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Ambiguity of Avalokitesvara and the Scriptural Sources for the Cult of Kuan-yin in China

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Summary

The bodhisattva Kuan-yin is also known as Kuan-shih-yin or Kuan-tzu-tsai, among other names. The bodhisattva is described as princely and heroic in some scriptures, although in the Lotus Sutra there is reference to his feminine manifestations. The paper discusses the ambiguous of the bodhisattva's name, gender, and status by examining the main scriptural sources for the cult of Kuan-yin as developed in China. Important sutras such as the Lotus, the SurangamaL, the Pure Land Kuan ching as well as a few esoteric sutras will be discussed. Distinctive beliefs shall be examined together with ritual practices as well as art historical evidences. between the popular "33 forms of Kuan-yin" with those mentioned in the scriptures will be made in order to suggest some possible processes through which this originally Indic bodhisattva became transformed into the Chinese "Goddess of Mercy".

Keywords: 1.Kuang-shih-yin 2.Kuan-shih-yin 3.Kuan-tzu-tsai 4.Kuan-yin 5.thirty-three manifestations

Avalokiteśvara is commonly known as Kuan-yin (Perceiver of Sounds) or Kuan-shih-yin (perceiver of the World's Sounds) in China. [1] A Chinese saying aptly describes the great popularity of this savior bodhisattva: "Everybody knows how to chant A-mi-t'o-fo [Amitabha], and every household worships Kuan-yin."

Neither Kuan-yin nor Kuan-shih-yin, however, corresponds to Avalokiteśvara, but rather to Avalokitaśvara, a name not used in the Buddhist world. That was why Hsüan-tsang (602~64) considered them as mistakes and suggested the right translation as Kuan-tzu- tsai (the Perceiving Lord). In a note explaining the name of the bodhisattva which he transliterated as "A-fu-lu-che-t'o-i-shih-fan-lo" in his Records of the Western Regions (Ta T'ang hsi-yü chi, T. no. 2087), Hsüan-tsang said, "This means in Chinese 'Kuan-tzu-tsai '. While 'a-fu-lu che-t'o' [Avalokita] means 'Kuan' (perceiving), 'i-shih-fan-lo' [isvara] means 'tzu-tsai' (lord). translations of 'Kuang-shih-yin (Illuminator of the World's sounds), 'Kuan-shih-yin' or 'Kuan-shih Tzu-tsai' are all wrong. " (T. 51: 883b). Hsüan-tsang therefore used kuan-tzu-tsai in all the sutras he translated, including the Heart Sūtra, a scripture as important to Chinese Buddhists as the Lotus Sūtra, in which the bodhisattva is called Kuan-shih-yin. Because of the great authority and prestige of these two scriptures, both names have become familiar to Buddhists in China, although they have consistently preferred Kuan-shih-yin or Kuan-yin. But which name is the correct translation of the Sanskrit name of the bodhisattva? Was Hsüan-tsang right in rejecting the earlier translations as wrong?

Aside from the ambiguity of the name, we are also confronted with the ambiguity of the bodhisattva's "forms" and gender. Since the period of Five Dynasties, around the 10th century, Kuan-yin has been increasingly represented as a feminine deity (Yü 1994). Beginning with the Ming (1368~1644), if not earlier, sets of paintings depicting Kuan-yin indifferent forms, be they five, thirty-two, or

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fifty-three have been created (a point to be discussed later). There is also the expression "thirty-three forms of Kuan-yin" in Sino-Japanese Buddhist art. [2] These multiple forms of bodhisattva are supposed to be illustrations of the thirty-three manifestations of Kuan-yin in the Lotus sūtra, or the thirty-two in the Surangama sūtra. But they in fact do not bear much resemblances to the scriptural sources, as we shall see later.

A final ambiguity is Kuan-yin's status. Although most scriptures refer to Kuan-yin as bodhisattva, some, however, present a different view. The Pei-hua ching (Karandapundarika, T. no. 157), a sutra translated during 397~439, tells a story stressing the father-son relationship between Amitabha and Avalokiteśvara. When Amitabha was a cakravatin in the past, he had 1000 sons, the eldest was named Puhsiun. When the latter became a monk, he took the name Avalokiteśvara. In the future, when Buddha Amitabha enters into nirvana, Avalokiteśvara would succeed him and will be known as "Universal Light-issuing Tathagatha King of Merit Mountain" (Pien-ch'u I-ch'ieh Kuang- ming Kung-te-shan-wang Julai, T. 3:

185c~186b). The same idea is found in Kuan-yin-shou-chi-ching (Sutra of Avalokites'vara receiving prediction, T. no. 371) which was translated into Chinese during 420~479. It is stated there that when Amitabha passes away, Avalokiteśvara will succeed him and he will be known as "Tathagata King of Merit Mountain of Universal Light" (T. 12: 357a), a title similar to the one above. The close relationship between Amitabha and

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Avalokiteśvara might be the reason why the Ta-le chin-kang pu-kung chen-shi sanmei ye ching pan-jo p'o-lo-mi-t'i li-chu shih (T. no. 1003), an esoteric sutra translated by Amoghavajra (705~774), equates the two and regards them as manifestations of the same reality. "A dharmata tathagata who has realized the pure self-nature is just another name for Perceiving Lord Tathagata King (Kuan-tzu-tsi Wang Ju-lai). He is also no other tha Amitayus. When he is active in the pure and wondrous buddha land, he manifests in the body of the buddha. But when he dwells in the polluted samsaric world during the five kasaya periods of decay, he appears as Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva" (T. 19: 612a). On the other hand, there are also sutras which see the bodhisattva as a buddha independent of his relationship with Amitayus / Amitabha. Another esoteric sutra translated by Amoghavajra, Ta-fang-kuang Man-chu-shih-li ching (T. no. 1101), for instance, predicts that Avalokitesvara will become a buddha known as "Tathagata Universal Ilumination of Equal Brightness" (Ping-teng Kuangming p'u-cho ju-lai, T. 20: 450b) without mentioning the other buddha. A third and certainly most radical view is that Avalokiteśvara was already abuddha in the past under whom Sakyamuni Buddha studied. Sakyamuni Buddha declares in Ch'ienkuang-yen-Kuan-tzu-tsai P'usa pi-mi fa-ching (Sutra of secret method taught by Bodhisattva Perceiving Lord of Thousand Shining Eyes, T. no. 1065), a sutra translated during the T'ang.

I remember that in the past Bodhisattva Perceiving Lord became a buddha before I. His name was Brightness of True Dharma (Cheng-fa-ming). I was a disciple of ascetic practices under him. Because of his instruction I eventually became abuddha. All tathagatas of the ten directions achieve the Supreme Way and turn the wheel of wonderful law in all the wondrous buddha lands as a result of receiving instructions from him (T. 20: 121a).

The idea that Avalokiteśvara was already a buddha long ago and is right now appearing as a bodhisattva in order to save beings is expressed enigmatically by the two sharing the same name as stated in the Surangana:

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I still remember that long before numbers of aeons countless as the sand grains in the Ganges, a Buddha called Avalokiteśvara appeared in the world. When I was with Him, I developed the Bodhi Mind and, for my entry into Samadhi, I was instructed by Him to precise meditation by the organ of hearing (Luk 135).

It is a great paradox that although Kuan-yin is probably the best known and most beloved Buddhist savior in China, it is not at all clear that we know him / her that well. There are indeed a number of ambiguities about this bodhisattva in the case of China.

I have chosen to discuss in this paper the scriptural sources for the cult of Kuan-yin in China in the hope that some of the ambiguities can be reduced. For in the introduction and dissemination of the faith in this bodhisattva, scriptures definitely played an important role. But the Chinese did not simply adhere to the scriptural depictions and definitions of Kuan-yin, nor did they strictly follow the scriptural stipulations and directions for worshiping Kuan-yin, for otherwise there would not have been any Chinese transformation. On the other hand, I would argue that many of the changes can still be explained on the basis of some scriptural sources. Even the indigenous scriptures were not created out of thin air, but are elaboration or modifications of some famous sutras such as the Lotus (Yü 1995). It is in examining the innovations and comparing them with the scriptural models that we can begin to trace both the sources and the development of the cult of Kuan-yin in China.

The Chinese Names of Avalokiteśvara

Chronologically, the names of the bodhisattva appeared as Kuan-yin, Kuang-shih-yin, Kuan-shih-yin, Kuan-shih Tzu-tsai and finally Kuan-tzu-tsai. Kuan-yin was mentioned in a list of attending bodhisattvas in the Cheng-chü Kuang-ming ting-yi ching (Sutra on achieving the brilliant concentration of mind, T no. 630), a sutra belonging to the Perfection of Wisdom group, translated by Chih-yao, a Central Asian, in 185. When Sanghavarma translated Wu-liang-shou ching (Sutra of Amitayus, T. no. 360), one of the scriptures glorifying Pure Land in 252, he translated the name as Kuan-shih-yin, who, together with Ta-shih-chih

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(Mahasthamaprapta), are the two foremost bodhisattvas. It is obvious that Kuan-yin was not a contraction of Kuan-shih-yin made in the T'ang in order to avoid the taboo name of Emperor T'ai-tsung (r. 627-49), Li Shih-min, as some Chinese scholars including Ting Fu-pao (1874-1952), the compiler of a dictionary of Buddhist terms claimed (Tay 17). It is also clear, as Go to Daiyo pointed out, that Kumarajiva was not the first translator who used Kuan-shih-yin, for he did not translate the Lotus sūtra until 406, some one hundred fifty years later (Goto 4). In these two earliest sutras where the bodhisattva is mentioned, there is no explanation about the meaning of the name. For that, we have to turn to the Lotus sūtra.

The Lotus sūtra was translated into Chinese six times, and three have survived. The first is Cheng fa-hua ching (Sutra of the lotus of the true law, T. no. 263), translated by Dharmaraksa, a native of Yüeh-chih (Bactria) in 286. Chapter 23 is entitled "Universal Gateway" (P'u-men) and is devoted to Avalokiteśvara who is called Kuang-shih-yin (Illuminator of the World 's Sounds), a savior who delivers people from seven perils, frees them from the three poisons of lust, hatred and ignorance, and grants infertile women either sons or daughters. The relevant passage concerning the name states:

The Buddha told the Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intent, "If sentient beings encounter hundreds, thousands, millions difficulties and disasters and their sufferings are unlimited, they will be delivered right away when they hear the name of Kuang-shih-yin and be free from all pain. That is why he is called Kuang-shih-yin. If someone keeps the name in his heart and falls into a fire which rages through the hills and fields, burning forests, shrubs and houses, the fire will immediately die down when he hears the name of Kuang-shih- yin. If a person enters into a river and becomes frightened because of the swift current, when he calls the name of Kuang-shih-yin and takes refuge in him single-mindedly, the authority and supernatural power of the bodhisattva will protect him from drowning and enable him to reach safety. [This is followed by the bodhisattva's saving people from the perils of winds, weapons, demons, imprisonment and robbers, all resulting from calling his name.] The realm of Kuang-

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shih-yin is without limit because it has his authority, supernatural power and merit. Because he is full of illuminating light (Kuang), he is therefore called Kuang-shih-yin (T. 9: 129a).

This earliest surviving version of the Lotus sūtra makes it clear that hearing and calling the name of the bodhisattva are the chief reason the faithful is saved, and that the bodhisattva is closely associated with light. As John Holt noted in Buddha in the Crown, one of the most distinctive feature of Avalokitesvara is indeed the strong presence of the light symbolism (Holt 31~34). But it leaves the connection between the bodhisattva and "sound" unspecified. The next surviving translation of the sutra known as Mio-fa lien-huaching (Sutra of the lotus flower of the wonderful law, T. no. 262), made by Kumarajiva, the famous translator from Kucha, in 406, as well as the third version known as Tien-pin mio-fa lien-hua ching (Sutra of the lotus flower of the wonderful law with an additional chapter, T. no. 264) translated by Jnanagupta and Dharmagupta in 601 removed the uncertainty. Both versions give the name of the bodhisattva as Kuan-shih-yin (Perceiver of the World's Sounds). The "Universal Gateway" is chapter 25 in Kumarajiva's translation and Chapter 24 in Jnanagupta-Dharmagupta's version. Originally, neither Kumarajiva's nor Dharmaraksa's version contains the gatha section at the end of the chapter. It is found only in the translation made by Jnanagupta and Dharmagupta. Of the three, Kumarajiva's translation has always been the most popular version in China, and therefore the gatha section was added to his version from the latter. When the Buddha is asked by Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intent why Kuan-shih-yin is called this name, the Buddha answers, "Good man, suppose there a re immeasurable hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of living beings who are undergoing various trials and suffering. If they hear of this bodhisattva Perceiver of the World's Sounds and single-mindedly call his name, then at once he will perceive the sound of their voices and they will all gain deliverance from their trials" (Watson 298-9, italics mine). Here, just as we read before, the only requirement for a person to be saved is to call the name of the bodhisattva. A crucial sentence which I underline above, however, is missing in Dharmaraksa's translation: the bodhisattva's perceiving of the sound uttered by those who call his

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name. The name "Kuan-shih-yin" now makes perfect sense. On the other hand, the light symbolism connected with him is still intact. The gatha praises the bodhisattva thus:

He of the true gaze, the pure gaze,

the gaze of great and encompassing wisdom,

the gaze of pity, the gaze of compassion——

constantlywe implore him, constantly look up in reverence.

His pure light, free of blemish,

is a sun of wisdom dispelling all darkness.

He can quell the wind and fire of misfortune

and everywhere bring light to the world.

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Perceiver of the World's Sounds, pure sage——

to those in suffering, in danger of death,

he can offer aid and support.

Endowed with all benefits,

he views living beings with compassionate eyes (Watson 305~306).

Chinese commentators interpreted the name by emphasizing the connection between the bodhisattva's perception or observation and the sounds made by the faithful who called out his name. Seng-chao (374~414), a brilliant disciple of Kumarajiva, wrote in his Commentary on the Vimalakirti Sūtra,

Kumarajiva said that when anyone meets danger, he / she should call the name and takes refuge in the bodhisattva. As the bodhisattva perceives the sounds, the person will receive deliverance. He is also named Kuan-shihnien (Perceiver of the World's Thoughts), or Kuan-tzu-tsai (Perceiving Lord) (Wan-tzu hsü-tsang-ching 27: 350a).

It is interesting to note that Kumarajiva knew that the bodhisattva was also called Kuan-tzu-tsai, but used the other name in his translation instead. Chi-tsang (549~629), the founder of the Three- treatise School, wrote a commentary on the

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Lotus and explained the name Kuan-shih-yin this way: "Kuan is the wisdom which can perceive and shih- yin is the realm which is perceived. When realm and wisdom are mentioned together, we have the name Kuan-shih-yin" (T. 34: 624c). He also repeated an earlier commentator Fa-yün (467~529)'s elaborate four-fold scheme of interpreting the name. In his commentary on the Lotus, Fa-yün says,

Kuan-shih-yin may be named four ways. The first is Kuan-shih-yin which means that he delivers by perceiving the sounds of the world. The second is Kuan-shih-shen [body] which means that he delivers by perceiving the bodily karma of the sentient beings. The third is Kuan-shih-yi [intentions] which means that he delivers by perceiving the mental karma of the sentient beings. The fourth is Kuan-shih-yeh [karma] which contains the previous three names. If you ask me why we only use the name Kuan-shih-yin, my answer is that to create karma by speech is easy, but to do good with regard to body and intention is hard. Moreover, in the Saha world of ours, we usually worship the Buddha with our voices. That is why Kuan-shih-yin becomes the established name (Wan-tzu hsu-tsang ching 42: 37la).

The Kuan-wu-liang-shou Fo ching (Visualization of the Buddha Amitayus sutra, T. 365), translated by Kalayasas, a monk from the western regions, in 430, has always been considered one of the three main scriptures of the Pure Land School (together with theGreater Sukhavativyuha and the Smaller Sukhavativyuha sutras). This sutra offers sixteen topics for visualization which is the meaning of Kuan. The tenth topic deals specifically with the visualization of Kuan-shih-yin. The passage instructs the mediator to visualize the bodhisattva's features in such great detail that some scholars have suggested that it might be based on the model of an actual image (Pas 38). The minute icongraphical description, on the other hand, serves as a standard for later artistic rendition and identification of the bodhisattva. The light symbolism which is already present in the Louts receives even stronger emphasis.

Within the circle of light emanating from his whole body, appear illuminated the various forms and marks of all beings that live in the five paths of existence.

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On top of his head is a heavenly crown of gems like those fastened (on Indra's head), in which crown there is a transformed Buddha standing, twenty-five yojanas high.....The soft hair between the eyebrows has the colour of the seven jewels, from which eighty-four kinds of rays flow out, each ray has innumerable transformed Buddhas, each of whom is attended by numberless transformed Bodhisattvas; freely changing their manifestations they fill up the worlds of the ten quarters; (their appearance) can be compared with the colour of the real lotus-flower. (He wears) a

garland consisting of eighty-thousand yays, in which is seen fully reflected a state of perfect beauty. The palm of his hand has a mixed colour of five thousand lotus-flowers. His hands have ten (tips of) fingers, each tip has eighty-four thousand pictures, which are like signet-marks, each picture has eighty-four thousand rays which are soft and mild and shine over all things that exist. When he lifts up his feet, the soles of his feet are seen to be marked with a wheel of a thousand spokes (one of the thirty- two signs) which miraculously transform themselves into five hundred million pillars of rays.

Buddha, especially addressing Aananda, said,

Whoever wishes to meditate on Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, must do so in the way I have explained. Those who practice this meditation will not suffer any calamity; they will utterly remove the obstacle that is raised by Karma, and will expiate the sins which would involve them in births and deaths for numberless kalpas. Even the hearing of the name of this bodhisattva will enable one to obtain immeasurable happiness. How much more will the diligent contemplation of him! (Takakusu 182~184)

This sutra is one of six visualization sutras which originated in Central Asia, probably Turfan, and translated into Chinese from the end of the fourth to the middle of the fifth century. [3] All of them teach the practitioner to engage in

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The Shou leng-yen ching (Surangama sūtra, T. no. 945), translated by Paramiti in 705, also calls the bodhisattva Kuan-shih-yin or Kuan-yin, but offers a different explanation for the name. It provides yet a third meaning of Kuan. The bodhisattva began by describing how he obtained samadhi by meditating on the organ of hearing as instructed by a buddha also named Kuan-shih-yin under whom he studied:

At first by directing the organ of hearing into the stream of meditation, this organ was detached from its object, and by wiping out (the concept of) both sound and stream-entry, both disturbance and stillness became clearly non-existent. Thus advancing step by step both hearing and its object ceased completely, but I did not stop where they ended. When the awareness of this state and this state itself were realized as non-existent, both subject and object merged into the void, the awareness of which became all-embracing. With further elimination of the void and its object both creation and annihilation vanished giving way to the state of Nirvana which then manifested (Luk 135).

The sound mentioned here in the meditation is not that made by the faithful who cry out his name, but any sound which, when examined (Kuan) with penetrating insight, leads to the realization of sunyata. Although the bodhisattva saves beings from various dangers and grants fourteen kinds of fearlessness in

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this sutra, the reason he can do so is different from that given in the Lotus. "Since I myself do not meditate on sound but on the mediator, I cause all suffering beings to look into the sound of their voices in order to obtain liberation" (Luk 139). [4] The bodhisattva concludes by once more linking his name to his meditation on hearing: "That Buddha praised my excellent method of perfection and gave me, in the presence of the assembly, the name of Kuan-shih-yin. Because of my all-embracing (absolute function of) hearing, my name is known everywhere" (Luk 142). In the Surangama sūtra, therefore, Kuan is understood neither as perceiving and responding to the cries for help uttered by the faithful, nor visualizing the divine visage of the bodhisattva, but as investigating the real nature of sound and realizing it as being void.

Let us continue with the survey of the chronological appearance of the bodhisattva's names. Bodhiruci combined the two names and called the bodhisattva Kuan-shihtzu-tsi (The Lord Who Observes the World) in Fa-hua ching-lun (Treatise on the Lotus sūtra, T. no. 1520) which he translated in 508. The name Kuan-tzu -tsai, was used for the first time in Ta-Pan-jo p'o-lo mi-lo-t'o ching (The great Prajna-paramita sūtra, T no. 220) translated by Hsuan-tsang in 663, and the eighty-volume version of Hua-yen ching (Avatamsaka sūtra, T. no. 279) translated by Siksananda in $695\sim699$. K'uei-chi $(632\sim682)$, Hsüan-tsang's chief disciple, provided an explanation for the name in his Pan-jo hsin-ching yu-tsan (Profound eulogy on the Heart Sūtra) and, following his own master, condemned the older name Kuan-shih-yin as wrong:

[The bodhisattva] practiced the six perfections in the past and has now obtained the fruit of perfection. Because he is foremost in observing

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everything with wisdom, he has now accomplished ten kinds of mastery (tzu-tsai). First, he has mastery over life-span because he can either prolong or shorten his life. Second, he has mastery over mind, for he is untainted by life and death. Third, he has mastery over wealth, for he can materialize it whenever he so desires and this is the result of his perfection in giving. Fourth, he has mastery over karma, for he only does good deed and encourages others to do the same. Fifth, he has mastery over life, for he can go wherever he pleases and this is the result of his perfection in discipline. Sixth, he is the master of superior understanding, for he can change into whatever he so pleases and this is the result of his perfection in patience. Seventh, he is a master of vows, for he can establish happily whatever he perceives and this is the result of his perfection in vigor. Eighth, he is a master of supernatural power, for he is fully endowed with

paranormal abilities resulting from his perfection in samadhi. Ninth, he is a master of insight, for while following words and sounds he penetrates into the wisdom. Tenth, he has mastery over Dharma, for his understanding always accords with the scriptures and this is the result of his perfection in wisdom. His position is next in line to become the buddha, but his realization is the same as the buddha. There is no obscure place that he does not illuminate. He is thus called Kuan-tzu-tsai (Perceiving Master, or Master of Observation). If one calls him Kuan-yin, both the word and the meaning are lost (Wan-tzu hsü-tsang ching 41:439a).

Why did translators give this bodhisattva two different names? Despite the criticisms of Hsüan-tsang and K'uei-chi, they continued to favor Kuan-shih-yin. There is also no evidence that earlier translation of this names was ever a mistake. In fact, these two Chinese names are translations from two different Sanskrit originals. Kuan-shih-yin was the translation for Avalokitaśvara, whereas Kuan-tzu-tsai was the translation for Avalokiteśvara which was apparently once also used though later dropped off from usage. Fa-yün who compiled a dictionary of translated terms, Fan-yi ming-yi chi (T. no. 2131), commented that the two names resulted from two different versions in the imported scriptures (T.

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54: 1062a). In an article published in 1927, Mironov confirmed the observation made by Fa-yün in the fifth century. He studied the Sanskrit fragments of the Lotus sūtra manuscripts brought by Otani's expedition from Eastern Turkestan. the three sets of fragments which for palaeographical reasons may be assigned to the end of the fifth century A. D. he happened to find three fragments of the twenty fourth chapter, devoted to the praside of Avalokiteśvara. The name of the Bodhisattva is spelt Avalokitaśvara. As the name occurs five times on an incomplete leaf, the possibility of a clerical error is hardly admissible. The circumstance is especially important, as the Petrovsky MS. of SP. from Kashgar has the usual form Avalokiteśvara. Thus a hereto missing link between the Indian and Chinese traditins seems to have been found. It cannot be doubted that Avalokitaśvara was the orginal form, later supplanted by Avalokiteśvara" (Mironov 243). Basing on this discovery, Goto suggests that Avalokiteśvara was used in scriptures coming into China from Kucha such as those translated by Kumarajiva and other Central Asian missionaries, while Avalokiteśvara in scriptures originating in India such as those translated by Hsuan-tsang who obtained the texts during his long sojourn there (Goto 9).

The translators of the Chinese sutras had therefore access to the two different versions of the bodhisattva's name. It is interesting that despite strong objections against the name of Kuan-yin vocied by Hsüan-tsang and others, it is this name that all East Asians have come to use in referring to this bodhisattva. Commentators, as I have indicated before, have also come up with fanciful interpretations of the "sound" part of the name. On the other hand, if Avalokiteśvara was originally the name of the bodhisattva, why was it dropped and replaced by Avalokiteśvara in India? Are there still traces of the former in non-Chinese sources which we can use for comparison?

The Forms of the Bodhisattva

One distinctive feature of Kuan-yin is that he can appear in many forms. Because there are a huge number of scriptures in Chinese connected with Kuan-yin, the sources describing his forms are very rich and diverse. [5] Since it is impossible to be exhaustive, we have to select the most representative scriptures for discussion. In general, we can distinguish two types of his manifestations.

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The first is a list of thebodhisattva's manifestation in either superhuman, human or nonhuman forms in order to carry out his work of salvation based on the spiritual principle of upaya (skillful means). This is the case found in the Lotus, Surangama and Ta-cheng chuang-yen pao-wang ching (Sutra on the Precious King of Adornment in Mahayana, Karandavyuha, T. no. 1050). The second is represented by esotoric scriptures in which the bodhisattva appears with multiples heads and hands holding various symbolic implements and reveals dharanis with marvelous efficacy.

The Lotus sūtra speaks of the bodhisattva appearing in thirty-three different forms. [6] It states, "Good man, if there are living beings in the land who need someone in the body of a Buddha in order to be saved, Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World's Sounds immediately manifests himself in a Buddha body and preaches the Law for them" (Watson 301). Following the same formulae, the bodhisattva manifests himself in the bodies of a pratyekabuddha, a voice- hearer, King Brahma, Shakra, Self-mastering God [Isvara], Great Self-mastering God [Mahesvara],[7] a great heavenly general, Vaishravana, a petty king, a rich man, a householder, a chief minister, a Brahman, a monk, a nun, a layman believer, a laywoman believer, the wife of a rich man, a householder, a chief minister, or of a Brahman, a young boy or a young girl, a heavenly dragon, yaksha, gandharva, being [deva],

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Several points need to be made. First of all, the thirty-three manifestions of the bodhisattva had relevance to a religious universe intelligible only to people living in Brahma, Shakra, and Shiva were Hindu gods. ancient India. Cakravartin, and devas were important fixtures of the Indian spiritual cosmos. Even the non-human inhabitants of that universe such as the asura, naga (dragon) and yaksha were known only by readers brought up in the Indian culture. That was why Goto argued convincingly that the author of this chapter of "Universal Gateway" of the Lotus sūtra must have been consciously addressing an audience familiar with the Vedic and Hindu mythologies and beliefs. By making the Buddhist bodhisattva capable of assuming the forms of all the important pre-Buddhist deities, Avalokiteśvara was thus elevated above them all (Goto $294 \sim 295$). very number of "thirty-three" was meaningful only in the Vedic and Hindu context. It had reference to the Vedic belief in the three-tiered universe (and the existence of eleven main gods in each level of the universe) as well as the thirty-three heavens. The number therefore had a symbolic, but not literal, meaning (Goto $167 \sim 168$). Secondly, the forms Avalokiteśvara assumes in order to preach the Dharma more effectively are generic, but not individualized forms. It does not say that the

bodhisattva appears as a king with a specific name, not to mention a biography, but rather as a generic king without any identity. It is more a status than a personality. Third and finally, of the forms Avalokiteśvara assumes, only seven are feminine. I make these three points now in order to highlight the contrast with the Chinese thirty-three forms of Kuan-yin which replaced them (to be shall discuss later). In the latter case, all the forms with clearly Vedic and Hindu connotations disappeared. The Chinese forms were predominately feminine, and they often refer either to some historical incidents happened in China or some legends familiar to a Chinese audience. This was one of several means through which Avalokiteśvara was thereby transformed into Kuan-yin.

Before we examine some of the Chinese forms of Kuan-yin, we have to finish the review of Avalokiteśvara's manifestations in the Surangama sūtra and the Karandavyuha sūtra. Although almost all of the thirty- two forms mentioned in the Surangama correspond to those found in the Lotus, a major difference is that the Surangama provides explanations about why the bodhisattva chooses to

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assume each form. Great careis taken in justifying the appropriateness of each form for each type of the bodhisattva's audience so that the importance of upaya is made clear. I cite some relevant passages for illustration:

If there are living beings who desire to be lords of devas to rule over the realms of the gods, I will appear as Sakra to teach them the Dharma so that they reach their goals.

If there are living beings who wish to roam freely in the ten directions, I will appear as Isvaradeva to teach them the Dharma so that they reach their goals.

If there are living beings who enjoy discussing well-known sayings and practice pure living, I will appear as a respectable scholar to teach them the Dharma so that they reach their goals.

If there are living beings who wish to govern cities and twons, I will appear as a magistrate to teach them the Dharma so that they reach their goals.

If there are women who are eager to study and learn and leave home to observe the precepts, I will appear as a bhiksuni to teach them the Dharma so that they reach their goals.

If there are women who are keen to fulfil their home duties thereby setting a good example to other families and the whole country, I will appear as a queen, a princess or a noble lady to teach them the Dharma so that they reach their goals.

If there are young men who are chaste, I will appear as a celibate youth to teach them the Dharma so that they reach their goals.

If there are dragons (nagas) who wish to be freed from bondage in their realms, I will appear as a nage to teach them the Dharma so that they reach their goals (Luk $136 \sim 138$).

The thirty-two manifestations of the bodhisattva in the Surangama sūtra follow closely those in the Lotus, with the omission of Vajrapani, and the substition of Vaisravana (Heavenly King of the North) with the Four Heavenly Kings. The Lotus clearly was the model for the Surangama. Like the Lotus,

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the Surangama promises believers deliverances from various dangers. Sharing a characteristic common to esoteric scriptures glorifying Avalokiteśvara which I will discuss below, the Surangama lists the benefits one by one and calls them the fourteen fearless powers bestowed by the bodhisattva. [8] Building on its hermeneutics of "hearing" and "sound", the sutra provides a philosophical link between the insight into the real nature of everything as void and the resultant psychological state of fearlessness. It is in this way reminiscent of the view put forward in the Heart sūtra where Avalokiteśvara is said to be free from fear

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because he does not have any thought-coverings as a result of having penetrated into the voidness of everything (Conze $164 \sim 165$).

The Surangama sūtra shares another distinctive feature with the esoteric scriptures in that it refers to Avalokiteśvara as having many heads, arms and eyes:

When I first realized the hearing mind which was most profound, the Essence of Mind (i. e. the Tathagato store) disengaged itself from hearing and could no longer be divided by seeing, hearing, feeling and knowing, and so became one pure and clean all-pervading precious bodhi.

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This is why I can take on different wonderful forms and master a countless number of esoteric mantras. I can appear with one, three, five, seven, nine, eleven and up to 108, 1,000, 10,000, and 84,000 sovereign (cakra) faces; with two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve, fourteen, sixteen, eighteen, twenty, twenty-four and up to 108, 1,000, 10,000 and 84,000 arms making various gestures (mudras); and with two, three, four, nine up to 108, 1,000, 10,000, and 84,000 clean and pure precious eyes, either merciful or wrathful, and in a state either of still imperturbability (dhyana -samadhi) or of absolute

wisdom (prajna) to save and protect living beings so that they can enjoy great freedom (Luk 141).

The Karandavyuha sūtra, translated by T'ien-hsi-tsai into Chinese from a Tibetan version around 1000, has a number of esoteric characteristics as well. It is in fact included in the section on esoteric sutras in the Taisho canon (T. vol. 20). This is a very important scriputre for the cult of Avalokiteśvara because it is one of the very few sutras where a mythological account about the life of this bodhisattva is given. Holt provides a succinct summary of this sutra, some parts of which I shall quote below. He puts the date of text anywhere from the fourth to the seventh century of the Common Era. The Sanskrit version that he uses may not be identical with the one the Chinese translation was based on, for there seem to be a number of differences.

Once while Gautama the Buddha was performing a meditation at the Jetavana monastery in the midst of his disciples and an attendant heavenly throng, a meditation aimed at the 'purification of everything', bright golden rays began to appear, lighting up the entire monastery and the surrounding Viskambhu, amagzed and filled with great joy, asked the countryside. Buddha about the source of these glorious rays of light. The Buddha responded by saying that they came from Arya Avalokiteśvara, who was preaching the dharma of nirvana to all the suffering denizens of the troutuous Avici Hell (dominated by a woeful lake of fire). To an Viskambhu, incredulous he continued: as a result of

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Avalokiteśvara's preaching of the dharma, the lake of fire in the Avici Hell was cooled and turned into a refreshing lotus pond and the sufferings of all of its inhabitants were thereby overcome. This miracle was then reported to Yama, Lord of Hell, who wondered what deity this might be. Recognizing Avalokiteśvara, Yama praised his virtues with a long eulogy.

Anxious for Avalokiteśvara's arrival in the human abode, Viskambhu eagerly asked the Buddha when he might be expected in this realm. The Buddha replied that Avalokiteśvara had then proceeded to visit pretaloka, where the suffering 'departed' in the form of hungry and thirsty ghosts heard his servon on dharman the form of the AGKs [Avalokitesvara-Guna-Karandavyuha]. Like the 'rain of dharma', water flowed from each of his pores to assuage their miserable conditions. The pretas were thus disabused of their belief in the permanent self, which had led them to commit karmic actions of greed resulting in their unfavorable rebirths. They were all thus transformed into bodhisattvas to dwell in the world of Amitabha's paradisacal budhha field, Sukhavati. The Buddha then proceeded to tell that once, long ago, when he was incarnated as a merchant during the time of the Buddha Vipasyin, he had heard that former buddha

enumerate the many qualities of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. The bodhisattva orginally had appeared from a shot of light emanating from the primordial self-existend buddha of the cosmos, who was engaged in his perpetural, deep meditation. From Avalokiteśvara's body (that of a mahapurusa), the world as we know it was created: the sun and the moon from his eyes, Maheśvara from his brow, Brahma and the other gods from his shoulders, Saraśvati from his teeth, the wind from his mouth, the earth from his feet, and Varuna from his stomach (Holt 47~48).

What comes after this passage in the Chinese translation makes the intention of the writer abundantly clear: to claim Avalokiteśvara's supremacy over shiva. "At that time the Bodhisattva Perceiving Lord told Maheśvara saying, 'In the future when the world enters the Age of Degenerate Law, people attached to

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wrong views will all say that you are the lord of the universe from the beginningless beginning and that you have created all beings'. At that time, sentient beings, having lost the way of enlightenment, they are confused by their ignorance and make the following statement:

The great body of emptiness,

makes the great earth your seat.

The world as well as all sentient beings,

are all evolved from this body (T. 20: 49c).

The sutra next mentions that the bodhisattva appears in the following twenty forms to save all beings. They are: buddha, bodhisattva, pretyeka-buddha, voice-hearer, Mahesvara, Narayana, Shakra, Brahma, God of the Sun, God of the Moon, God of Fire, God of Water, God of Wind, naga, Vinayaka, yaksha, Vaisravana, king, minister, father and mother (T. 20: 50c~51a). It is interesting to note that compared with the earlier thirty-three or thirty-two manifestions, more Hindu gods are mentioned in this sutra which clearly tries to present Avalokiteśvara as the creator of the cosmos as well as a universal savior. On the other hand, only one of the manifestation, that of a mother, is feminine.

The next section is the story of Avalokiteśvara's previous incarnation as a divine horse named Balaha who saved the prince Sinhala who was the previous incarnation of Gautama Buddha. I turn again to Holt's summation.

After Sinhala led a crew of 500 other merchants on a seagoing venture in search of precious jewels, his ship was taken by storm and wreched off the coast of the island of Tamradvipa (Lanka). By the grace of the lord to whom Shinhala was devoted, the 500 shipwreched sailors safely reached the

shores of the island, where they were warmly embraced by troops of celestial nymphs. In reality, the nymphs were raksasis plotting to devour the captain and his men. The 'nymphs' feigned shared distress with the merchants, seduced them, and begged them to become their husbands. One night after Sinhala had spent the evening in the arms of his beautiful nymph, the lamp in his room began to laugh.

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Sinhala asked the lamp the reason for the laughter, and the lamp replied by telling him that a previous group of shipwrecked merchants had been similarly treated by the nymphs but ultimately had been imprisoned and eventually devoured, for the beautiful nymphs in reality were vicious raksasis in disguise. The light warned Sinhala that he and his comrades were in imminent danger and that there was only one possible means by which they could be saved. The lighted lamp told Sinhala that on the seashore there stood a white winged horse named Balaha ready to take him and his 500 comrades away to safety, but that on one should open his eyes until he had safely landed on the further shore. Alarmed by the light's revelation, Sinhala quickly assembled his fellow merchants an instructed them in the advice that had been given. They then scurried down to the shore and mounted the waiting Balaha, who then rose majestically into the The raksasis, seeing that their prey was escapi ng, called out in loud lamentations. The merchants, all except Sinhaha, were touched with both pity and desire, opened their eyes to look back, and dropped back down into the ocean, where they were immediately devoured. Sinhala alone escaped and, after landing on the shore, went back to his father's house in Sinhakalpa (Holt 49).

The story in the Chinese version ends with a happy family reunion. It does not have the gruesome denouement in which the prince's former "wife", a bewitching raksasi, followed him back to the palace, managged to seduce the father who married her and made her the new queen. She then got all the raksasis to come to the kingdom and eventually devoured the king and his family. The prince finally made the people to see the truth. They proclaimed him the new king who succeeded in banishing the raksasis to the forest and restored peace in the country (Holt $49 \sim 50$).

The last long section of the sutra in the Chinese version is the revelation of and a chorus of praise to the "six-character" dharani om mani padme hum. The Buddha declares that this dharani is the "subtle and wondrous original mind" of Avalokiteśvara. The dharani is a wish-fulfilling jewel, but so far nobody knows about it. If one should come to know the dharani, not only oneself, but one's

ancestors of seven generations back, will all achieve salvaton. That is not all. The benefit of the dharani even extends to strangers who come into contact with the dharani-keeper of the tape worms living inside his body. "The worms living inside the body of the person who holds this dharani are destined to reach the stage of a nonretrogressing bodhisattva. If the person carries the dharani on his body or wears it on his head, anyone who sees him is like seeing a stupa containing a relic or seeing a tathagatha..... When a person chants this dharani as instructed, he attains unlimited eloquence and develops the heart of great compassion..... When the breath of such a person touches someone else, the latter will develop a heart of compassion and leaving anger and other poisons behind, achieve the stage of a non-retrogressing bodhisattva, and speedily realize anuttara-samyak- sambodhi. If a person wearing or carrying this dharani should touch someone else's body with his hand, the person so touched will also speedily attain the status of a bodhisattva" (T. 20: 59b~c). Most of the last volume of the sutra is similarly devoted to the wonders of the six-sylable dharani (T. 20: 59c∼64a).

I now turn to the forms of Avalokiteśvara found in the esoteric sutras glorifying this bodhisattva who teach saving dharanis, of which the Karandavyuka that I have discussed above can be counted as one example. One of the earliest such sutras is the Ch'ing Kuan-shih-yin p'u-sa hsiao-fu tu-hai t'o-lo-ni ching (Scripture of the Dharani for Invoking Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva to Dissipate Poison and Harm, T. no. 1043) translated by Nan-t'i during the last years of the Eastern Chin dynasty (317 \sim 420). The T'ien-t'ai school has always put special emphasis on this sutra ever since the T'ien-t'ai master Chih-i (538 \sim 597) used it as one of the sources for the last of the four forms of samadhis: neither walking nor sitting samadhi (Stevenson 1986,50; Donner and Stevenson 28, 275 \sim 280). Although the bodhisattva appears in this sutra in a human form and not with multiple heads and arms like in the other esoteric sutras discussed below, it places the same degree of emphasis on the keeping of the dharanis as the latter.

The title of this sutra is explained by the story set forth in the beginning of the scripture. A delegation of Vaisali citizens who suffer from all kinds of horrible diseases caused by yaksas comes to the Buddha with an urgent request for help. The Buddha tells them to invoke Avalokiteśvara by offering him willow branches and pure water. The bodhisattva appears in front of the Buddha

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and proceeds to teach the people to chant three sets of dharanis, the last of which, consists of 15 phrases, is particularly powerful. Known as the "divine dharani of six- character phrases" (liu-tzu chang-chu sheng-chou), the chanting of which together with the three-fold calling of Avalokiteśvara's name will save people from all kinds of dangers. For instance, to cite just a few examples, Avalokiteśvara will guide lost travellers by appearing in the form of a human being and lead them to safety; he will create a well and food to save people dying of thirst and hunger. Women who are on the point of death because of difficult childbirths will live; merchants who lose property to robbers will recover it because the latter will have a sudden change of hearts. The dharani not only saves people from sufferings in this world, but will enable them not being reborn in the realms of hell, hungry ghosts, animals, and asuras.

Instead, they will be born in a place where they can see the Buddha and beome freed after listening to the Dharma. Avalokiteśvara is called the "Great Compassionate One" (Ta-pei) in this sutra and is declared to be the savior who "courses in the five realms of rebirth" to carry out the work of salvation (T. 20: 36b).

Beginning with the Northern Chou dynasty (556 \sim 681), more esoteric scriptures about Avalokitesvara with new dharanis were introduced into China. The deity in these scriptures appears not in a regular human form, but in the esoteric forms of many heads and many arms. The first of these new forms of Avalokiteśvara to be introduced to China was the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara (Ekadasamukna, Sih-i-Three sutras, translated by Yeh-she-ch'ueh-to in $563 \sim 577$ (T. no. 1070), Hsuan-tsang in 659 (T. no. 1071) and Amoghavajra (705 \sim 774, T. no. 1069) are about this deity. Next, it was Avalokiteśvara holding a lasso (Amoghapasa, Puk'ung-ssu-so) who figures in seven sutras, the earliest of which was translated by Yen-na-ch'ueh-to in the Sui $(581 \sim 618)$ and the rest by, among others, Hsuan-tsang and Bodhiruci (d. 727) in the T'ang (T. nos. 1092~1098). Sutras on the Thousandhanded and Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara were translated next and the thirteen sutras were all done in the T'ang (T. nos. 1056~1068). Aside from those by Chiht'ung (done in 627~649, T. no. 1057) and Bhagavadharma (done in 650, T. no. 1060), Hsuan-tsang, Bodhiruci, and the three Tantric masters Subhakarasimha (636 \sim 735), Vajrabodhi (670 \sim 741) and Amoghavajra also made their translations. A fourth esoteric form of

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Avalokiteśvara, that of holding the wheel of a wish-granting jewel (Cintamanicakra, Ju-yi-lun) is the subject of yet another nine sutras which were translated by I-tsing, Bodhiruci, Sikshananda, Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra and others, all in the T'ang (T. nos. $1080 \sim 1088$).

Although these esoteric scriptures are devoted to different forms of Avalokiteśvara, they nevertheless share some common characteristics. The first of these is, of course, the emphasis on the chanting of the dharanis. Like the Ch'ing Kuan-yin ching and the Karandavyuha, they promise unfailing deliverance from all possible disasters, the gaining of both worldly benefits and transcendant wisdom. They always categorize the benefits by listing them numerically. They emphasize minute, detailed and correct procedures: how to make either a three- dimensional image of the deity (mandala) or a representational imagery painted on cotton cloth (pata), how to prepare the ritual arena, how many times one should chant the dharani, what ritual ingredients one should use in performing the fire offering (homa) to the deity, what hand gestures (mudra) to perform and what visualizations of the deity to carry out during the rite. There are also magical recipes for averting specific disasters. I will select some passages from Fuo-shu shih-i-mien Kuan-shih-yin shen-chou ching (T. no. 1070) translated by Yeh-she-chü-to to illustrate what I mean.

The sutra calls for a daily routine of bathing in the morning (if bathing is impossible, then at least rinsing the mouth and washing both hands), followed by reciting the dharani 108 times. The result is the gaining of ten rewards in one's present lift: (1)does not suffer from any disease; (2)is constantly remembered by buddhas of the

ten directions; (3) always possesses money, things, clothes and food sufficiently and without want; (4) can overcome all enemies; (5) can cause all sentient beings to give rise to hearts of compassion toward oneself; (6) no poison, evil charm or fever can harm one; (7) no knife or stake can hurt one; (8) will not be drowned by water; (9) will not be burned by fire; (10) will not suffer a sudden death. On the other hand, the following four compensations will become one's own: (1) sees inumerable buddhas before one dies; (2) will never fall into hell; (3) will not be harmed by any animal; (4) is reborn in the land of the Buddha Amitayus. If one has committed the four parajikas (deserving expulsion) and the five deadly sins (leading to be born in the Avici Hell), by chanting this dharani but once, all the

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sins will be extinguished.

It then describes the method of worship. First make an image of the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara with white sandalwood. Place it on a high platform facing the west. Scatter the ground with flowers. From day one to day seven, chant the dharani three periods each day: 108 times in the morning, 108 times at noon and 108 times in the evening. One does not have to offer any food, but from day eight to day thirteen, one should offer food, drink and fruits. Do not put them on plates but on beds woven with clean grass. The practitioner kneels on a cushion made of sedge grass facing the statue. On the 14th and 15th day, make sandalwood fire offering in front of the image and also place a clean copper container filled with one sheng (pint) of Soma oil in front of the practitioner. Then take incense made of the Aguru tree and of a thickness as that of a chopstick, prepare 1008 sections of this kind of incense, each being one inch in length. Starting from the noon of the 15th day, the practitioner takes one section of the incense, smear it with Soma oil, recite the dharani over it and then throw it into the sandalwood fire. He does so until all of the 1008 sections are finished. He should not eat anything for these two days. On the night of the 15th day, Avalokiteśvara enters the place of practice and the sandalwood statue shakes by itself. At that time, the whole earth also shakes. The face of the Buddha sitting on the topmost head of the statue praises the practitioner and promises to fulfill all his wishes.

The sutra ends with various recipes to deal with moon elcipses, nightmares, diseases of people and animals, and disturbance caused by ghosts. Here are two examples: place equal amounts of realgar and yellow ochre on leaves, chant the dharani 1008 times in front of the image of Avalokiteśvara, bath with warm water mixed with the above. All obstacles, nightmares, and diseases will go away. For getting rid of evil ghosts who have entered one's home: place 108 sticks of incense in front of the image, chant the dharani once over each stick and throw it into the fire. When all the incense sticks are finished, all evil ghosts will scatter and do not dare to stay (T. 20: 149b~151b).

Space does not allow me to discuss sutras on the Amoghapasa and Cintamanicakra Avalokiteśvara. However, I will provide here a synopsis of the Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara sutra translated by

Bhagavadharma, by far the most important of all the esoteric scriptures in China. The sutra is spoken by the Buddha in the palace of Avalokiteśvara located on the island Potalaka. Suddenly there is a great illumination and the three thousand chiliocosms turn golden in color, shaking all over while the sun and moon become dull by comparison. Bodhisattva Dharani King (Tsung-chih-wang) asks the Buddha why this is happening and the Buddha answers that it is because Avalokiteśvara is going to reveal the dharani. Avalokiteśvara then takes over the center stage. He speaks with the first person pronoun "I" in the stura.

When I practised under a buddha by the name of Ch'ien-kuang-wang ching-chu Ju-lai innumberable kalpas ago, the buddha took pity on me and all sentient beings. Touching my forehead with his golden hand, the buddha instructed me to keep this dharani and work for the benefit of beings living in evil times in the future. I was at that time a bodhisattva of the first stage, but as soon as I heard the dharani, I advanced right away to the eighth stage of the bodhisattva path. Filled with joy and exaltation, I vowed, 'If I am capable of benefiting and comforting all sentient beings in the future, let me be endowed with a thousand hands and a thousand eyes right away.' As soon as I made the vow, this happened. So from that long ago epoch, I have kept the dharani. As a result, I have always been born where there is a buddha. Moreover, I have never undergone birth from a womb, but am always transformed from a lotus.

Having explained the origin and efficacy of the dharani, Avalokiteśvara calls upon anyone who wants to keep this dharani to give rise to the thought of compassion for all sentient beings by making the following ten vows after him:

Namah Avalokiteśvara of Great Compassion, may I quickly learn all Dharma.

Namah Avalokiteśvara of Great Compassion, may I speedily obtain the eye of wisdom.

Namah Avalokiteśvara of Great Compassion, may I quickly save all

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sentient beings.

Namah Avalokiteśvara of Great Compassion, may I speedily obtain skill of means.

Namah Avalokiteśvara of Great Compassion, may I quickly sail on the prajn~aa boat.

Namah Avalokiteśvara of Great Compassion, may I speedily cross over the ocean of suffering.

Namah Avalokiteśvara of Great Compassion, may I quickly obtain the way of discipline and meditation.

Namah Avalokiteśvara of Great Compassion, may I speedily ascend the nirvana mountain.

Namah Avalokiteśvara of Great Compassion, may I quickly enter the house of non-action.

Namah Avalokiteśvara of Great Compassion, may I speedily achieve the Dharma-Body.

If I face a mountain of knives, it will naturally crumble,

if I face a roaring fire, it will naturally burn out,

if I face hell, it will naturally disappear,

if I face a hungry ghost, it will naturally be satiated,

if I face an Asura, its evil heart will naturally become tame and,

if I face an animal, it will naturally obtain great wisdom.

After making such vows, one should sincerely call the name of Avalokiteśvara as well as the name of Amitabha Buddha who is Avalokiteśvara's original teacher. If anyone recites the dharani, should he fall into an evil realm of rebirth, or not being born into one of the lands of the buddhas, or not attaining unlimited samaadhi and eloquence, or not getting all the wishes of one's desire in the present life and, in the case of a woman, if she detests the female body and wants to be born a man in her next life, Avalokiteśvara promises that all these would become true. Otherwise he will not achieve complete, perfect enlightenment.

If anyone steals or damages the sangha's property, by reciting this dharani, the sin will be forgiven Anyone who has committed the five sins and ten evil

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deeds, who slanders the Dharma and corrupts monastic discipline, or who destroys temples and steals monks' possessions, is freed from all the guilt by chanting this dharani. But if one has doubts about the efficacy of the dharani, then the consequences of even a slight mistake will not disappear, how much more so a serious sin?

The keeping of the dharani will result in fifteen kinds of good rebirth and the avoidance of fifteen kinds of evil death. The fifteen kinds of evil death from which one is saved are: (1)from hunger and suffering; (2)from being imprisoned by cangue and beaten by staff; (3)at the hands of enemies; (4)from fighting on the battlefield; (5) by being mauled by wolves or other vicious animals; (6) by being attacked by poisonous snakes and scorpions; (7) by drowning or burnt by fire; (8)by poison; (9)by witchcraft; (10)from madness; (11)by falling from a tree or a cliff; (12)from enemies' curse; (13)being killed by heretic gods and demonic ghosts; (14)from chronic and lingering illnesses; (15)by suicide. The fifteen kinds of good rebirth one enjoys are: (1)being always ruled by a virtuous king wherever one is born; (2)always born in a good country; (3) always living in a peaceful time; (4) always meeting with good friends; (5) always born without any physical defects; (6) but with a pure and ripe heart for truth; (7) will not break any precepts; (8) having harmonious and virtuous family members; (9)fully endowed with money and food; (10)always respected and taken care of by others; (11)never suffering from robbery; (12)always having one's desire fulfilled; (13) always beingprotected by nagas, devas, and virtuous gods; (14) can see the Buddha and listen to the Dharma in the place of birth; (15)can understand and penetrate the correct Dharma.

The dharani consisting of 84 phrases is then revealed.

All the assembled reach different levels of realization. Some attain the fruit of sotapanna, sakadagami, anagami or arahant. Others attain the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, all the way to the tenth stage of the bodhisattva path. Unlimited number of sentient beings give rise to bodhicitta.

In keeping the dharani, one should stay in a clean room, purify oneself by bathing and put on clean clothes. Hang a banner (with a painting of the bodhisattva?), light lamp, offer flowers, delicacies and food and concentrate one's thoughts without allowing them to wander. One can expect that Sun-light and Moon-light Bodhisattvas as well as many gods and immortals come to bear

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witnesses. Avalokiteśvara will look after the practitioner with the thousand eyes and protect him with the thousand hands. As a result, one will understand all worldly classics, including the Vedas and all heterodox philosophies thoroughly. By chanting the dharani, one will be able to cure 84,000 kinds of illnesses and order gods and ghosts to subdue Mara and heterodox teachers. If a person who either studies the sutra or practices meditation in the wilderness is bothered by evil spirits and cannot concentrate, just chant this dharani once, they will be bound and subdued by it. Any one who gives rise to the thought of compassion to sentient beings and decides to keep the dharani as taught, Avalokiteśvara will order nagas, benevolent gods, devaguardians of the secrets of Vairocana to always follow and surround him without leaving his side. They will protect him as if he were their eyes or their very lift (T. 20: 106b~108b).

Method of setting up a sacred arena is then given: recite the dharani 21 times over a knife. Use the knife to demarcate the boundary on the ground. Or one can recite the dharani 21 times over pure water and pour it on the four sides to create the

boundary. Or use white mustard seed. Recite the dharani 21 times and then scatter them on the four sides. Alternatively, one can also create the boundary by visulization. Or recite the dharani 21 times over clean ashes or five-colored twine. Either can serve as markings for the arena's boundry (T. 20: 109b).

Many recipes to deal with various problems or to attain specific goals follow, and here are a few samples. If one wants to order a ghost around, get a skull from the wild, wash and clean it. Set up a sacred area in front of the image of the Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed One, worship it with flowers, incense, food and drink. Do so for seven days, and the ghost will appear and do whatever it is ordered. If a woman suffers from a difficult childbirth, recite the dharani 21 times over sesame oil, rub it in her belly button and her vagina and the baby will come out easily. If someone has phobia about the dark and is afraid to go out at night, make a necklace with white threads, recite the dharani 21 times and tie it with 21 knots. When this is worn on the neck, fear goes away $(T. 20: 110b \sim c)$.

The sutra ends by identifying the names of the forty mudras of Avalokiteśvara and the benefits they bestow on the worshiper (T. 20: $111a \sim b$).

I have devoted considerable space to the description of these three esoteric

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scriptures centering around Avalokiteśvara. This is justified because, with the possible exception of Ch'ing Kuan-yin, they are not very well known. students of Chinese Buddhism, including myself prior to my study of Kuan-yin, usually stay away from the esoteric scriptures, regarding them as a bit too specialized. As a result, there is a vacuna in the current scholarship on Chinese esoteric Buddhism. Although a huge body of such scriptures exists, the majority of them having been translated in the T'ang and Sung, it has rarely be used as sources for the reconstruction of the kind of religious beliefs and practices they presented to their contemporary audiences in China. Even a cursory summary as I have tried to do above, therefore, might be helpful to provide a concrete sense about this type of literature. The second reason for my going into some detail about the promises Kuanyin grants to the faithful is because such scriptures create a new identity of this deity not found in the earlier exoteric scriptures. While the Lotus sūtra, the Surangama-Sutra and the Pure Land Visualization Sutra, the three most important scriptures promoting the faith in Kuan-yin since the Six Dynasties, promise similar worldly benefits as well as salvation from evil rebirths as those vouchsaved by the esoteric texts, Kuan-yhin is subordinated to Sakyamuni and Amitabha respectively. In the esoteric scriptures, on the other hand, Kuan-yin increasingly assumes an independant role as a universal savior. Responding to the development of the cults of Shiva and Vishnu in Hinduism, esoteric Avalokiteśvara exhibits similar omnipotence and omniscience. The process reached its culmination in the Karandavyuha Sutra. we have seen earlier. Avalokitesvara is declared to be the creator of the universe, including Shiva himself.

One measure of the popular reception of a scripture is provided by the depiction of its themes in art. The "Universal gateway" chapter of the Lotus sūtra is a well known

example. According to Fa-hua ch'uan-chi (Record of the Lotus sūrta, T. no. 2068), Tsu-ch'ü Meng-sun (r. $401 \sim 433$), the king of the Northern Liang dynasty, was credited with the promotion of this chapter as an independent scripture. The king was a Buddhist devotee. He suffered from illness and was told to chant the chapter, for "Kuan-yin has a special affinity with people of this land." He did so and recovered from his illness. From then on, this chapter, known as Kuan-shih-yin Sutra, started to circulate as an independent

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scripture (T. 51: 52c). Among the scriptures found in the caves of Tun-huang, 1048 were copies of the Lotus and almost 200 were copies of the Kuan-yin sūtra. While a few could be dated to before the Sui dynasty ($581 \sim 618$), the majority were copied during the Sui and T'ang, indicating the growing popularity of Kuan- yin during this time. Moreover, among the frescoes in the existing 492 caves in Tun-huang, more than 28 are illustrations of this chapter. They were painted during several hundred years, beginning with the Sui and ending with the Hsi- hsia $(990 \sim 1227)(Sun 1987, 61 \sim 62)$.

The attraction of Avalokiteśvara as a cosmic god as depicted in the esoteric sutras must be very great. In fact, we can find evidences of positive responses to this new idea in new iconographies of this deity. Gilt bronzes of Kuan-vin holding willow branch and water bottle began to be created as early as 470—500, clearly reflecting the influence of Ch'ing kuan-yin ching. This is a Chinese creation, for Avalokitesvara is usally depicted as holding a lotus stem instead of willow branch in India. Although for some time even in China, Kuan-yin continued to be depicted with holding a lotus stem in one hand, eventually it was replaced by the willow branch in the Sung and later. In Ming and Ch'ing, when Kuan-yin was already femininized, even when she was shown not holding anything in her hand, the willow branch would still be depicted as emerging from the water bottle, which might be shown sitting beside her. Another indication of the willow branch and pure water as established attributes of Kuan-yi is provided by the gatha praising her sung during the celebrations of her "birthday" which is held on the 19th day of second month, sixth month and the ninth month. Included in the Ch'an-man jih-sung (Daily Liturgies of the Ch'an School), a text published in 1834, "Celebratory Rite for Bodhisattva Kuanshih-yin's Holy Birthday" (Kuan-shih-yin P'u-sa sheng-tan chu-yi) fuses elements from the Lotus sūtra, Ch'ien-shou ching and Sutra of Thousand Hands. It calls for the chanting of Kuan-yin's name three times, followed by the chanting of the Great Compassion Dharani seven times. Then the following gatha to be sung accompanied by music:

The Bodhisattva is the Perfectly Penetrating One. Born in the forest of seven jewels, her true form has a thousand hands and thousand eyes.

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She sits in the Potalaka Palace. Sprinkling sweet dews with a willow branch, she nourishes the entire dharma realm universally. Displaying her

supernatural powers and riding on thousand layers of ocean waves, she arrives in full splendor in this place of truth.

The grace of the wondrous Kuan-yin Bodhisattva is hard to repay,

Her purity and splendor are the result of spiritual cultivation carried out in many kalpas.

Thirty-two different manifestations are found in many worlds.

She has been transforming beings in Jambudvipa for innumerable kalpas.

The sweet dew in the bottle is constantly sprinkled everywhere,

The willow branch in her hand has been there for numberless autumns.

A thousand prayers rising from a thousand places are all answered.

She has always been a boat transporting people from the ocean of suffering (Fo-chiao chao-mu ke-sung, $90 \sim 92$).

Seven extant reliefs of the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvarafrom the chi-pao-ta (Tower of the Seven Jewels), completed in 703 under Empress Wu ($690\sim705$), are now kept in different museums of the world. The one in the Freer Gallery shows the deity having "ten small heads placed in superimposed tiers above the main head as if attached to the headdress" (Howard 1993, $100\sim101$). Other fine examples are found in Japan, such as the image in Horyoji created in the 8th century in the T'ang style. Amoghapasa and Cintamanicakra Avalokiteśvara were also represented in art after those sutras were translated in the T'ang. However, of all the esoteric forms of Avalokiteśvara introduced into China, it is the Thousand-handed and Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara who became most popular in China. This was widely attested to by the production of images, keeping of the Great Compassion Dharani by monks and lay people resulting in miracles, copying of the Ch'ien -shou ching, and recitation of key passages such as the "ten vows" and the dharani in a ritual setting leading to Chih-li ($960\sim1028$)'s formulation of the repentance ritual in the Sung (Yü 1996).

It is clear from this survey that there is a rich source from both exoteric and esoteric scriptures which can serve as models for artists to depict the various forms Avalokiteśvara assumes to help sentient beings. Indeed, many images and

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drawings of this bodhisattva have been created using such scriptural sources as their basis. However, when we look at the sets of Kuan-yin paintings, be they five, thirty-two, or fifty-three, made by artists in late imperail period, no discernable connection with scriptural sources is present. They were indigenous creations by Chinese artists who showed unrestrained freedom in their imagination of a Kuan-yin who looked remarkably like a beautiful Chinese lady.

Of the multiple sets of Kuan-yin, the one with five forms probably was the earliest. Such a set painted by Ting Yün-p'eng (1547~ca. 1628) is kept at Nelson-Aitkins Museum at Kansas City. All the five are feminine. The majority of the thirty-two forms and the fifty-three forms are also feminine. At least four sets of the thirty-two forms of Kuan-yin are extant: one set painted by Hsing Tz'u-ching, a woman painter of the Ming, is kept at the Palace Museum in Taipei, one set attributed to Tu Chin (of the Ming?) is kept at the Tokyo National Museum, another set with only 28 remaining of the original 32 attributed to Ting Yün-p'eng is kept at Anhui Provincial Museum, and finally a set painted by the daughter of the famous painter Ch'iu Ying (1494—ca. 1552) is kept by a private collector in Japan. The drawings in the four sets are identical, all done in the Pai-miao line-drawing style, but the gathas appended to them might be different. For instance, one of the forms shows Kuan-yin sitting on a lionlike mythological animal called hou, [9] an iconography not found prior to the Ming. Although the image is the same in the Palace Museum set (Fig. 1) and the set in Anhui Provincial Museum (Fig. 2), the gathas, however, are different.

A set of the fifty- three forms of Kuan-yin compiled and printed with a

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preface by Hu Ying-ling (1551~1602), a historian with a strong interest in the Kuanyin lore, has been reprinted in several modern editions. All thirty- two forms are repeated here, but many new ones are also added. Forty-two of the fifty-three are definitely feminine, and eleven are masculine, including the forms of buddha, monk, minister and so on, drawing inspiration from the Lotus and Surangama. fifty-three refers to the fifty- three visits the young pilgrim Sudhana makes in search for truth described in the Avatamska Sutra, another text providing scriptural basis for the cult of Kuan-yin in China. The 40 chüan version of the sutra translated by Prajñā in 798 is particularly important. It is a translation of the Gandavyuha(T. no. 293), the section of the sutra which describes Sudhana's pilgrimage. Kuan-yin is the twenty-eighth "good friend" Sudhana pays a visit. Sitting on a diamond boulder in a clearing adidst a luxuriant wooded area, Kuan-yin, who is referred in the sutra as "brave and manly" (yung-meng ta-chang-fu), preaches dharma to him. In the Avatamsaka, Kuan-yin is credited with the power to save people from similar perils as those mentioned in the Lotus. When one calls on the name of Kuan-yin, one can go without fear into a forest infested with bandits and wild beasts. One is freed from fetters and chains, and one is saved from drowning in the raging ocean. When thrown onto burning coals, on calling Kuan- yin's name, one is not killed, for the flames will become lotus sprouts in a lake. By late T'ang, artists liked to combine the depictions of Kuan-yin in these two sutras together. This is quite a common theme among the tenth century frescoes at Tun-hung (Fontein 78) and among wood-block illustrations of Buddhist scriptures printed in the Sung (960~1279) and later. Such a wood-block print dated 1432 (Fig. 3) shows an illustration of Kuan-yin appearing as a minister from the Lotus on the upper half and Sudhana paying homage to Kuan-yin from the Avatamsaka in the lower half. It is interesting to note that Kuan-yin in both renderings looks decidedly feminine.

The painters of these multiple sets of Kuan-yin seem to favor certain feminine forms which they would use repeatedly, a point which I shall take up below.

The Feminization of Avalokitesvara in China

Kuan-yinwas perceived as predominately musculine and similarly so depicted in Chinese art until the T'ang, although literary and anecdotal examples can be

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cited to trace the bodhisattva's sexual transformation to as early as the fifth century during the north and south dynasties, as C. N. Tay demonstrated. [10] But beginning with the Five Dynasties, around the tenth century, Kuan-yin was increasingly feminized and, by the Ming, the bodhisattva was transformed into a "goddess of mercy". Kuan-yin was also depicted as primarily feminine in art as we have seen with the multiple sets of the bodhisattva. Moreover, not only has Kuan-yin been feminized, she also appeared in several distinctive feminine images in China. Three feminine images of Kuan-yin have particularly become widely known in China: that of a chaste and filial daughter, that of a young and flirtations fish seller, and that of a kind old woman.

The sources for these images are not canonical sutras. As we have seen before, although many scriptures are connected with Kuan-yin, yet aside from the Lotus sūtra and Surangama sūtra, we cannot find many others in which Kuan-yin is described as feminine. The media for Kuan-yin's sexual transformation and, at the same time, her sinicization, are provided by indigenous sutras (otherwise known as "apocryphal sutras"), miracle tales, and a unique genre of religious literature known as "precious volumes" (pao-chüan) which were written in a mixture of classical and colloquial Chinese. Heir to popular sutra lectures prevalent in the T'ang, precious volumes in late imperial China were often recited aloud, accompanied by music, to an audience composed of mostly women who were illiterate. Biographies of religious women, as well as novels, plays and ethnographical literature are some other sources providing us with clues. Chinese come to understand Buddhism not only through translated sutras but also, or perhaps even more so, through their exposure to the kind of sources that I refer here. Since monks and lay Buddhists collaborated in creating and preserving

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these media for Kuan-yin's transformation, I do not believe that we should consider the feminine Kuan-yin as a phenomenon found only in Chinese popular religion, as scholars previously claimed (Ch'en 1964; Maspero 1928). On the contrary, I take it to be a powerful example of the creativity of Chinese Buddhist tradition.

What can the feminine images of Kuan-yin tell us about Chinese Buddhism and gender? It goes without saying that Kuan-yin, a "goddess", was not a real woman. Even though the feminine images of Kuan-yin were provided with names and identities, they were not historical women. And although women worshiped Kuan-yin and could read or listen to the stories glorifying Kuan-yin, so did men. "Precious volumes", miracle tales, indigenous sutras, novels, and plays about Kuan-yin did not constitute genres restricted to either a female authorship or readership. On the other hand, it can be argued that images of Kuan-yin were not created out of thin air, but

were based on ideas and ideals of womanhood in late imperial China. These images can therefore reveal what the society thought about women and what some of the women aspired to become in that society.

By far the most familiar image of Kuan-yin is the chaste and filial daughter represented by Princess Miao- shan. As Glen Dudbridge demonstrated in his studies, the core of the legend can be traced to the stele inscription entitled "Biography of the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion" (Ta-pei P'u-sa chuan) composed by Chiang Chih-ch'i ($1031\sim1104$) who came to Ju-chou, Honan, as its new prefect in 1099. He became friends with the abbot of Hsiang-shan Ssu in Pao-feng county which housed a Ta-pei (Thousand-eyed and Thousand-armed Kuan-yin) Pagoda and was the pilgrimage center for the Kuan-yin cult. The fame of the temple and the pagoda rested on the legend that Princess Miao-shan, who was an incarnation of Kuan -yin, underwent the apotheosis on this very site. Based on what the abbot told him, Chiang wrote the account which was penned by the famous calligrapher Tsai Ching and inscribed on a stele in 1104. When Chiang served as the prefect of Hangchow during $1102\sim1103$, he brought the story with him and the monk of Upper T'ien-chu Monastery, another pilgrimage center for Kuan-yin worship, had the same story carved on a stele in 1104 (Dudbridge 1978, $10\sim15$; 1982, $589\sim594$). [11]

Although the legend of Miao-shan was already known in the Sung, the fully p. 447

developed story, however, was set forth in the Ming novel The Complete story of Kuan-yin of the Southh Sea Nanhai Kuan-yin ch'üan-chuan), the Ming ch'uan-ch'i drama Story of Hsiang-shan (Hsiang-shan chi), and the early Ch'ing sectarian text True Scripture of Kuan-yin's Original Vow of Universal Salvation (Kuan-yin chi-tu pen-yüan chen-ching, preface dated 1667). All the works cited above, moreover, were in turn based on the Precious Volume of Hsiang-shan (Hsiang-shan pao-chuan). The earliest surviving edition was from the Ch' ien-lung era in the 18th century, although it bore a preface dated to 1103 written by a monk named P'u-ming of Upper T'ien-chu Monastery, who cannot be otherwise identified. Even if the preface was spurious, the "precious volume" was clearly written by the Ming, for it was already referred by this title in the 1550s. The story, in short, is the following. [12]

Miao-shan was the third daughter of King Miao-chuang who ruled an unspecified kingdom in an unspecified time. She was by nature drawn to Buddhism, keeping a vegetarien diet, reading scriputres by day and practicing Ch'an meditation at night from an early age. The king had no son and hoped to choose an heir from among his sons-in-law. When Miao-shan reached the marriagible age of nineteen, she refused to get married, unlike her two elder sisters who had both obediently married the men chosen by the father. The king was greatly angered by her refusal and punished her with various ordeals. She was first confined to the back garden and subjected to hard labor. When she completed the tasks with the aid of gods, she was allowed to join a nunnery to undergo further trials in the hope of discouraging her from pursuing the religious

She persevered and the king burned down the nunerary, killed the five hundred nuns, and had Miao-shan executed for her unfilial behavior. While her body was safeguarded by a mountain spirit, Miao-shan's soul toured hell and saved beings there by preaching to them. She returned to the world, went to Hsiang-shan, meditated for nine years and achieved enlightenment. By this time, the king had become seriously ill with a mysterious disease which resisted all medical treatment. disguised as a medicant monk, came to the palace and revealed the only remedy which could save the dying father: a medicine concocted with the eyes and hands of someone who had never felt anger. She further told the astonished king where to When the king's messengers arrived, Miao-shan willingly find such a person. offered her eyes and hands. The father recovered after taking the medicine and came to Hsiang-shan with the royal party on a pilgrimage to offer thanks to his savior. He recognized the eye-less and hand-less ascetic to be no other than his own daughter. Overwhelmed with remorse, he and the rest of the royal family all became converted Miao-shan was transformed into her true form, that of the thousandeyed and thousand-armed Kuan-yin. After the apotheosis, Miao-shan passed away and a pagoda was erected to mark the site.

Earlier in the story, Miao-shan's refusal to get married was her major crime for which she had to suffer many hardships and even death. Later in the story, her selfless sacrifice of her hands and eyes to save her father made possible the reconciliation and her eventual transfiguration. The rejection of marriage is based on two powerful arguments. The first one has to do with a negative attitude toward sexuality and desire and the second is a negative evaluation of the married condition itself. Both reflect the values of Buddhism which has always regarded the monastic and celibate life as more preferable to that of a householder. Miao-shan set a strong model for Chinese women's resistance to marriage. However, for them, the revulsion against marriage is not just an indictment against sexuality per se, but was also caused by the fear of a difficult married life involving over-bearing in-laws, the pain and danger of childbirth, and the folk belief that women who have given birth to children are punished in the underworld for having produced polluting substances (Ahern 214).

Some women expressed their resistance to marriage by concrete action.
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Marjorie Topley studied women living in a rural area of the Canton delta who from the early 19th to the early 20th century "either refused to marry or, having married, refused to live with their husbands. Their resistance to marriage took regular forms. Typically they organized themselves into sisterhoods. The women remaining spinsters took vows before a deity [Old Mother Kuan-yin], in front of witnesses, never to wed" (Topley 1975: 67). Andrea Sankar who studied women living in chai t'angs (vegetarian houses) in Hong Kong in the 1970s also commented on their attraction to Kuan-yin. "One concrete appeal for the spinsters who have chosen to live in chai t'angs......is the strong identification many women have with the Goddess [sic] Kuan-yin. Next to discussions on the different categories of chai, stories about the lives of Kuan Yin were a popular topic of conversation" (Sankar 307). Later, she again observes, "For my informants, Kuan Yin is an apotheosized woman.

The myths they relate depict her more as a folk heroine than as a saint.....Kuan Yin provides a charter for their celibate lives. Her life as a strong, independent, successful woman who lived in the secular world sanctifies and legitimazes their own choice of life style. Now some of their motivations for turning to the religious life as they grow old and retreat from the secular world can be attributed to the kinship they feel with Kuan Yin" (Sankar 310).

In 1987 when I did field work in Hangzhou, I often encountered similar sentiments against marriage expressed by women pilgrims I interviewed. These village women would sing songs glorifying Kuan-yin which were called "Kuan- yin sutra". They expressed their admiration for Kuan-yin/Miao-shan's independence and courage in refusing marriage. They envied her independence and freedom. One went like this:

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There is a truly chaste woman in the household of King Miao-chuang.

First, she does not have to bear the ill humor of her parents- in-law.

Secondly, she does not have to eat the rice of her husband.

Thirdly, she does not have to carry a child in her womb or on her arms.

Fourthly, she does not need a maid to serve her.

Everyday she enjoys peace and quiet in her fragrant room.

Turning over the cotton coverlet, she sleeps on the bed alond.

Stretching out her legs, she went into the Buddha hall.

Tucking in her feet, she withdrew into the back garden.

For the sake of cultivation she suffered punishments by her parent.

But now, sitting on the lotus throne, she enjoys blessings.

If Princess Miao-shan is a symbol of virginal chastity, Yülang Kuan-yin (Kuan-yin with a Fish Basket) is a feminine image of Kuan-yin of greater complexity. Known also as Mr. Ma's Wife (Ma-lang-fu), Bodhisattva with Chained bones (So-ku P'u-sa) or simply, "Woman from Yen-chou", she is a seductress and sexual tease. I discussed the history and significance of the myths surrounding this image quite extensively elsewhere and other scholars had also found this figure intriguing (Yü 1992: 239~256; Sawada 1959; Stein 1986). In short, Kuan-yin appeared in the disguise of either a prostitute or a beautiful young woman fish vendor carrying a bamboo basket of carps. In the former disguise, she made love to any man who desired her, but as soon as he made love to her, he would be miraculously purged of sexual desire. In the latter disguise, as a fish-selling girl, she promised marriage to the suitor who

agreed to follow Buddhism, went through the marriage ceremony, but suddenly died before the marriage could be consummated. Both stories had their origin in the T'ang. But the first image, that of a prostitute, became less prominent in later times. In Ming-Ch'ing times, however, perhaps as an echo of this legend, a beautiful courtesan or a bewitching cross-dressed male actor was sometimes praised as Kuanyin. The image of the Fish-basket Kuan-yin who was a model of chastity, however, was preserved. In these myths, Kuan-yin used sex as a bait to convert people to Buddhism, but remained chaste because she with-held its fulfillment. Many Ch' an monks in the Sung $(960 \sim 1279)$ and later wrote poems about her and

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they clearly saw her in th is light: a clever practitioner of the Buddhist skillful means (Sawada $40 \sim 44$).

The image of Kuan-yin as an old woman became noticible for the first time after the Sung. In the pao-chüan literature composed in the Ming and Ch'ing, this is one of the favorite disguises assumed by Kuan-yin. Kuan-yin was a main character in Hsi yu chi (Journal to the West), popularly known as The Monkey, , one of the most famous novels written in the 16th century by Wu Cheng-en (c. $1500 \sim 1582$). Although Kuan-yin normally appeared in the novel as the Potalaka Kuan-yin accompanied by her divine entourage of Sudhana and Dragon Girl (Yü 1994: 163~ 166), she also took the disguise of an old woman in Chapters 14, 55 and 84, always rendering help to Tripitaka, the monk pilgrim, and his party critical and timely assistance. This image of Kuan-yin is totally devoid of sexuality and is a powerful matriarchal figure of authority and strength. She is called "Old Mother" in the novel. This is also the title given to Kuan- yin in three precious volumes that I shall briefly The first precious volume is in fact connected with the legend of the Fishbasket Kuan-yin. It is entitled Precious Volume of the Fish-basket Kuan-yin and set the story in the Sung, correctly reflecting the time when this cult first gained popularity. In this version Kuan-yin first appeared as an old woman fish monger. It was only after she failed to attract anyone's attention in this disguise that she changed into a beautiful young maiden. The second text, Precious Volume about Kuan-yin's Conversion of the Twelve Enlightened Ones, tells the story of how Kuanyin led twelve persons, both men and women, some good and some bad, into enlightenment. Kuan-yin took the disguises of a monk and a beautiful young woman, but also of a poor old beggar woman. The last precious volume is rather unusual. Entitled Precious Volume of Efficacious Kuen-shih-yin Who Saves Beings from Sufferings and Dangers, it was clearly modeled upon the "Universal Gateway" chapter of the Lotus sūtra and the esoteric sutras. Kuan-yin was called "Old Mother" throughout the text. Consisting of two volumes, the text narrated how she saved people from twenty-four kinds of danger. The twenty-four perils were very concrete and could be encountered in daily lives. They are the following: (1)falling into a pit of fire; (2)being carried away in a current; (3)robbers; (4)being pushed over the precipice evil (5)meeting old by and man; an enemy; (6)

executioner's blade; (7)imprisonment; (8)poison; (9)raksha; (10)vicious animals; (11) snakes and scorpions; (12) hailstorm; (13) difficult childbirth; (14) facing enemy in the battlefield; (15)collapsed house; (16)falling down a landslide; (17)suicide by hanging; (18)being trampled by horses; (19)being run over by carriages; (20)suicide by jumping into the river; (21) suicide by jumping into a well; (22) pack of wolves; (23)hell; and (24)miscellaneous dangers not mentioned above. The first 12 perils are mentioned in the gatha section of the Louts sūtra, but not the next 12, though some of which reflect the concerns found in the esoteric sutras, such as the fear of a difficult childbirth or suicide. This list serves as a window into the social and p sychic anxieties of people iving in late imperial China. The dangers Kuan-vin could avert were realistic and ever present, such as difficult childbirths, disasters awaiting one travelling on the streets (being trampled by horses and carriages), or the temptations of suicide (the specific forms of suicide mentioned here were indeed the favorite choices of the people living at that time). The author of the precious volume added these new dangers to the more limited ones found in the Lotus sūtra. probably belonged to a religious sect related to the White Lotus tradition which was inspired by Maitreyan millenarianism and Pure Land devotionalism. One quarter into the text we find a piece of tentalizing information stating that the precious volume was revealed to leaders of this religious group in the 11th year of Wan-li (1583).

Where can we find the source for Kuan-yin the matriarch? Buddhist sutras do not provide the answer. Instead, I think we have to look into the Chinese indigenous religious tradition concerning the goddess Queen Mother of the West. Worshiped by both the elite and the masses by the Han dynasty (206 B. C.~220 A. D.), she was clearly the most famous Chinese goddess until the appearance of the feminine Kuan-yin. She is the goddess of immortality and the revealer of the secret knowledge of eternal life. According to the oldest dictionary, the Han Erh, "Queen Mother" meant one's father's deceased mother, an honorific posthumous title confirmed on female ancestors in the father's line used in ancestal cult. Her hagiographies rarely mentioned her actual age, and when they described her physical appearance, they would say that she looked to be a matron of thirty years old. But because she was believed to be the mother of all, she was also sometimes referred to as the old crone with white hair. According to a

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recent study, she was a favorite subject in T'ang poetry. "Many [T'ang] poets refer to her by the intimate expression Amah (wetnurse or nanny). This familiar usage occurs especially in contexts in which the goddess is portrayed as a mother figure or a teacher" (Cahill 69). The poets called her heavenly palace located on top of Mt. Kun- lun, the cosmic pillar, "Amah's household" (Cahill 205). The Goddess was a protector of young women who chose to live alone and also, particularly, older, widowed women. "One strong tradition depicts the Queen Mother herself as a white-haired crone. Old women are often widowed. By choice or by accident, they may find themselves unportected and alone, outside the bounds of traditional family circle within which most medieval Chinese women lived and found the meaning of their lives. If they are childless, older women are especially vulnerable in traditional Chinese society, which defines a mature woman's worth, in

terms of her motherhood. Herself immeasurably old and yet possessed of great dignity and authority, childless and yet the mother of all, the Queen Mother brought respect to the position of the older women" (Cahill 229).

The Queen Mother's fame began to be eclipsed by Kuan-yin and other female deities after the T'ang. Known increasingly by the more intimate title "Wang-mu niangniang" (Granny Queen Mother), she has continued to be worshiped by the common people down the ages till today. It is noteworty that by the Ming dynasty female deities of less renown than the Queen Mother played dominant roles in popular vernacular novels such as Water Margin by Shih Nai-yen (c. $1290 \sim 1365$) and Investiture of the God by Lu Hsi-hsing (c. 1520~1601). By the 16th century, another powerful new goddess, the "Unborn Old Mother", made her first appearance in the writings of the White Lotus sectarians. The theme of powerful goddesses in such popular novels might have played some role in the birth of the Unborn Old Mother, for sectarians were firm believers in the novels. "Those in the northern provinces all firmly believe in the novel Investiture of the Gods and all those in the southern provinces venerate the Water Margin" (Overmyer 140). Old Mother Kuan-yin and Unborn Old Mother might have been created by different groups of believers, but as Overmyer pointed out, we should bear in mind that there was in fact a rich tradition of female deities in the popular religious background. These feminine goddesses were understood to be post-

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menopausal women. They were of course free from the messiness of childbirth and the problems of sexual desire. They represented motherliness, pure and simple. They retained all that was attractive about femininity, but were devoid of anything negative which true womanhood entails.

Another inspiration for Old Mother Kuan-yin might come from stories about real Chinese old women who practiced Buddhism. Because women were seldom writers of their history, we are faced with the perennial problem of sources. There is only one biography of Chinese nuns, for instance. Edited by the monk Pao ch' ang in 516, Lives of the Nuns contains contains short biographies of 65 nuns who lived during the 4th to the 6th centuries. Coming from primarily aristocratic backgrounds, they moved easily among the elites and court. They showed a high rate of literacy, for only twelve of the sixty-five could not read or write. Noted for their strict observance of vinaya, vegetariansm, meditation, many of them were also devotees of Kuan-yin (Tsai 1994). Although there is a voluminous body of biographical sources about Ch'an masters known as the "lamp record" compiled in the Sung, few women practitioners were given biographies of their own. Abbess of Mo-shan was the only nun who received her own account because she had a male disciple willing to acknowledge her role in his own enlightenment (Levering 1982: 28). more such female teachers have been rescued from oblivion (Hsieh 1996).

In the 18th century, P'eng Shao-sheng (1740~1796), a pious Pure Land lay Buddhist, compiled the only collection of Chinese Buddhist laywomen's biographies entitled Biographies of Good Women (Shan nü-jen chuan). Of a total of 148 biographies, 18 or a little more than 10% are stories about old women. Thirteen of these old women

were Ch'an practitioners, while the rest were Pure Land devotees. They were either identified by their living place or profession, and if their last names were known, they were simply called "Granny X". Of the 13 women Ch'an practitioners, though their birthplaces and family backgrounds were often left blank, we can surmise that they lived probably in the T'ang and Sung, the so-called golden age of Ch' an. They were dipicted as enlightened, though some were clearly rustic and uneducated, others could recite passages from Buddhist scriptures by heart. They often served as catalysts for Ch'an monks on their way to enlightenment. Some old women, such as described in

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biographies 15, 16 and 17, exchanged quick and sharp Ch'an repartees with famous Ch'an masters and proved to be their equals and even betters.

A final source for the matriarchal Kuan-yin could be the roles of old women in traditional Chinese society. According to the Confucian ideal for a woman, she must practice the three obediences, namely, she should obey her father at youth, her husband after marriage, and her son after her husband dies. But although she was theoretically dependent on her son, when a woman reached middle age and became a matriarch in thehousehold, her status in actual life could be very impressive. Matriarch Chia ruled her large family almost like an emperess dowager in the famous Ch'ing novel Dream of the Red Chamber. Though fictional, it must also have reflected a certain degree of social reality. For even in contemporary Taiwan, "older women have ways of wielding power and influence that are not open to younger women. If they have gained the loyalty of their sons, they can exert considerable control over them, even after they are grown men with wives and children of their In many cases too, older women take a strong hand in decisions about household management, investment, or social affairs.....as a women's menstrual flow ends in her 40 's or 50's, she gains increasing power over the people around her" (Ahern $201 \sim 202$).

Old women also enjoyed more freedom of movement, for they were considered both by themselves and the society to be free from sexual desire. They could travel in public alone without causing censure. Certain professions belonged exclusively to older women, for instance, match-making. In traditional China, no proper marriage could be contracted without the service of the match-makers (Ebrey $73 \sim 74$) Match-makers were always older women. Old women often also served as go-betweens between lovers in Chinese drama and novels. So, in assuming the disguise of a matriarchal figure, Kuan-yin absorbed all these nested cultural characteristics associated with old women in China: motherly, powerful, wise, a mediator for spiritual enlightenment but also worldly happiness.

Conclusion

Thetransformation of Avalokiteśvara into the Chinese Kuan-yin is a long and complicated process. While Buddhist sutras provided the initial inspiration for the cult of Kuan-yin in China and their authority continue to be invoked for its

support, the construction of the Chinese Kuan-yin has drawn from many other sources One of the most important sources which I cannot go into her is the voluminous collection of miraculous stories about Kuan-yin. Known as Kuan-ying (influence-response)or kling-ying (efficacious responses), such stories constitute one subgenre of the Buddhist miracle literature. Soon after the translations of the Lotus sūtra, there were already miracle stories about people who invoked the bodhisattva, first by the name Kuan-shih-yin and later, Kuan-shih-yin. A total of 69 tales were recorded in a collection compiled as early as 501, incorporating two even earlier collections. A twelveth century Japanese copy of this text is extant and has been studied by Makita Tairyo (Makita 1970). [14] In the succeeding centuries, more such collections were compiled providing testimonials to the compassionate actions of As Campany argued convincingly, miracle tales played a powerful role in generating and reinforcing the faith in Kuan-yin (Campany 1993). As such tales were increasingly gathered into independent anthologies from the T'ang on, other miracle tale collections glorifying the Lotus sūtra, on the other hand, include proportionately less stories about Kuan-yin (Matoba 1981, 1982, 1984, 1986). This is not suprising, for although the Lotus provides the most important scriptural basi s for the faith in Kuan-yin, as the bodhisattva took root on Chinese soil, he / she achieved an independent status.

Similarly, following the growing fame of Kuan-yin, Chinese indigenous scriptures began to be created from as early as the fifth century. Many such scriptures have not survived, with only the titles recorded in the Buddhist bibliographical catalogues. But one of them, the Kuan-shih-yin Sutra Promoted King Kao (Kao Wang Kuan-shih-yin ching, T. no. 2898), has attained a canonical status. Not only was it carved on sutra slabs in 616 on Mt. Fang- shan, together with the Lotus, Vimalakirti, Avatamsaka, Nirvana and Projñā-parmitā sutras, it has remained to be the favorite scripture printed and distributed for free by the

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faithful in order to generate merit even in present-day Taiwan (Yü 1995: 438).

Together with the creation of Chinese indigenous sutras, iconographies, and hagiographies of Kuan-yin, the bodhisattva has also been provided with a Chinese home. The mythological Potalaka was transposed onto the island P'u-t'o, situated off shore from Chekiang Province. Pilgrimage makes this Buddhis inscription of the Chinese landscape a reality (Yü 1992: 202~234).

The domestication and transformation of Avalokiteśvara into the Chinese Kuan-yin is a fascinating case study of how Buddhism became indigenized in China. I begin this paper with the discussion of the various ambiguities connected with this bodhisattva. In the final analysis, the very nature of these ambiguities is perhaps the greatest asset enabling his /her "conquest" of China.

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Appendix

Fig. 1 One of the Thirty-Two forms of Kuan-yin by Hsing Tz'u-ching (Collection of Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan)



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Fig. 2 One of the Thirty-two forms of Kuan-yin (Colletion of Anhui Provincial Museum, People's Rehublic of China)



Fig. 3 Wood-block illustration combining Lotus and Avatamsaka sūtras date 1492 (Private collection of Zhou Shaoliang)



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觀音菩薩的經典依據及其名號和 其他一些不明問題

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提要

觀音一般又叫觀世音、觀自在,更早又叫光世音。雖然多本經典不明示菩薩的性別,但《華嚴經》稱觀音為「勇猛丈夫」,從《法華經》開始,觀音又可以女性形態出現於世。本文通過顯密教的一些主要經典討論此菩薩的名號、性別及地位(是佛還是菩薩)的一些不明的問題,除了經典中討論的宗教信仰外,宗教儀式及實踐、以及藝術史的資料也對此問題有所幫助。最後我比較《法華》及《楞嚴經》中提到的三十三身和中日畫家常畫的三十三觀音,從而探討觀音如何漢化的一些線索。

關鍵詞:1.光世音 2.觀世音 3.觀自在 4.觀音 5.三十三身

- [1] These are the translations given by Burton Watson in his The Lotus Sutra(New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). Leon Hurvitz, on the other hand, translated the two terms as "Sound Observer" and "He Who Observes the Sounds of the World" in his Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976). Both were based on Kumarajiva's Chinese version translated in 406.
- [2] They are: (1)Willow-branch, (2)Dragon -head, (3)Sutra-holding, (4)Circle of Light, (5)Royal Ease, (6)White-robe, (7)Lotus-reclining, (8)Waterfall-gazing, (9)Medicine-giving, (10)Fish-basket, (11)Virtuous-King (Brahma), (12)Water-moon, (13)One Leaf, (14)Blue-necked, (15)Awe-inspiring (heavenly general), (16)Life-lengthening, (17)Many Jewels, (18)Cave-dwelling, (19)Calm and Serene, (20)Anu, (21)Abhetti, (22)Parnasvari, (23)Vaidurya, (24)Tara, (25)Clam, (26)Six Periods, (27)Universal Compassion, (28)Wife of Mr Ma, (29)Anjali, (30)True Suchness, (31)Non-dual, (32)Lotus-holding, (33)Water-sprinkling. Goto, Kanzeon Bosatsu no kenkyu, pp. 170~182. He uses anthologies of Buddhist iconographies and provides commentaries on each of these forms. This list contains a mixture of allusions to the Lotus esoteric scriputres, and Chinese indigendous legends about Kuan-yin.
- [3] The other five are Kuan Hsü-k'ung-tsang pu'sa ching (Sutra on Visualizing the Bodhisattva Akasgarbha, T. 409), Foshuo Kuan-Fo san-mei hai ching (Sutra on the Sea of Mystic Ecstacy by Visualizing the Buddha, T. 643), Fo Syo kuan Mi-lo P'u-sa shang-sheng Tu-shuai-t'ien ching (Sutra of Meditation on Maitreya Bodhisattva's Rebirth on High in the Tusita Heaven, T. 452), Fo shui kuan P'u-hsien P'u-sa hsing-fa on the Practice of Visualizing the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, T. 277), Fo Shuo Kuan Yao-wang Yao-shang erh P'u-sa ching (Sutra Spoken by the Buddha on Visualizing the Two Bodhisattvas Bhaisajyaraja and Bhaisajyasaudgata, T. 1161). Pas, Visions of Sukhavati, pp. 42~43.
- [4] Charles Luk comments on this passage: "By discarding the sound to look into the meditator himself, that is into the nature of hearing, he disengages himself from both organs and sense data and thereby realized his all-embracing Buddha nature which contains all living beings. By developing their pure faith in him and by calling his name, or concentrating on him, they achieve singleness of mind that mingles with his Budhi substance and become one with him; hence their liberation from sufferings which do not exist in the absolute state." The Surangama Sūtra, p. 139.
- [5] According to Goto, more than eighty exoteric and esoteric scriptures connected with Kuan-yin exist. He lists them in Chapter 20 of his book Kanzeon Bosatsu no Kenkyu, pp. 283~288.
- [6] The earliest extant version of the Lotus, however, has far less than thirty-three. The Cheng fa-hua ching, gives the following list of seventeen: buddha, bodhisattva, pratyeka-buddha, voice-hearer, King Brahma, gandharva, ghost and spirit, rich and powerful, deva, cakravartin, raksha, general, monk, vajrapani, hermit, rishi, and student (T. vol. 9: 129b~c). It is interesting to note that no feminine forms are mentioned.
- [7] I follow Hurvitz in translating these two term (Hurvtz 314). Watson translates them as "the heavenly being Freedom" and "the heavenly being Great Freedom"

which do not convey much sense to English-speaking audience. The two names of course refer to the Hindu god Shiva, but neither Hurvitz nor Watson so identifies.

[8] The fourteen are listed below: (1)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 order to obtan liberation; (2)By returning (discriminative) intellect to its (absolute) source, I cause them to avoid being burned when they find themselves in a great fire; (3)By returning hearing to its source, I cause them to avoid drowning when they are adrift on the sea; (4)By stopping wrong thinking and thereby cleansing their minds of harmfulness, I lead them to safety when they wander in the realm of evil ghosts; (5)By sublimating their (wrong) hearning to restore its absolute condition, thereby purifying all six organs and perfecting their functions, I cause them, when in danger, to be immune from sharp weapons which become blunt and useless like water that cannot be cut and daylight that cannot be blown away, because their (underlying) nature does not change; (6) By perfecting the sublimation of their hearing, its bright light pervades the whole Dharma realm to destroy the darkness (of ignorance) thereby dazzling evil beings such as yaksa, raksa, kumbhanda, pisaci, putana, etc., who cannot see them when meeting them; (7) When hearing is reversed so that sound vanishes completely, all illusory objects of sense disappear so that (practisers) are freed from fetters which can no longer restrain them; (8) The elimination of sound to perfect hearing results in universal compassion so that they can pass through regions infested with robbers and bandits who cannot plumder them; (9) The sublimation of hearing disengages them from the objects of sense and makes them immune from (attractive) forms, thereby enabling lustful beings to get rid of desires and cravings; (10)The sublimation of sound eliminates all sense data and results in the perfect mingling of each organ with its objects and total eradication of subject and object, thereby enabling all vindictive beings to bury anger and hate; (11)After the elimination of sense data and the return to the bright (Reality), both inner body and mind and outer phenomena become crystal clear and free from all hindrances, so that dull and ignorant unbelievers (icchantika) can get rid of the darkness of ignorance; (12) When their bodies are in harmony with the nature of hearing, they can, from their immutable state of enlightenment (bodhimandala), re- enter the world (to liberate others) without harming the worldly, and can go anywhere to make offerings to Buddhas countless as dust, serving every Tathagata in the capacity of a son of the King of Law and having the power to give male heirs with blessed virtues and wisdom to childless people who want boys; (13) The perfection of the six organs unifies their divided functions so that they become all-embracing, thus revealing the Great Mirror (Wisdom) and immaterial Tathagata womb compatible with all Dharma doors taught by Buddhas as unacountable as dust. They can bestow upright, blessed, gracious, and respect-inspiring girls on childless parents who want daughters; (14)In this great chiliocosm which contains a hundred lacs of suns and moons, there are now Bodhisattvas countless as sand grains in sixty-two Ganges rivers. Dharma to set a good example to all living beings by befriending, teaching and converting them; in their wisdom their expedient methods differ. Because I used one penetratint organ which led to my realization through the faculty of hearing, my body and mind embrace the whole Dharma-realm in which I teach all living beings to concentrate their minds on calling my name. The merits that follow are the same as those derived from calling on the names of all the se Bodhisattvas. One, my single name does not differ from those uncountable ones, because of my

practice and training which led to my true enlightenment. These are the fourteen fearless (powers) which I bestow upon living beings (Luk $139 \sim 141$).

- [9] This was most likely connected with the cult of the "Three Great Beings" (Avalokiteśvara, Manjusri and Samanthabhadra) which began about the end of the T'ang. #10 of the Ying-pan-po group of sculptures at Ta-tsu, Szechwan, dated to the late T'ang, seems to provide the earliest example of this grouping where the thousand-handed and thousand-eyed Kuan-yin stands in the middle flanked by Manusri and Samanthabhadra, whereas the more common grouping there has Vairocana Buddha in the middle instead of Kuan-yin (Ta-tsu shih-ke yen-chiu, 432). Once this cult became popular, it would be necessary to provide Kuan-yin with an animal mount in order to match the animal mounts of the other two bodhisattvas. Such triad is found in many Chinese temples.
- [10] He cites the entry in the Fa-yüan chu-lin, a Buddhist encyclopedia compiledin 668 which states that Kuan-yin manifested himself in the feminine form in 479 to free the devotee P'ang Tzu-ch'iao from prison. The histories of Northern Ch'i and the north and south dynasties compiled earlier tell of a similar manifestation to heal the sick and licientious Northern Ch'i emperor Wu-ch' eng (r. $561 \sim 565$). They also record that the last empress of the Ch'en, nee Shen, became a Buddhist nun and received the religious name "Kuan-yin" in 617. Tay, Kuan-yin, The Cult of Half Asia, p. 20.
- [11] The stele still stands in Hsiang-shan Ssu. The inscription was recarved in 1308 because the original was damaged by erosion. The discovery of the stele, which had been assumed to be lost by scholars until 1991, was described by Lai Swee-fo (Lai Jui-he) in his article, "Wai-li hsiun-pei chi", published in Chung-kuo shih-pao (April 6, 7, 8, 1993). I owe this information to Professor Glen Dudbridge.
- [12] The general outline I summarize here is familiar to many women in China today. I interviewed women pilgrims in Hangchow, P'u-t 'o, Yünnan and Taiwan in 1987. When I asked them about Miao-shan, they told me stories about her which contained most, if not all, key elements from this outline.
- [13] Postpartum discharges are considered to be extremely polluting. A mother who has thus offended the gods by this invoidable sin in childbirth, and particularly if she dies while giving birth, has to go to a special region in the underworld called blood pond to undergo torment. A filial son can help his mother to lessen or avoid the punishment by performing a religious ritual called "breaking the blood pond" at the time of the mother's death.
- [14] Some of these earliest tales about Kuan-yin have been translated by Robert Campany. See "The Earliest Tales of the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin", in Religions of CHina in Pravtice. Edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 82~96.