

要 旨

Ekayāna Buddhism and Avalokiteśvara

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1 Introduction

There is not such a Bodhisattva who has been close to the people as Kannon (Avalokiteśvara) Bodhisattva through Southeast Asia. This Bodhisattva emerges to initial Mahāyāna Buddhist texts. Kannon with eleven faces or various kinds of Kannon derive later from this *Lotus Sūtra*. The story that Kannon relieves people by transforming himself variously and Kannon's motherhood were reasons why he is so popular to people.

By the way, why did Chinese translate him “光世音”, “觀世音” or “觀自在”?

In addition, why did the *Lotus Sūtra* accept the faith of Kannon ?

Whole Chinese translation text does not have a story of Amitabha and Kannon in the *Lotus Sūtra*, but Sanskrit and Tibetan texts have it. Why does this story appear only in Sanskrit and Tibetan texts?

2 Sanskrit *Lotus Sūtra* and the Chapter on Avalokiteśvara

Kumārajīva translated the *Lotus Sūtra* into Chinese in 406. It was just 1600 years ago. As is generally known, verses(偈) of “觀世音菩薩普門品” lacks in his translation. In other words the “妙法蓮華經” which we are now reading with the prose(長行) and the verses(偈) is not the original translation of Kumārajīva. That means we depend on “添品妙法蓮華經” Jñānagupta revised.

This “觀世音菩薩普門品” was preferred as the text which preached relief of people, and has spread in the Asian world independently from the *Lotus Sūtra* since the early times.

The additional part of the verses mentioned about Amitābhā and Kannon is found only in Sanskrit manuscripts and Tibetan text. There is not the verses(偈) of “普門品” in “正法華經”. And “添品妙法蓮華經” does not have this additional verses(偈) either.

Besides, Tibetan text and all of the Sanskrit manuscripts of “普門品” of the *Lotus Sūtra* have a story of Amitābhā and Kannon. Three translations in Chinese, however, lack of it. That is, we can say, this story was added in India after the seventh century. Then, why would such verses be added?

In this 28th verses, bhikṣu and Dharmākara are equal with Lokeśvara-rāja-nayaka namely the nominative case.

Modern scholars translated it “Dharmākara bhikṣu who respects King Lokeśvara as a leader” by the reason why it is clear from the prose of “無量壽經” (the *Immortal life Sūtra*) that King Lokeśvara and Dharmākara bhikṣu are originally another person.

In the Sanskrit *Lotus Sūtra*, however, this Dharmākara bhikṣu is handled to be same as Lokeśvara-rāja-nayaka. It happened from the confusion that Lokeśvara has been identified with Avalokiteśvara in the Sanskrit text.

Judging from a Sanskrit *Lotus Sūtra*, a more important thing is that a person standing aside of Amitabha Buddha is Dharmākara bhikṣu who is Kannon. In addition, in the Pure Land texts, the Kannon is treated as an attendant image of Buddhist statue of Amitābhā Buddha, and then there is a possibility that Amitābhā Buddha has been added to “普門品” associated with the Kannon.

3 Names on Avalokiteśvara

“觀世音”, the Chinese translation word of Avalokiteśvara is quite a strange word. Because, the sound is not the thing to be looked, but to be heard. We will find 「蓋樓一旦」「現音聲」「光世音」「觀世音」「觀音」「觀世念」「觀世自在」「觀自在」「觀世音自在」 in the Chinese translation.

As *avalokita* derives from the verb $\text{ava}\sqrt{\text{lok}}$ (to look), it was translated into “現” or “觀”. Next word “*svara*” means the sound. In the case of “光世音”, the word of “光” comes from the understanding of *ava* as *ābhā* (light). There is no difference between *-bh-* and *-v-* in Gādhārī manuscripts. In addition, a vowel does not have distinction of long or short sound in the handwriting manuscripts of Kanroṣṭhī. If we assume Dharmarakṣa used the text having these characteristics, we can understand why he translated “光世音”. Dharmarakṣa may have understood *lokita* comes from *loka*.

On the other hand, it is thought that “觀自在” was *Avalokiteśvara* from a compound with *avalokita* and *īśvara* (free). It is said an example of such an equivalent appears after the translation of Bodhiruci of the sixth century.

As a figure and relief of *Īśvara* and *Maheśvara* are shown in the “普門品”, Kannon seems to be connected with *Īśvara* faith. And *Lokeśvara*, which is another name of *Siva* like *Lokeśa* (a world master) is used on an epitaph of AD. 759 instead of *Avalokiteśvara*, who is thought to have been formed after faith of *Siva* thrived.

The word “觀自在” is said not to be translated in Chinese by the sixth century. It occurred by a change of a phoneme. In other words, confusion of “s” and “ś” is often seen in Sanskrit manuscripts, original *Avalokita-svara* is pronounced as *Avalokiteśvara* and changed gradually into *Avalokiteśvara*.

It has been thought so far the word, “觀自在” was translated after Bodhiruci of the six century. We can, however, find the word in Kumārajīva's “注維摩經”. That means Kumārajīva of the fifth century knew the both meaning of “觀自在” and “觀世音”.

According to 澄觀 of 華嚴宗, there must have been two words on Kannon. One is *Avalokiteśvara* translated into “觀自在”, the other is “觀世音” translated by the word of “攝伐多”.

We cannot return “攝伐多” to *svara*, but *śobata*. It is possible to understand it comes from the verb $\sqrt{\text{śru}}$ (to hear).

Although we cannot find out a suitable word corresponding to “攝伐多”, we can find the word “*savana*” in Pali text. The text of the *Lotus Sūtra* which Kumārajīva used may have been a text in Kuccha language (Tohara B) and “攝伐多” may have been a word resemble to *śabda*(音).

Then Kumārajīva translated it into “觀世音” from the word of “a sound” in his text.

But why did not Kumārajīva translate it “to hear a sound of the world”, but translate it “to watch a sound of the world?”

Kichizo(吉藏) describes this as follows by taking up Kumārajīva's opinion.

The “light” means intelligence of a Bodhisattva. But great mercy of the Kannon is not expressed enough by “光世音” of Dharmarakṣa's translation. However, in the case of “觀世音” of Kumārajīva, Kannon observes people's cry who demand to be delivered from pains. That means Kannon helps people by observing world's sound, mind and body.

Through Kichizo's commentary, we can recognize that Kumārajīva translated into Chinese “觀世音” from his viewpoint of that “音” (sound) means a cry for help, then Kannon not only listens but also observes people.

However, as Dr.Unrai Wogihara pointed out, *avalokita* is the past passive participle, which means to be observed but not to observe.

Then Dr.Wogihara understood that original word must have been *avalokitr* and changed into *avalokita*.

We cannot deny its possibility. Because Skt *Lotus Sūtra* which was spread in town has a word of *avalokṛta*.

Many 「念」 (smṛti), in the phrase “念彼觀音力” are used in the verses of “普門品”. Abhidharma text explains that 「念」 (smṛti) is not to forget and remember clearly.

Thus 「念」 (smṛti) of Kannon means to give people relief if they recall Kannon.

However, there is no word of “念” (smṛti) in the prose(長行) in “普門品”, which is consisted with “if you hear the name of Kannon, you will get out of suffering”, “if you keep his name, you will be released from disaster”, “if you call Kannon, he will save you” and “he appears with various styles to preach”.

The verses of “普門品” shows the same standpoint as “觀佛” (pratyutpanna-samādhi) in “般舟三昧經” (*Bhadrapālasūtra*), it is different from the prose(長行) that seems to be earlier compiled than the verses.

Namely, the prose of “普門品” describes much easier relief than the verses which preaches people not to be relieved without practicing the concentration. We can say that the original Kannon was a Bodhisattva who listens to people's cry and help them, then Kumārajīva translated it “觀世音菩薩” from this meaning.

By the way, Kannon is said to help people by transforming himself into 32 or 33 figures in China, Korea or Japan. In the other hand, Jātaka says Bodhisattva is born in the various worlds, but never says Bodhisattva transform himself in his life. The *Lotus sūtra* is the first sūtra which the Bodhisattva transforms himself. The transforming into 33 figures depends on the “*Fa-hua wen-chü*” (『法華文句』) of Chih-i (智顗). The Skt *Lotus Sūtra* describes 16.

4 The Origin of Kannon

The *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* describes about the relationship between Avalokiteśvara and Mt. Potalaka where is said to be related to Mt. Potiyi in Sri Lanka. Since the *Lotus Sūtra* does not have such a story, which may have appeared around the time of compilation of the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*. The faith of Avalokiteśvara originates from the *Lotus Sūtra*. Its faith is stated to have been related to Īśvara of Hinduism.

There will be no problem, even if we presume that the *Lotus Sūtra* accepted Īśvara as one of good gods of Hinduism. But Īśvara is no longer the god to make everything as a first cause. It means freedom from attachment by the idea of *Śūnyatā* of Īśvara power of Avalokiteśvara in the *Lotus Sūtra*. It makes possible Avalokiteśvara free relief activities by *Śūnyatā* theory based on great mercy. It leads people who want Avalokiteśvara's relief to the Awakening.

Avalokiteśvara was figured as a statue with a mustache in order to express a male. Bodhisattva has been defined as a male by the Abhidharma theory as we recognize it from early Gandhara statue of Bodhisattva. But gradually it became to be figured like a female. Needless to say, Bodhisattva never has a sexual difference if we talk it from the standpoint of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

A female Bodhisattva appears after Tantra Buddhism in which takes the Tārā Bodhisattva.

As I mentioned before, Avalokiteśvara who transforms himself to the various people was taken into the *Lotus Sūtra* in the early times when the *Lotus sūtra* was compiled. We can find two types of Bodhisattva in the *Lotus Sūtra*. That is a lay Bodhisattva and a Bodhisattva-monk. We will be able to imagine that Avalokiteśvara is a prince like a Gandhāra statue.

We will find many sentences "to keep this *Lotus Sūtra*". However, it is not clear what the *Lotus sūtra* suggests. Then the traditional Tie'en t'ai theory had pointed out the accomplishment of the Buddhahood of two vehicles and the eternal Śākyamuni Buddha. The accomplishment of the Buddhahood of a wrongdoer and of a female have been told to show the relief of all person. The *Lotus Sūtra* had positively accepted various faith and gods into it.

Chapter five of the *Lotus Sūtra* describes various plants grow up under rain of the Buddha's mercy. It never says grass grows up to a useful tree. Grass has the significance of being as grass itself. It is the thought consistent in the *Lotus Sūtra*.

An ideal method of Avalokiteśvara without being seized with a figure and form, appearing various styles depending on character of people and deserve, provoking people to the awakening, is an ideal of the practice of Mahāyāna Buddhism which the *Lotus Sūtra* aims at.