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Abstract	A reconstruction of the 12th century Long Roll of Buddhist Images, based on internal evidence, reveals a distinct iconographical unit of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin images. The Kuan-shih-yin images with such accompanying cartouches as She-fu-li, P'u-t'o-lo-shan, Pai-shui-ching, Ku-chueh-hai-an, and Hsun-sheng-chiu-ku may be traced to the most fundamental and complete esoteric textual iconography of the Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin. The emphasis on a grouping of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin images, set against the background of Potalaka, the Pure Land of Kuan-shih-yin in this scroll may derive not only from the Buddhistic interpretation of Pandura, the Bodhi, but also from its specific importance to the Ta-li Kinkdom. For example, the original stock of the ruling family was known as the "White people," and the legend of the founding of the kingdom relates a prophecy delivered by a " White-robed Maiden," an apparition of the "White stone Kuan-shih-yin." The paper concerns itself primarily with the following problems : 1) Scrutinization of literary source materials pertaining to the Potalaka White-robed, Kuan-shih-yin iconography-sutras, liturgical texts, explanatory notes on iconography in collections of iconographical drawings, biographical accounts of crucial historical personalities and local gazetteers. 2) Interpretation of their causal relationships with the pictorial renditions of the iconography. 3) Definition of degrees of confiations between T'ang and Sung iconographical elements in the above context. 4) Distillation of prefigurational contents germane to. Ta-li culture from the tightly programmed unit of Potolaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin figures represented in the Long Roll of Buddhist Images.
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## Iconological Study of Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin

*Moritaka Matsumoto*

A reconstruction of the 12th century *Long Roll of Buddhist Images*, based on internal evidence, reveals a distinct iconographical unit of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin images. The Kuan-shih-yin images with such accompanying cartouches as *She-fu-li*, *P'u-t'o-lo-shan*, *Pai-shui-ching*, *Ku-chueh-hai-an*, and *Hsun-sheng-chiu-ku* may be traced to the most fundamental and complete esoteric textual iconography of the Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin.

The emphasis on a grouping of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin images, set against the background of Potalaka, the Pure Land of Kuan-shih-yin in this scroll may derive not only from the Buddhistic interpretation of Pandura, the Bodhi, but also from its specific importance to the Ta-li Kingdom. For example, the original stock of the ruling family was known as the "White people," and the legend of the founding of the kingdom relates a prophecy delivered by a "White-robed Maiden," an apparition of the "White stone Kuan-shih-yin."

The paper concerns itself primarily with the following problems: 1) Scrutinization of literary source materials pertaining to the Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin iconography-sutras, liturgical texts, explanatory notes on iconography in collections of iconographical drawings, biographical accounts of crucial historical personalities and local gazetteers. 2) Interpretation of their causal relationships with the pictorial renditions of the iconography. 3) Definition of degrees of confluences between T'ang and Sung iconographical elements in the above context. 4) Distillation of prefigurational contents germane to Ta-li culture from the tightly programmed unit of Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin figures represented in the *Long Roll of Buddhist Images*.

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This study concerns itself primarily with iconographical identification of 6 specific Kuan-shih-yin images based on literary sources, and iconological analyses of causal relationships between the visual and the textual iconography. It involves an interpretation of contextual implications of these Kuan-shih-yin paintings in view of the unusual nomenclature and unique programming principle<sup>1)</sup>.

The White-robed Kuan-shih-yin's (白衣觀世音) identify was apparently a primary issue in the sphere of esoteric iconography as dealt with in many sutras, liturgical texts and commentaries<sup>2)</sup>. Although not a single theory was deemed canonical, when some of the pertinent information are gathered and tabulated, there emerges a reasonably clear imagery of the deity.

It was advocated in the past that the Water-Moon Kuan-shih-yin (水月觀世音) iconography was the one that brought about the luscious landscape setting, reflective of the Potalaka Mountain, rendered in the *Hua-yen Sutra* (華嚴經), into the so-called White-robed Kuan-shih-yin iconography. However, a body of liturgical sources points to the fact that it was the White-robed Kuan-shih-yin that was most closely connected with the imagery of Potalaka, and not the Water-Moon Kuan-shih-yin. It is, therefore, more reasonable to contend that the Water-Moon Kuan-shih-yin was merely a type, derivative of the White-robed Kuan-shih-yin iconography, and that several other Kuan-shih-yin types are traceable to the more architypal and yet more encompassing esoteric iconography of the Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin.

As it will be analysed below, the nomenclature of Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin is deliberately chosen here so as to endow the Kuan-shih-yin images with some unique iconological properties that could not have been characterized otherwise. The iconographical elements of the Potalaka and the White-robed Kuan-shih-yin (白衣觀世音) are the two basic common denominators that bond the images in question so compatibly that not a single image violates that

contextual framework implied in the programming.

*The Long Roll of Buddhist Images*<sup>3)</sup>, a late 12th century painting executed by a Ta-li painter called Chang Sheng-wen (張勝溫) and collaborators in Yünnan district, provides us with a set of new information pertaining to the Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin iconography. The present scroll format and arrangement of the images are not in accordance with the original accordion-type format, and the reconstruction based on internal evidence reveals a remarkably organic iconographical unit of Kuan-shih-yin images. These Kuan-shih-yin images bear such accompanying cartouches as She-fu-li (社縛梨), P'u-t'o-lo-shan (菩陀落山), Pai-shui-ching (白水精), Ku-chueh hai-an (孤絕海岸), and Hsun-sheng Chiu-ku (尋聲救苦), all of which may be traced to the more fundamental and complete esoteric textual iconography of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin with distinct references to the Potalaka Mountain, the Kuan-shih-yin's Pure Land.

#### **Analysis of She-fu-li Fo-mu (社縛梨佛母) Figure 1.**

This image was not properly identified in the past, perhaps because of the unusual nature of its nomenclature and its iconography<sup>4)</sup>. Although the cartouche on this frame reads "Chiu chu-chi-ping Kuan-shih-yin (除諸疾病觀世音)," its proper inscription is written in the cartouche on the following frame, which reads "She-fu-li Fo-mu." The image should be identified as Yeh-i Kuan-shih-yin (葉衣觀世音)<sup>5)</sup> with a strong allusion to White-robed Kuan-shih-yin (白衣觀世音). As for its name, some variations of She-fu-li in Chinese characters are found in esoteric texts of the T'ang and Sung periods. The *Yu-ch'ieh Ta-chiao-wang Ching* (瑜伽大教王經)<sup>6)</sup>, translated by Fa-hsien (法賢) in the early Sung uses 6 characters Po Lan Na She Fu Li (鉢蘭拏賒縛哩) for this icon while *the Yeh-i Kuan-tsu-tsai P'u-sa Ching* (葉衣觀自在菩薩經), translated by Pu-k'ung (不空) renders its mantra as "An, Po Lo Na She Fu Li Hung Cha (唵, 鉢囉拏捨縛哩吽發吒)." In the appellation, Po-lan-na means a leaf, and She-fu-li, a robe



Fig. 1.

though the two translators' choice of two homonymic characters—Lan and She—are different. It should be understood, therefore, that these variations of the deity's name are the result of Chinese transliterations of the original Sanscrit name, Parna Savali. In the above T'ang sutra is recorded a painting instruction for the Yeh-i Kuan-shih-yin (葉衣觀世音) image. It is in the form of a heavenly maiden, crowned with an insignia of Amitayus (無量壽佛), surrounded by a halo edged by flames. He is a 4-armed image, holding an auspicious fruit, an axe, and a noose in his hands and with one hand making the "Wish Granting" mudra. And he is seated on a lotus. The text ends with a ritual instructions to be performed in front of the painted image of this Kuan-shih-yin<sup>7)</sup>. Significantly enough,

our She-fu-li Fo-mu shows a high degree of iconographical similitude to the above description, despite some minor discrepancies. Yeh-i Kuan-shih-yin (葉衣觀世音) is one of the constituents of the Lotus Section of the Womb World Mandala, and is located at the north eastern corner of the section. The *Hizōki* (秘藏記) and other texts mention his white-coloured body and a white lotus for his seat, which allude to the imagery of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin<sup>8)</sup>. It has been widely accepted view that Yeh-i Kuan-shih-yin who resides in a lotus and wears its leaf as his robe, is so named because of such unique expressions of the lotus. And there exists a close relationship between Yeh-i (葉衣) and Pai-ch'u (白處) or White-robed (白衣) Kuan-shih-yin, for they too are so named due to their unique manifestations of symbolic disposition of the white lotus flower. That is, when the white lotus flower is manifested as his habitat, he is identified as Pai-ch'u (白處), or what possesses white habitat, and when the white lotus flower is manifested as his robe, he is named White-robed Kuan-shih-yin. In fact, such iconographical conflation between Yeh-i and White-robed Kuan-shih-yin is explained in *Besson Zakki* (別尊雜記): It says that due to the lack of independent guhyakalpa (儀軌) for White-robed Kuan-shih-yin, the mudra and mantra of Yeh-i Kuan-shih-yin as instructed in *Yie-i Kuan-tzu-tsai P'u-sa Ching* (葉衣觀自在菩薩經) came to be adopted for the White-robed Kuan-shih-yin ritual<sup>9)</sup>.

The cartouche for our She-fu-li clearly reads Fo-mu (佛母), Buddha's Mother, and not Kuan-shih-yin. This difference of nomenclature is indeed reflective of a change in view point present in later liturgical writings on this deity. An early Sung text cited above, namely *Yu-ch'ieh Ta-chiao-wang Ching* (瑜伽大教王經) and a 12th century Indian *Sadhana-Mala* classify the icon as Fo-mu, Buddha's Mother. Although its name, parnasavali is maintained in the texts, it has been loosely incorporated into the system of Vajrayana, and therefore, it is treated as an emanation of either

Aksobhya-Buddha (阿閼佛) or Amoghasiddhi-Buddha (不空成就佛) and its greatly exaggerated bodily appearance resembles the fierce images of Tantric iconography<sup>10)</sup>. Thus, in its reference to Fo-mu, our She-fu-li image reveals an inkling of Vajrayana characteristics and yet its physical iconographical features are still substantially based on the T'ang tradition of the icon as had been described in the *Yeh-i Kuan-tzu-tsai P'u-sa Ching*. This rather curiously eclectic iconographical characteristic can also be detected elsewhere in this work.

**Analysis of P'u-t'o-lo-shan Kuan-shih-yin (普陀落山觀世音) and Pai-shui-ching Kuan-shih-yin (白水精觀世音) Figures 2 and 3.**

It is contended here that the next two Kuan-shih-yins, entitled



Fig. 3



Fig. 2.

P'u-t'o-lo-shan and Pai-shui-ching are also identifiable as other manifestations of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin (白衣觀世音)<sup>11)</sup>. Their three-faced, three-eyed and six-armed physical features and their names make them rather unique and no proper iconographical identification of our Kuan-shih-yins was advanced in the past. Strangely enough, there is no icon resembling our Kuan-shih-yins among T'ang Buddhist materials. However, in the same Sung translated sutra cited above is found a description of a White-robed image that is three-faced, six-armed and which has three eyes on each face. His attributes are vajra-pounder, bow and arrow, lotus and rosary, while one of his hands makes the "Fear Not" mudra. It seems that our Kuan-shih-yins turn out to be the only existing images that conform to these required features in a significant way. In view of the crucial iconographical match-ups with the textual descriptions, such irregularities as their "Wish Granting" mudra in lieu of the "Fear Not" mudra, P'u-t'o-lo-shan's (普陀落山) noose and Pai-shui-ching's (白水精) sacred cloud in place of the vajra-pounder may not be of great consequence. In fact, the *Shosetsu Fudoki* (諸說不同記) cites cases of interchangeable mudra and attributes<sup>12)</sup>. Both of our Kuan-shih-yins wrap their hips with tiger furs, which finds its correspondence in a description of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin recorded in another early Sung text called *I-ch'ieh-fu-she-hsiang-ying-ta-chiao-wang Ching Sheng Kuan-tzu-tsai P'u-sa Nien-sung I-kuei* (一切攝相應大教王經聖觀自在菩薩念誦儀軌)<sup>13)</sup>. One can safely say, therefore, that as far as iconographical type, our Kuan-shih-yins are primarily based on the Sung White-robed Kuan-shih-yin iconography.

The above Sung sutra contains another significant information in its painting instruction. It specifies that an image of a white colour Kuan-shih-yin should be painted in keeping with a proper iconography of Potalaka Mountain. This supports the view that Potalaka Mountain and White-robed Kuan-shih-yin were iconographically compatible during the Sung period and also, that the landscape



elements in our Kuan-shih-yin paintings reflect, though in a symbolic manner, the picturesque surrounding of Potalaka. The concept of compatibility of Potalaka and Kuan-shih-yin rendered in the old and new *Hua-yen Sutras* (華嚴經)<sup>14)</sup> was elaborated to a great extent in such T'ang esoteric sutra as the *Pu-k'ung Chuan-so Shen-pien Chen-yen Ching* (不空羂索神變真言經). Particularly Chapter 8, entitled *Ch'ing-ching Wu-kou Lien-hua-wang p'in* (清淨無垢蓮華王品), provides a painting instruction of Potalaka which is filled with graphic details of the shape and glorious sight of the mountain, Kuan-shih-yin's palatial abode, and its surrounding sea<sup>15)</sup>. Important is the fact that the majestic heavenly assembly here includes White-robed Kuan-shih-yin as well. As we know, the old *Hua-yen Sutra's* imagery of Potalaka was only that of a mountain. However, the new *Hua-yen Sutra*, the above T'ang esoteric sutra and others added to this a view of the sea around Potalaka Mountain. And this glorification of the site in the great sea seems to have been a canonical basis for the later esoteric texts such as the *Mieh-i-ch'ieh-tsui-t'o-lo-ni Ching* (滅一切罪陁羅尼經) of the early Sung period. This Sung text, in fact, instructs to paint various kinds of aquatic creatures in the great sea for the Kuan-shih-yin painting which can account for the rendition of our painting<sup>16)</sup>.

The name Pai-shui-ching (白水精) is certainly a unique name for a Kuan-shih-yin, and has never been recorded as such anywhere else. However, it does not seem totally mysterious when it is viewed in the context of the Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin. Since the sea element is as significant as the mountain aspect of Potalaka imagery, it is quite telling that a tortoise, a token of the sea, is thrust into this painting. In fact, there is a line describing a golden tortoise in conjunction with Potalaka Mountain in a T'ang sutra called *Chin-kang-ting Yu-ch'ieh Ch'ien-shou Ch'ien-yen Kuan-tzu-tsai P'u-sa Hsin-hsing I-kuei Ching* (金剛頂瑜伽千手千眼觀自在菩薩修行儀軌經)<sup>17)</sup>. And as we all know, the iconographical function

of tortoise is exemplified in many Shui-t'ien (水天) paintings. Therefore, Pai-shui-ching Kuan-yin (白水精觀音) with all of the above implications may be identified as a white-robed Kuan-shih-yin meant to emulate the quintessence of the beautiful water that surrounds the Potalaka Mountain<sup>18)</sup>.

One most generic difference between our P'u-t'o-lo-shan (普陀落山) and Pai-shui-ching Kuan-shih-yin paintings lies in the presence of Buddha images in the former. These Buddhas of the ten quarters, on the other hand, adorn the flaming halo of the preceding She-fu-li Fo-mu whose basic disposition, as pointed out earlier, is identifiable with that of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin. The significance of the compatibility of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin and Buddhas of the ten quarters may be imputed to a purification ritual instructed in a T'ang esoteric text, the *Kuan-shih-yin P'u-sa Ju-i-mo-ni T'o-lo-ni Ching* (觀世音菩薩如意摩尼陀羅尼經), translated by Shih-ch'a nan-t'o (実叉難陀). The text includes a passage rendering the importance of observing these Buddhas together with White-robed Kuan-shih-yin in his abode, Potalaka Mountain<sup>19)</sup>.

#### **Analysis of Ku-chueh Hai-an Kuan-shih-yin (孤絕海岸觀世音) Figure 4.**

The name of this Kuan-shih-yin was translated in the past as "the solitary crosser of the seashore" or "the sole and supreme farther shore" and yet no concrete textual identification was put forth<sup>20)</sup>. Potalaka is rendered in the *P'u-t'o-lieh-tsu-lu* (普陁列祖錄) as the place of Kuan-shih-yin's unlimited transfigurations and as the site of the transmission of the True Law. It records three prominent T'sao-tung masters of the Sung period in conjunction with this Chinese version of Potalaka in the sea. Hung-chih (宏智) is reported to have been there during the Chien-yen period (1127-1130) and worshipped the Potalaka Kuan-shih-yin on the island. Chen-hsieh Ch'ing-liao (真歇清了), who was a disciple of Tan-hsia Tzu-ch'un (丹霞子淳) just as Hung-chih was, went to P'u-t'o-lo (普陁



Fig. 4.

洛) in the year 1131 and built his hut and named it “Hai-an-ku-chueh-an (海岸孤絕庵).” It also records that Tzu-te-ch’an-shih (自得禪師), who was a disciple of Hung-chih, started to spread the True Law on the island in the year 1137. These aspects of the Chinese version of Potalaka with the specific reference to Hai-an-ku-chueh (海岸孤絕) as the permanent residence of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin have an important bearing on our Kuan-shih-yin iconography in terms of its nomenclature and its exulting manifestations of the Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin.

Ch’ing-liao’s hut, called Hai-an-ku-chueh-an (海岸孤絕庵), on the island and our Ku-chueh-hai-an Kuan-shih-yin (孤絕海岸觀世音) must tell us more than a coincidental resemblance in their naming. An-

other support for this close relationship is the fact that the person who wrote the first colophon, and more importantly, this very inscription of Kuan-shih-yin is none other than Tung-ku Miao-kuang (東谷妙光), who compiled the *Yao-lu* (要錄) for the aforementioned Tzu-te Ch'an-shih (自得禪師), officially recognized as the 15th generation T'sao-tung patriarch from Ta-chien (大鑑)<sup>21</sup>.

Our Ku-chueh-hai-an Kuan-shih-yin (孤絕海岸觀世音) and Ch'ing-liao's Hai-an-ku-chuh-an (海岸孤絕庵), despite a slight difference in the word order, should be imputed ultimately to a liturgical writing called *Kuan-shih-yin P'u-sa Wang-sheng-ching-t'u P'en-yuan Ching* (觀世音菩薩往生淨土本緣經).

In the text the same nomenclature of Hai-an-ku-chueh (海岸孤絕) is used for an island and it is clearly in reference to Potalaka. It is described as a southern island in the sea where sweet fruit and fragrant grass grow and the Kuan-shih-yin resides there in his palatial abode, adorned with seven jewels. The text explains that it was a desolate island in olden days and it is the present day Pu-t'o-lo-shan (補陀落山)<sup>22</sup>.

It is my contention, therefore, that our Ku-chueh-hai-an Kuan-shih-yin is but another manifestation of the Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin and that this sutra may be recognized as the canonical basis for Ch'ing-liao's hut so named and the precedent for our Kuan-shih-yin's nomenclature.

Iconographically speaking, our Kuan-shih-yin reveals some telling features of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin. Extremely fine white lines surround the image from the top of his tall chignon down to the hem of his light coloured garments, which is no doubt a pictorial manifestation of "White Garment" of Pandura Vasini. Chapter Five of the *Ta-jih-ching-shu* (大日經疏) explains that he resides permanently in white lotus flower and his crowned chignon is covered over by a pure white garment, which is in keeping with his basic meaning of his Sanscrit name, Pandura Vasini (半拏羅縛悉儻). Pan-

dura means "white" or "pale white" and Vasini means "that which possesses such clothe or habitat." The white robe is obviously the most conspicuous motif of all the visual characteristics of the White-robed Kuan-shih-yins, known by so many different names, and it seems natural that it became a standard iconographical property of Pandura Vasini<sup>23</sup>).

A painting instruction recorded in a T'ang sutra, *Kuan-shih-yin P'u-sa-shuo shao-hua-ying-hsien-te-yuan-t'o-lo-ni Ching* (觀世音菩薩說燒華陀現得願陀羅尼經), is to be considered as one of the canonical bases in this regard. The white robe, specified there for the Kuan-shih-yin painting, is a prerequisite for the t'o-lo-ni-ritual. Furthermore, *Zuzōshō* (圖像抄) supplies a literal account of the White-robed Kuan-shih-yin image. It was described as being a life-size figure made for Shingonin (真言院) during the time of Shirakawain (白河院). His dhea was covered by a thin silk scarf and he holds a bottle in his left and a willow branch in his right hand. The above iconographic description can readily explain our Ku-chueh-hai-an Kuan-shih-yin image. If we are to believe its production date recorded in *Zuzōshō*, this could be realized as an important precedent for our White-robed Kuan-shih-yin type.

Just as the name Ku-chueh-hai-an Kuan-shih-yin evoked this imagery of Potalaka, there are some visual properties in our painting that alludes to the Potalaka. The strongest clues lie in its depiction of a pagoda and adjacent buildings emerging out of the sacred cloud, and of three horizontal lines at the top. The *Pu-k'ung Chuan-so Shen-pien Chen-yen Ching* (不空羂索神變真言經) described in detail how magnificent the Kuan-shih-yin's palatial abode looks and how extensive the assembly of deities in and around the Potalaka palace is. In view of this, the golden pagoda and buildings in our painting can best be understood as being a pictorial expression of the Kuan-shih-yin's abode. In fact, the heavenly cloud that hovers around the palace is physically connected to the flaming halo of our Kuan-

shih-yin image.

Just behind the white cloud there are horizontal gold lines which are drawn in a rather mechanical fashion and yet they seem to be significant in their symbolic meaning. Chapter Three of the above sutra includes a passage accounting for the fundamental mudra and mantra of the Kuan-shih-yin's ritual. This mantra is called "Kuan Ch'a San Shih Pu K'ung Chao Ming Lien Hua Kuang Shen T'ung Wei Te."<sup>24</sup> This text explains that recitation of this mantra will make all Buddhas of past, present and future extremely happy and provide the most effective divine protection from all suffering and great fears of the eight perils. The three horizontal lines may be indicative of an assurance of this protection by all Buddhas of the three world. This method of rendition reminds us of the incised drawings on the lotus petals of the Todai-ji Colossal Buddha where the supreme world of Birushana is symbolically rendered with the use of similarly schematic horizontal lines.

**Analysis of Kuan-shih-yin of Eight Perils (八難觀世音) figure 5.**

The supreme protection from eight perils told in the above sutra seems to be the central theme for our painting that follows the Ku-chueh-hai-an Kuan-shih-yin. On three frames the composition unifies eight different scenes of salvation by Kuan-shih-yin in the mountain and by the river. Cartouches are provided for the Kuan-shih-yins of eight perils, of which two at the left are cut off and illegible. These subsidiary figures of Kuan-shih-yin are all much smaller than the central figure of the same deity. All of these small images, excepting the figure at the far left facing a building, are dressed in flowing robes, holding willow branches and flasks or bowls and adorned with halos edged with flames. They resemble the preceding figure of Ku-chueh-hai-an Kuan-shih-yin to such an extent that they may be taken for its emanations. Similar consanguineous relationship can be observed between that small Kuan-shih-

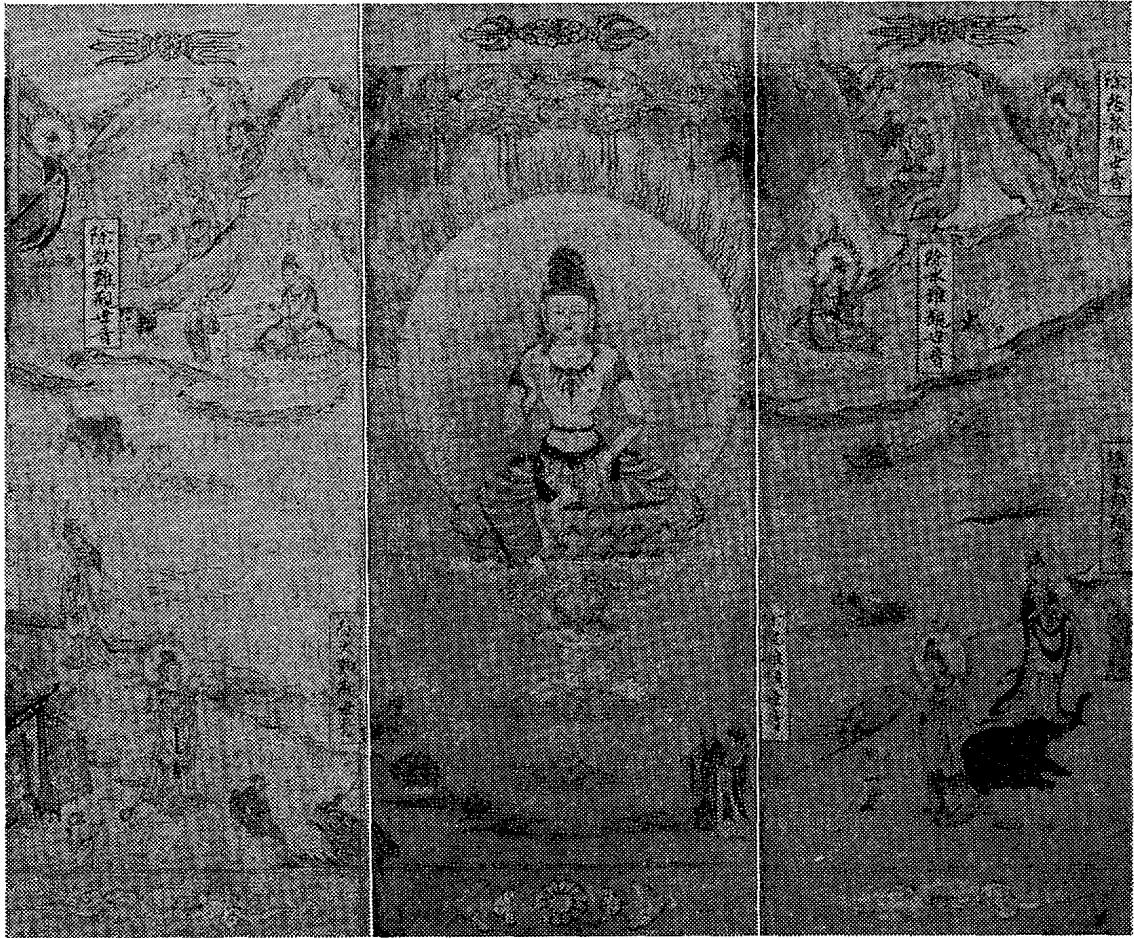


Fig. 5.

yin image at the far left and Hsun-sheng Chiu-k'u Kuan-shih-yin in the following frame, which will be discussed later.

The landscape elements in this large composition, such as glowing rays behind a Sumeru-like formation of the mountain, an expanse of water surrounding the mountain, conch, makara in the water, and the wheel of the Law and other of the five sacred jewels, coincide with the description of Potalaka told in those writings that have been cited already.

The primary Kuan-shih-yin image sits on a White lotus adorned with White cloud, its right foot pendent, embraced by a majestic pale White halo. His slim but rather bare upper body is coloured in White with a shade of pink, and he wears a red and White

striped skirt. The appearance of the Kuan-shih-yin seems to be rather unique even amongst examples of so-called P'u-men pin Kuan-shih-yin (普門品觀世音) images<sup>25</sup>. A possible canonical basis for our Kuan-shih-yin's nomenclature is *Pu-k'ung Chuan-so Ching* (不空羼索經) cited above. In Chapter Three, a name of Kuan-shih-yin "Ch'u-pa-nan-ch'ien (除八難僊)" is mentioned. However, this sutra does not supply any further information about its visual properties, while an early Sung esoteric text called *I-ch'ieh-fu-she-hsiang-ying-ta-chiao-wang Ching Kuan-tzu-tsai Pu-sa Nien-sung I-kuei* (一切攝相応大教王經聖觀自在菩薩念誦儀軌) provides a concrete iconographical description. Amid detailed accounts of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin the text includes such painting instructions as "The body of Kuan-shih-yin is to be painted in pink, his mudra to be the 'Fear Not' showing him to be the savior of mankind from eight perils. He is to be sitting on a lotus pedestal with one leg pendent, resting on a lotus." Furthermore, the text gives instructions to paint such motifs as "lion, elephant, snake and fire to the right side of the Kuan-shih-yin, and to the left, bandits, incarceration, confinement, and sea devils," and it says that "they are the eight perils that all people encounter."<sup>26</sup> Important is the fact that our painting satisfies all of the above primary instructions, despite a minor discrepancy in its distribution of the eight perils. This Sung esoteric liturgical material indicates no direct reference to P'u-men pin of the *Lotus Sutra* (法華經) where 12 perils and the salvation by Kuan-shih-yin are described in specific terms. The fact that the *Pu-k'ung Chuan-so Ching* (不空羼索經) version of the eight perils is retained in this Sung sutra may indicate consolidation of esoteric Kuan-shih-yin iconography diverging from the traditional one of P'u-men pin origin. It is, of course, premature to conclude that all Kuan-shih-yins of eight perils are esoteric in nature, totally devoid of P'u-men pin based iconographic properties. However, in view of the above contextual implications of our Kuan-shih-yin of Eight Perils and adjacent



Kuan-shih-yin images programmed together, it seems feasible to interpret that our Kuan-shih-yin here was meant to be a variant manifestation of esoteric Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin iconography.

**Analysis of Hsun-sheng Chiu-k'u Kuan-shih-yin (尋声救苦觀世音)**

Figure 6.

The last of our Kuan-shih-yin is the Hsun-sheng Chiu-k'u Kuan-shih-yin painting which is obviously a continuation of the preceding Pa-nan Kuan-shih-yin (八難觀世音) composition as seen in the faint hatching lines representing glowing rays along the upper part of the cartouche. And the fact that a miniture replica of this Kuan-



Fig. 6.

shih-yin is painted in the preceding frame suggests their consanguineous relationship. The name and the iconography of our Kuan-shih-yin, which were not properly identified in the past, need to be scrutinized afresh. Although the name Hsun-sheng Chiu-k'u Kuan-shih-yin, translated as the Kuan-shih-yin "who seeks the sound and saves from suffering,"<sup>27)</sup> reveals one of the most fundamental disposition of Kuan-shih-yin, it should not be regarded simply as another rendering of Avalokitesvara in Chinese. It is my contention that our Kuan-shih-yin is a variant manifestation of Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin just as the other Kuan shih-yins discussed thus far.

T'ang Wang-po's (唐玉勃) eulogy to a Kuan-shih-yin painting is recorded in *P'u-t'o-lo-chia-shan Chi* (補陁洛伽山記) in which he emphatically talks about the Kuan-shih-yin's instantaneous and complete salvation of the faithful from the perils. The Kuan-shih-yin that he refers to here is none other than Hsun-sheng Chiu-k'u (尋声救苦) and the text mentions a view of Potalaka Mountain in the distance<sup>28)</sup>. Another eulogy to a Kuan-shih-yin painting by Sung Lien (宋濂) is recorded in *Sung-hsueh-shih Ch'uan-chi* (宋学士全集). He too uses Hsun-sheng Chiu Chung-sheng k'u (尋声救衆生苦) to mean Potalaka Kuan-shih-yin, though the word Chung-sheng (衆生) is added to the basic nomenclature, making the term more descriptive of the Kuan-shih-yin's disposition<sup>29)</sup>. The author of this eulogy is the very writer of the second colophon of our painting and his mention of this Kuan-shih-yin in the above writing resolves the question of its nomenclature. Being the official compiler of *Yüan-shih* (元史), his knowledge of the culture of the remote regions of China, including that of Yünnan, and his familiarity with Buddhism and its history proved to be substantial. At any rate, the above, literary materials help establish our Hsun-sheng Chiu-k'u Kuan-shih-yin's identification that it is not any Kuan-shih-yin but the Kuan-shih-yin of Potalaka. Some primary iconographic features of our Kuan-shih-yin reveal its identity

as well. He is clad in a yellowish white undergarment and a black net upper-garment. He stands on a lotus petal boat with his arms crossed at the wrist and he holds a rosary in his right hand. His unique two layered garments find literal as well as pictorial correspondences in the *O-li-to-lo T'o-lo-ni O-lu-li Ching* (阿唎多羅陀羅尼阿嚕力經), translated by Pu-k'ung (不空) also quoted in *Zuzosho* (圖像抄). It describes that Pandura Vasini (半拏羅婆悉爾), namely White-robed Kuan-shih-yin, has its chignon decorated with a crown and it is clad in a white robe and a black heavenly garment<sup>30</sup>.

Another distinct feature, his crossed wrists and the rosary, is also accounted for in *Zuzōshō*, though the positioning of the left and right hands is reversed. It is interesting to note that this text equates White-robed Kuan-shih-yin to Hsing-tao Kuan-shih-yin (行道觀世音) and the *Asabashō* (阿娑縛抄) illustrates a Hsing-tao Kuan-shih-yin, together with similar iconographic features. As this problem of nomenclature is yet to be solved, suffice it to suggest here that the Hsing-tao Kuan-shih-yin, together with Yin-lu Kuan-shih-yin (引路觀世音) may be fundamentally imputable to White-robed Kuan-shih-yin<sup>31</sup>. In fact *Besson Zakki* (別尊雜記) illustrates an image clearly inscribed as White-robed Kuan-shih-yin (白衣觀世音) that corresponds to our Hsun-sheng Chiu-k'u Kuan-shih-yin. Also in *Kakuzenshō* (覺禪抄) there is an identical description of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin which is specified as a Chinese version<sup>32</sup>. Thus, our Hsun-sheng Chiu-k'u Kuan-shih-yin (尋聲救苦觀世音) can be considered as being consanguineous with Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin because of the inescapable iconographical as well as literary similitudes between them.

### **Rationale for the Emphasis of Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin**

In view of the fact that all of our Kuan-shih-yin images connotes in various ways the imagery of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin, set against the ideal back-drop of Potalaka, it may be worth speculating

possible reasons for such an emphasis on this iconography.

It is worth noting that sutras and other liturgical sources bring about the following imagery of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin which should be compared to the underlying iconographical principle of our painting: White-robed Kuan-shih-yin is synonymous with Pai-ch'u (白處), namely Lien-hua Pu-mu (蓮華部母), a Mother of the Lotus Section in the Womb World Mandala, and such deities as Pai-shen (白身), Ta-ming Pai-shen (大明白身), Yeh-i (葉衣), Ta-pai (大白), Ta-pai-shen (大白身), Pai-ming (白明), and Pai-se (白色) are all consanguineous with White-robed Kuan-shih-yin (白衣觀世音), despite their different names<sup>33</sup>. Such multiplicity of the nomenclature is indeed indicative of the importance of its colour white, either in the physical appearance or the habitat, which may be imputable to the theological concept of Bodhi, an emanation of the fundamental disposition of Buddha.

In order to ascertain intrinsic meanings of our painting it is imperative to distill its prefigurational contents germane to the regional culture in which it was embodied. Our painting was a product of Ta-li, a proud Buddhist nation in which the sovereignty and well being of the royal family were believed to be protected by divine power. Ta-li was a kingdom founded by Tuan Ssu-p'ing (段思平) after his victory over Yang Kan-chen (楊干貞) in 938. Since then the Tuan family ruled the country practically until the time when Kublai Khan sacked the nation. The legend with respect to founding of the kingdom recorded in *Tien-nan Tsa-chih* (滇南雜誌), a local gazetteer, tells us the divine prophecy of naming the kingdom Ta-li. According to the legend, the prophecy is said to have been made by Pai-i Fu (白衣婦-White-robed Maiden) who was none other than an apparition of Pai-shih Ta-shih (白石大士-White-stone Kuan-shih-yin)<sup>34</sup>. This Pai-shih Ta-shih shows an inescapable allusion to White-robed Kuan-shih-yin. Moreover, this White-robed Maiden is portrayed as a divine guide who helped Tuan Ssu-p'ing and the

Ta-li soldiers cross the water when they were stranded by the water on their way to a crucial battle, which is also an allusion to the function of Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin. Thus, the name of the kingdom Ta-li itself connotes that it is an ideal land that was chosen and named by White-robed Kuan-shih-yin, and for that matter it is a manifestation of Potalaka, the Pure Land of Kuan-shih-yin. As well, the legend illuminates Tuan Ssu-p'ing as a divine ruler who was chosen by a miraculous revelation of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin, which can be interpreted as an homage to the Tuan family who ruled the Ta-li Kingdom since the founding father.

It is contended here that such emphasis of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin, the colour white in particular may be imputable to the original stock of the Tuan family who was described as Pai-jen (白人-white people) in historical records<sup>35</sup>). There are, in fact, significant differences between the foundation story of Ta-li and that of Nan-chao (南詔), the forerunner of Ta-li. Founding of the Nan-chao Kingdom by a dark coloured Fan-seng (梵僧), otherwise known as Chien-kuo Kuan-shih-yin (建國觀世音) is a story rendered in the first half of the *Long Roll of Buddhist Images*, the *Nan-chao Scroll* in Fujii Yurinkan, the *Nan-chao Yeh-shih* (南詔野史) and other writings of Yünnan<sup>36</sup>). Just as the Ta-li legend for the Tuan family, the white people, the Nan-chao story was clearly intended for the exaltation of the dark coloured Nan-chao's ruling family called Meng (蒙) who was described as a descendent of King Asoka of India. It is reported that the Meng family of Nan-chao and the Tuan family of Ta-li were ethnically different, and the difference were so indicated by their symbolic colour characterization<sup>37</sup>).

In view of the above, the very choice of Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin iconography for the principle programming in our painting should be interpreted as the Ta-li painters' controlled expression of the non-canonical view of the multiple manifestations of Potalaka White-robed Kuan-shih-yin with such profound understand-

ing of the national content implied in this iconography.

### Notes

- 1) This article is based on the paper that this author presented to "The 31st International Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa" which was held in September, 1983 in Tokyo and Kyoto.
- 2) The most common form of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin is found in the ink-monochrome painting tradition, cherished primarily by Ch'an masters and their circles since the Sung period. However, the present study does not deal with this popular art form for the purpose of reinstating its manifestations to the esoteric iconological context.
- 3) This monumental painting in the collection of Palace Museum in Taipei was studied by Dr. Helen Chapin, Mr. Li Lin-ts'an, Mr. Masayuki Sekiguchi and Dr. Alexander Soper. The present author's new interpretation of the work is discussed in the following: *Bukkyō Geijutsu*, no. 140, pp. 61-79; no. 118, pp. 58-96; no. 111, pp. 52-74 and *Tetsugaku*, no. 65, pp. 97-112.
- 4) Dr. Soper did not let the deity unidentified, as he wrote, "I take this as a rendering for Jambhali: a name that I have not found in any lists, but which should identify the female counterpart and consort of Jambhala, the god-of-wealth aspect of Kuvera." *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XXXIII. 1/2, p. 82. This identification should be checked against the iconographic analyses rendered below.
- 5) The Yeh-i Kuan-shih-yin is otherwise known as I-hsing chin-kang who has his position in the Womb World Mandala. *Besson Zakki* in *Daizōkyō Zuzō*, III, p. 252.
- 6) This text, translated in 1001, needs to be recognized as an important source material for the study of esoteric iconography of Sung. *Daizōkyō*, XVIII, pp. 567-578.
- 7) These iconographic features are described in specific terms. *Daizōkyō*, XX, p. 448.
- 8) *Hizōki* in *Daizōkyō Zuzō*, I, p. 12.
- 9) *Besson Zakki* in *Daizōkyō Zuzō*, III, p. 248. *Kakuzenshō* and *Asabashō*, however, indicate a contradicting view on such conflation of the deities. The fact that these representative iconographic materials of the Japanese esoteric Buddhism were not in agreement on the question may have been reflective of a growing tendency toward divergent iconographic theories due to the flux of new information from Sung China replacing the traditional one of T'ang origin.
- 10) See the following for the detail: Bhattacharyya, B., *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, Oxford, 1924, p. 196.

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- 11) These Kuan-shih-yin images were considered so very unusual as Chapin emphatically stated, "The preceding figure is entirely unlike all the representations of the Avalokitesvara (or, one had better say here) the Kuan-yin of Mount Potalaka known to the writer." *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XXXIII, 1/2, p. 83. In fact, none has come up with a proper iconographical identification of these images.
- 12) Such cases are described in *Daizōkyō Zuzō*, I, p. 42.
- 13) This sutra was translated by Fa-hsien. *Daizōkyō*, XX, p. 64. The allusion of White-robed Kuan-shih-yin to Potalaka indicated in the above sutra is developed further in another Sung text. *Daizōkyō*, XX, p. 443.
- 14) Comprehensive studies on this subject are found in Daiyō Gotō's *Kanzeon Bosatsu no Kenkyū*, Tokyo, 1958 and Kou Aimi's article in *Yamato Bunka*, nos. 15, 16.
- 15) *Daizōkyō*, XX, p. 269.
- 16) The text was translated by Shih-hu. *Daizōkyō*, XX, p. 503, The painting instruction is given in specific terms.
- 17) A tortoise and its association with the quintessence of water is found in this sutra which was translated by Pu-k'ung. *Daizōkyō*, XX, p. 75. Related to the above is a close relationship between Shui-ching P'u-sa and Nagini rendered in *Daizōkyō*, XX, p. 88.
- 18) Such characterization of this deity may evoke the imagery of Dakasri in the Lotus Section of Womb World Mandala, who is described as having utmost control over water. *Ta-jih-ching-shu* in *Daizōkyō*, XXXIX, p. 641.
- 19) *Ibid.*, XX, p. 197.
- 20) The former is Chapin's translation and the latter Soper's *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XXXIII, 1/2, p. 84.
- 21) The nomenclature of this Kuan-shih-yin has a great bearing on the provenance of this painting as a whole which was discussed in detail by the present author in the following: *Bukkyō Geijutsu*, no. 111, pp. 69, 70; *Tetsugaku*, no. 65, pp. 67-112.
- 22) This text may be a fake sutra fabricated in the Sung period, which provides an ideally closely dated precedent for our Kuan-shih-yin iconography. *Zokuzōkyō*, 1-87, pp. 288-290.
- 23) The significance of the colour white for this icon is exemplified in the following: *Ta-jih-ching* in *Daizōkyō*, XXXIX, pp. 632, 682, *Hakuhō Zuzō*, VI, pp. 700, 701, *Kuan-shih-yin P'u-sa-shuo shao-hua-ying-hsien-te-yuan-t'o-lo-ni* in *Daizōkyō*, XXI, p. 612 and *Zuzōsho* in *Daizōkyō Zuzō*, III, p. 32.
- 24) *Daizōkyō*, XX, p. 243.
- 25) Various examples of this type of Kuan-shih-yin were studied in the following article; Miyeko Murase, "Kuan-yin as Savior of Man:

Illustration of the Twenty-Fifth Chapter of the Lotus Sutra in Chinese Painting," *Artibus Asiae*, XXXIII, 1/2, pp. 39-74.

- 26) The text was translated by Fa-hsien. *Daizōkyō*, XX, p. 64.
- 27) Chapin's interpretation of this cartouche is found in *Artibus Asiae*, p. 77, which needs to be amended in view of the new information discussed below.
- 28) This crucial passage is in *Daizōkyō*, LI, p. 1139.
- 29) *Sung-hsueh-shih ch'uan-chi pu-i* in *Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng*, ch. 24, p. 1322.
- 30) *Daizōkyō Zuzō*, III, p. 32.
- 31) Hsing-tao and Yin-lu Kuan-shih-yin iconography was discussed by Eiichi Matsumoto. *Tonkōga no Kenkyū*, Tokyo, 1937, pp. 361-367.
- 32) *Besson Zakki* in *Daizōkyō Zuzō*, III, p. 250, *Kakuzenshō* in *ibid.*, IV, p. 850. Similar examples are found in *ibid.*, XII, pp. 999, 1000, 1027.
- 33) A good introduction to the question of such nomenclature is written by Tadao Kisshō in *Misshū Gakuhō*, no. 132, pp. 255-263.
- 34) This crucial legend is recorded in *Tien-nan Tsa-chih*, p. 614.
- 35) *Ibid.*, p. 613, also in *Yun-nan t'ung-chih*, ch. II. Numerous such historical records are examined in this collection of articles, *Yunnan Paitzu ti ch'i-yuan ho hsing-ch'eng lun-wen chi*, K'un-ming, 1957.
- 36) The legend of the Nan-chao's foundation was rendered in detail by Chapin and Soper in *Artibus Asiae*, XXXII, 1, and by Li Lin-ts'an in *A Study of the Nan-chao and Ta-li Kingdoms in the Light of Art Materials Found in Various Museums*, Taipei, 1982. The present author's interpretation is found in *Bukkyō Geijutsu*, no. 118.
- 37) Just as the historical materials distinguished the people of Yunnan by their symbolic colours, black and white, they were described as being different in their ethnological as well as cultural characteristics. What the present author is most interested in is the fact these people were recognizably different despite some uncertainty as to their ethnological definition. The colour characterization in the naming of their tribal identity is said to have been embodied in the choice of colours for their clothes as well. In the section 4 of *Man-shu ming-lu* is recorded that the Pai Man (White People) were dressed in "White Robes." The White People (Pai Man) is believed to have been more sophisticated culturally including the language than the Black People (Wu Man) due, perhaps, to the longer and more intimate contact with China. It is reported that many Pai Man's cultural traits can be linked with the Thai people, while those of the Wu Man are traceable to the Tibeto-Burman people. For the detail see Yoshirō Shiratori's article in *Minzokugaku Kenkyū*, Vol. 15, nos. 3, 4, pp. 292-303.