomplishment of the conduct of youthful prince Mañju • r . Measureless is the accomplishment of the vows of the youthful prince Mañju • r . Ceaseless is the accomplishment of the most distinguishing virtues of all bodhisattvas of youthful prince Mañju • r . Youthful prince Mañju • r is the mother of hundreds of thousands decillions of Buddhas. Youthful prince Mañju • r is the teacher of hundreds of thousands decillions of the Bodhisattvas. Youthful prince Mañju • r is engaged in the maturing and disciplining of the realm of all sentient beings. ”) (Gv: 418, 12-18; T 278: 9, 783b; T 279: 10, 439a; T 293: 10, 836c.)

[15]

The Avalokite • vara chapter is found in: Gv: 159-164; T 278: 9, 718a-718c; T 279: 10, 366c-367b; T 293: 10, 733a-735c; T 294: 10, 859c-861b; Cleary 1989: 151-156.

[16]

Gv: 159, 2, 6-11; T 278: 9, 718a; T 279: 10, 366c; T 293: 10, 733a; T 294: 10; 859c.

[17]

All English translations are given in the present writer ' s rendering if not stated otherwise.

[18]

Gv: 158, 23. In the *Eighty-Huayan* and *Fourty-Huayan* the verse is translated as 海上有山 (T 279: 10, 366c; T 293: 10, 732c). The verses are absent in the *Sixty-Huayan* as well as in the *Luomo* which proves their later origin.

[19]

See, e.g., Leighton 2003: 191-192.

[20]

Gv: 158, 25-26.

[21]

Gv: 161, 10-12. This extensive verse section containing twenty-two stanzas in the Sanskrit version, is completely absent in all Chinese translations except *Fourty-Huayan*. There, in turn, an eulogy in verses is added which is spoken by Sudhana when he addresses Avalokite • vara, and that part is lacking in Sanskrit version from Nepal. This again demonstrates that all verses in the Avalokite • vara chapter are later interpolations added when Avalokite • vara worship developed into a popular and widely practised cult in India, and that in India too different versions of the text were circulating.

[22]

Gv: 163, 10-15.

[23]

Gv: 163, 23 (19th stanza); see also footnote 80.

[24]

The mountain is named differently in the various Chinese translations of the *Ga • • avy ha* based obviously on different names in earlier Sanskrit versions. In the *Luomo*, it is called *Jinganglun zhuangyan gaoxian* 金剛輪莊嚴高顯 (*Vajrama • • alavy h bhyudaya*), in the *Sixty-Huayan Guangming* 光明 (*Prabh*), in both the *Eighty-Huayan* and *Fourty-Huayan Budaluoji* 補怛洛迦 (*Potalaka*). The possible Sanskrit versions of the two earlier names are given according to Gómez (1967: xxvii).

[25]

Chinese characters with *hanyu pinyin* romanization in square brackets are added by the present writer.

[26]

Beal 1983: 233-234; T 2087: 51, 932a.

[\[27\]](#)

Watters (1996: 229), for example, is of the opinion that Xuanzang did not personally visit the countries western of Andhra including Malakuta and, of course, mount Potalaka. He also mentions that Xuanzang may have been inspired directly by the *Gaṇḍavyāha* in his search and description of the mount Potalaka. Lee (1994) even elaborates the theory that the Chinese pilgrim may have tried to follow the route of Sudhana in his travelling in India. He does, however, in his intriguing comparative work not discuss the problem of the location of mount Potalaka.

[\[28\]](#)

There are many modern works discussing this issue. The two following passages represent the current understanding of Avalokiteśvara-relations in cult and iconography. Niyogi (2001: 58) says: “Avalokiteśvara has been identified with some Hindu gods. His attributes may be compared with Brahmā, his functions as preserver and defender as Viṣṇu, his colour, symbols, etc., with that of Śiva. From this it appears that his origin cannot be traced from any cult or religion, but is the idea of divine compassion represented with such materials as the art and mythology of the day offered. Not only is Avalokiteśvara identified with some Hindu gods but there are supreme forces of Hinduism embodied within the deity.” Williams (1991: 233), citing a number of related works, summarizes the topic as follows: “There is undoubtedly an iconographical connection of Avalokiteśvara with the Hindu god Śiva. We have seen already that Avalokiteśvara bestows upon Śiva his place in the Hindu pantheon. Nevertheless, Avalokiteśvara himself is also called Maheśvara in the *Karaṇḍavyūha* Great Lord, a standard epithet of Śiva. He is described as ‘a beautiful man... wearing a diadem on his matted hair, his mind filled with the highest friendliness, and looking like a disc of gold.’ This could be a description of Śiva, for whom the matted hair is a symbol as Lord of the Yogins. In a lovely Kashmiri brass sculpture from c. 1000 CE, Avalokiteśvara is shown seated on Potalaka, his mountain home, with matted hair and deer. Behind is what initially looks very much like Śiva's trident. Śiva too dwells in the mountains as a yogin, and is associated with animals in his role of Lord of the animals. Elsewhere Avalokiteśvara is described as ‘blue-throated’, a term for Śiva embedded in Śaivite mythology.” See also Holt 1991: 41-42.

[\[29\]](#)

The city's name is rendered differently in the various Chinese versions: *Poluoboti* 婆羅波提 in the *Luomo* and *Sixty-Huayan*, *Duoluobodi* 墮羅鉢底 in the *Eighty-Huayan*, and *Menzhu* 門主 in the *Fourty-Huayan*. We are not able to identify it with any historical site. The Mahādeva chapter is found in: Gv: 367-368; T 278: 9, 719a-719c; T 279: 10, 368a-368b; T 293: 10; 736a-737c; T 294: 10, 861b-

862b.). The figure of Ananyag min is discussed at the end of this paper.

[30]

Shu 1989: 185.

[31]

Ibid.: 181ff.

[32]

Ibid.: 187.

[33]

Ibid.: 187ff.

[34]

We may only speculate whether the emergence of the name ‘ Avalokite • vara ’, meaning ‘ The Observing Lord ’, has not at least in part its roots in human psychology. The hermits living on the top of the mountain constantly exposed to a vast view downwards on the abodes of human and other beings could have brought forth in their visionary meditations an extremely strong feeling of compassion which then mingled with the perception of the figure of the local deity. This then gave birth to the image of the great bodhisattva they consequently started to preach.

[35]

Niyogi (2001: 57) carefully expresses a similar point of view: “ There are some of the facts about the identification Potala or Potalaka. It is not unlikely that it may be located in south India from where the sea is not far away. In this context reference may be made to some Buddhist deities associated with Potalaka: Potalaka Bhagav (vat) T r • a • • aparivartta(r) ri • a • ; • r -Potalaka Lokan tha • ; • r Potalak Bh • kut T r ; etc. From

this it appears that Potalaka is not only associated with Avalokite • vara but also with other Buddhist deities as mentioned above. Probably it was an important Buddhist centre where some gods and goddesses became popular and were thus associated with the place-name. ”

[36]

The analysis of the second and third phases of this development as represented in the texts as well as later Chinese sources, is given by Y ü (2001: 31-91).

[37]

Gv: 160, 5-8. The description of Avalokite • vara putting his hand on Sudhana ’ s head is, again, absent in all Chinese versions save *Fourty-Huayan* where it is rendered as: 爾時，觀自在菩薩摩訶薩，放闍浮檀金妙色光明，起無量色寶焰網雲，及龍自在妙莊嚴雲，以照善財，即舒右手，摩善財頂，告善財言。(T: 10, 293, 733a). The attributes of the bodhisattva ’ s appearance are, however, described in greater detail in the hymn in praise of Avalokite • vara which is also found only in the *Fourty-Huayan* but absent in all other versions including the Sanskrit text from Nepal (T 293: 10, 735b).

[38]

Compare, for example, description of the appearance of the night-goddess V sant , the thirty-

second *kaly* • *amitra: sa* [Sudhana] ... *adrak* • *d v sant* • *r tridevat m...vicitra-*
anupamama • *ik* • *g re sarvavaragandhapadmagarbhamah ratnasi* • *ha- sane ni* • *ann* •
suvar • *avar* • *ena k yena abhin lam* • *dubahuke* • *m abhin lanetr m abhir p* •
pr s dik • *dar* • *an y* • *sarva- bhara* • *a-ala* • *k ravibh* • *ita* • *ar r* • *raktavara-*
ambaranivasan • *candrama* • • *ala-ala* • *k* • *tabrahmaja* • *m aku* • *adh ra* • •
sarvat r grahanak • *atrajyotirga* • *apratibh sasa* • *dar* • *ana* • *ar r m* |

(“ He...saw the night goddess V sant ...in the mansion of brilliant, incomparable jewels sitting on the great lion throne in the calyx of a lotus replete with all distinctive fragrances; her body of golden colour, with soft rich black hair and black eyes, her appearance extremely beautiful, her body adorned with all ornaments, wearing a red robe, her coiffure adorned with the disc of the Moon on her forehead, her body reflecting all the stars and constellations. ”) (Gv: 171, 13-17; T 278: 9, 720a; T 279: 10, 369a; T 293: 10, 738b.)

[39]

On various descriptions of Avalokite • vara in the Buddhist-Tantric iconography see, e.g., Bhattacharyya 1987: 124-144; Niyogi 2001: 59-69.

[40]

Gv: 159, 20-28; T 278: 9, 718a; T 279: 10, 366c; T 293: 10, 733a; T 294: 10, 860a.

[41]

Still, I would like to present here for comparison the list of Sudhana ’ s virtues seen through the eyes of Mañju • r which describes the attitude and maturity of a person just starting on his path of a bodhisattva ’ s “ higher education ” . Sudhana here is described as: *p rvajinak* • *ta-adhik ra* ‘ having revered past buddhas ’ ; *avaropitaku* • *alam la* ‘ having planted wholesome roots ’ ; *ud ra-adhimuktika* ‘ imbued with great zeal of devotion ’ ; *kaly* • *amitra-anugata-* • *aya* ‘ disposed to follow benevolent friends ’ ; *anavadyak yav* • *manaskarmasamud c ra* ‘ impeccable in bodily, verbal, and mental deeds ’ ; *bodhisattvam rgapari* • *odhanaprayukta* ‘ engaged in purification of the bodhisattva path ’ ; *sarvajñat -abhimukha* ‘ turned toward omniscience ’ ; *bh jan bh to buddhadharm* • *m* ‘ having become a vessel of the Buddha-dharmas ’ ;

• *ayagamanapari* • *uddha* ‘ having purified his disposition ’ ; *asa* • *gabodhicittaparini* • *panna* ‘ having perfected his independent awakening mind ’ (Gv: 40, 31 – 41, 1-3; T 278: 9, 688c; T 279: 10, 332b; T 293: 10, 677c). The difference between these two lists is obvious since Avalokite • vara ’ s clearly describes the characteristics of a much more advanced Mah y na adept than Mañju • r ’ s. Other lists containing similar elements are to be found for example in the S garamegha chapter (Gv:

51, 18-28; T 278: 9, 690b; T 279: 10, 335a; T 293: 10, 680c) and Maitreya chapter (Gv: 394, 22-27; T 278: 9, 772b; T 279: 10, 428c; T 293: 10, 824a).

[42]

Of course, this scheme is only one possible way to systematize the items presented in the list in a quite scattered and, most likely, to some degree corrupted form (as is rather typical of the *Ga • • avy ha*) and in no way presumes to be ultimately and exclusively true. Still I hope it facilitates the comprehension of what the authors of the s tra who were so eager to create such lists aimed at and wanted to express.

[43]

In the Chinese versions the name is rendered as *piluomojie sanmei dabei famen* 毘羅摩伽三昧大悲法門 in the *Luomo*, *dabei famen guangming zhi xing* 大悲法門光明之行 in the *Sixty-Huayan*, *pusa dabeixing jietuomen* 菩薩大悲行解脫門 in the *Eighty-Huayan*, and *pusa dabei sujixing jietuomen* 菩薩大悲速疾行解脫門 in the *Fourty-Huayan*. The most intriguing among these names is the one given in the *Luomo* which differs from all the others and contains obviously the phonetic transcription of an unknown Sanskrit word unless *piluomojie* is the translator's version of *avilamba* (' immediate ') which, however, would violate the rules of transliteration. *Piluomojie* as phonetic translation of *vilomaka* (' inverted, reversed ') as proposed by Gómez (1967: xxiv) is also rather baseless. The most interesting issue, however, is that the title of this translation corresponds to a part of the name of the *sam dhi* in question.

[44]

Gv: 160, 9-11; T 278: 9, 718b; T 279: 10, 367a; T 293: 10, 733b; T 294: 10, 860a.

[45]

Gv: 160, 11-13; T (*ibid.*).

[46]

Gv: 160, 13-14; T (*ibid.*). It is interesting to note that in the *Luomo* five further *p ramit s* are listed following *d na*. We do not know whether this is the result of the translator's creativity or whether he had, indeed, a differing Indian text at his disposal. The other Chinese versions, however, follow the Sanskrit where *d na* is not taken as a *p ramit* ; in the *Sixty-Huayan*, however, the passage is given in slightly abbreviated form.

[47]

In the Chinese translations both *sheshou* 攝取 and *chengshu* 成熟 are randomly used for *parip ka/parip cana/parip cayati* (' bringing to maturity ') the first being also employed for *sa • graha/sa • g • h • ati* (' taking care '). In the Sanskrit text, however, these two terms are not treated as

synonyms.

[48]

Gv: 160, 14-19; T (*ibid.*).

[49]

See, e.g., G ó mez 1977.

[50]

Although *bhaya* may also mean ‘ danger, peril ’ , I prefer here the translation ‘ fear ’ as it seems to me that the accent in the *Ga • • avy ha* is laid first of all on freeing sentient beings from the inner, psychological obscurations rather than from outer perils, since the very term *du • khadaurmanas* also refers to the ‘ suffering mind ’ .

[51]

Gv: 160, 19-20; T (*ibid.*).

[52]

Gv: 160, 20-28.

[53]

T 294: 10, 860b.

[54]

T 278: 9, 718b.

[55]

T 279: 10, 367a.

[56]

T 293: 10, 733b.

[57]

Gv: 160, 28-30; T 278: 9, 718b; T 279: 10, 367a; T 293: 10, 733b; T 294: 10, 860b.

[58]

The Chinese versions translate and interpret the three items of Statement 4 in two different ways. In the *Luomo* we find: 出生現在正念救護三世一切眾生怖畏正念法，名字法輪法門。為脫輪轉三界眾生故，入論議法門。住此法門故，示現一切眾生等身。(“ I bring forth a method of right mindfulness in which I am properly mindful in the present to protect all sentient beings in the three worlds from dangers, and which is called ‘ the name sphere dharma method ’ . In order to liberate the sentient beings who cycle around in the three worlds I enter the dharma method of doctrinal explanations. Since I maintain this dharma method, I manifest a body which equals all sentient beings. ”) In the *Sixty-Huayan*, the passage is translated respectively: 我出生現在正念法門，名字輪法門故；出現一切眾生等身。(“ Since I bring forth the dharma method of right mindfulness in the present which is called ‘ the name sphere dharma method ’ , I manifest a body which is equal to all sentient beings. ”). These two earlier translations obviously tend to explain the philosophical meaning of the original text. In the

Eighty-Huayan and *Fourty-Huayan*, however, the passage is translated in a simplified way, no longer in philosophical-educational terms of universal meaning but unequivocally aimed at the evocation of Avalokite • vara ’ s image: 若念於我，若稱我名，若見我身 (“ ...no matter whether they are mindful of me or utter my name or behold my body... ”). This clearly shows that an increasingly devotional and cultic attitude has strongly influenced the later translations. (I am indebted to Friedrich Grohmann for his kind help to make the English translation of these passages more smooth in style and precise in expression.)

[59]

Gv: 160, 31-32; T (*ibid.*).

[60]

Gv: 160, 32 – 161, 1, 6.

[61]

Gv: 160, 32; 161, 1-6; T (*ibid.*).

[62]

Actually, ‘ great compassion ’ is considered one of the basic issues of the bodhisattva conduct. In the *Ga • • avy ha*, Buddha himself and many other *kaly • • amitras* emphasise it together with ‘ omniscience ’ or ‘ omniscient knowledge ’ (*sarvajñat* or *sarvajñajñ na*) as the main source of their effort and activities. Still, only here in the Avalokite • vara chapter, great compassion is mentioned and described as the basis of a distinctive method.

[63]

The term ‘ *lysiology* ’ meaning the “ doctrine of liberation ” and intended as Western equivalent for Indian *mok • • adharma* was introduced in the end of 1960s by Linnart Mäll in his groundbreaking article “ A Possible Approach towards Understanding • *nyav da* ” ; see Mäll 2005: 16-24.

[64]

Dutt 1986: 159-166; English translations: Kern 1963: 406-418; Watson 1993: 298-306.

[65]

Luk 1978: 136ff; T 642: 15, 629b-645a.

[66]

In the Sanskrit version of the *Lotus S tra*, the list is much shorter, see Dutt 1986: 261-262; Kern 1963: 410-411; the English translation by Watson (1993: 301-302) follows the Chinese translation by Kum raj va (T 269: 9, 57a-57b) and contains the full list. On the analysis of the lists, see e.g. Y ü 2001: 45-48, and Dung 2001: 138-139.

[67]

T 1050: 20, 50c-51a; see also Y ü 2001: 48.

[68]

Luk 1978: 136.

[69]

Dutt 1986: 261.

[70]

Ibid.: 262.

[71]

As mentioned above (see e.g. footnotes 18 and 21), the verse section certainly belongs to a later stratum of the text than the prose section.

[72]

Dutt 1986: 259.

[73]

A similar paradigm is also presented in the Vāsantī chapter of the *Gaṇḍavyāha* where the night goddess introduces herself as protector of sentient beings freeing them from these and many further dangers: Gv: 172, 6 – 175, 19; T 278: 9, 720b-721b; T 279: 10, 369b-370a; T 293: 10, 738c-739c.

[74]

Conze 1972: 81. Lopez (1988: 7) explains the appearing of Avalokite • vara here in the role of teacher: “ His presence is another indication of the relatively late date of the sūtra, suggesting that the sūtra was written at the time when the cult of the Bodhisattva of compassion, textually associated with the twenty-fourth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* and with the Pure Land Sūtras, had become well-established. ”

[75]

Conze 1972: 93.

[76]

Gómez 1996: 193.

[77]

Luk 1978: 139.

[78]

Gv: 161, 25.

[79]

Dutt 1986: 265.

[80]

Gv: 263, 19-27 (stanzas 19-20); T 293: 10, 734b.

[81]

T 278: 9, 786b; T 279: 10, 443a; Gv: 434, 31; 435, 8, 20 (stanzas 49, 59, and 62); T 293: 10, 848a, 848b.

[82]

The name of the bodhisattva is rendered as *Wuyixing* (無異行) in the *Luomo*, as *Zhengqu* (正趣) in

the *Sixty- and Eighty-Huayan*, and *Zhengxing Wuyixing* (止性無異行) in the *Fourty-Huayan*.

[\[83\]](#)

Gv: 165, 13-16; here Thomas Cleary's translation is used (Cleary: 1989, 156).

[\[84\]](#)

A number of them are mentioned in Niyogi 2001: 58: Tārā, Mañdhara, Śākyā, Mahāvīrya, Sudhanakumāra, Bhadrakāya, Hayagrīva, Prajñā, Śakti, etc. However, there is no hint whatsoever in the text that Ananyagāmin himself was a female figure as McMahan (2002: 125) states emphatically.