

Aesthetics of Karuṇā the Thousand Armed Avalokiteśvara

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Introduction

The importance of the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara in Buddhism is well known. For example, the hymns to the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara are recited in most of the Buddhist rituals at present in Korea.¹ The belief in Avalokiteśvara in Korea developed on the basis of the texts, *Avatamsakasūtra*, *Saddharma-pundarīka* and the smaller *Sukhāvatī-vyūha*. The thousand-armed configuration represents one of the most popularly depicted images among many visual representations of Avalokiteśvara in Korea. The earliest reference to the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara in Korea is found in the *Darani-jip-gyoung* (Daraṇī Collection), which was translated into Chinese in 654 C.E. This form of Avalokiteśvara is mentioned as the most powerful *bodhisattva*. *Cheon-soo-gyoung*, the text of the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, is one of the most often recited texts in Korea.² It consists of *daraṇis* (mantric verses) praising the limitless compassion of the *bodhisattva*. The text, having derived its contents from the beginning and end of the Sanskrit original, has been a modified form to serve as a ritual text.

The major practice of followers of Avalokiteśvara in Korea is the calling of the name of Avalokiteśvara ('Gwanseum-bosal'). It is believed that if one recites his name single-mindedly in any perilous situation, one can be free from suffering and attain enlightenment. Single-minded recitation brings a sentient being and the *bodhisattva* together as one being. In the state of Oneness, one's own compassionate power begins to flow and one's wishes come true. Their prayers to the Gwanseum-bosal not only make their secular wishes come true, but also helps them achieve the right enlightenment, *bodhicitta*. In this belief, Gwanseum-bosal is the power of Buddha, which realizes the infinite compassion towards all sentient beings. According to the *Avatamsaka sūtra*, Gwanseum-bosal appears in forms of sentient beings in order to save sentient beings from various kind of suffering, such as the fear of a hard path, of ignorance, or attachment, etc., which leads to enlightenment. The *Saddharma-pundarīka* narrates that he transforms into different

forms by the power of his skilful means so as to teach people of different inclinations.

The Question

Avalokiteśvara is the personification of the compassion-nature of Buddha. *Karuṇā* ('compassion') is mentioned in an enormous number of passages in all principal treatises of Mahāyāna Buddhism.³ Its importance in Mahāyāna Buddhism is well exemplified by Śāntideva of the 7th cent. CE., who regards it as the one necessary thing which leads to the acquisition of all the principles and attributes of Buddhahood.⁴

Features of the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara which we see commonly can be characterized by his standing posture with two or four or six main arms and multiple arms stretched forth from the upper body of the *bodhisattva* in resemblance to the radiating light.⁵ Each hand is characterized by a distinguishing attribute such as *cintāṃmani* (wish fulfilling jewel), *pāśa* (noose), three-pronged *vajra*, one-pronged *vajra*, bow and arrow etc. or a specific *mudrā*.⁶ The eye is drawn on each palm.

Why, then, has Avalokiteśvara been imagined with a thousand arms and a thousand eyes, whereas among other popular *bodhisattvas*, neither Mañjuśrī nor Samantabhadra has such a configuration? How is the concept of *karuṇā* revealed in the form of the thousand arms of Avalokiteśvara, and how has it contributed to the artistic efflorescence of Mahāyāna Buddhism?

The present paper attempts to examine how the concept of *karuṇā* is related to artistic creativity and how it is conducive to the reflection of multiple powers, symbolized by the thousand arms in the visual representation of Avalokiteśvara.

Śoka (grief), Karuṇā and Artistic creation

On the question of the relation of *karuṇā* to artistic creation, we have a profound source in Indian aesthetics: the beginning of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyāṇa* and its interpretation by Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta.

The beginning of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyāṇa* significantly brings human faculties of knowledge, emotion and meditation together in the matter of the creative process of art. Vālmīki heard the story of Rāma from the Saint Nārada – the hearing represents knowledge. While he was pondering on the story along the river-bank, he saw a pair of birds in love. Suddenly, the male bird fell to the ground, being shot by a hunter, and the female bird rolled on the ground and lamented in piteous fashion.

Being overwhelmed by sorrow, Vālmīki threw a curse at the hunter (representing emotion). But, in a moment, he recovered himself and questioned: "Why was I deceived by emotion?" (overcoming the emotion). He discovered that his pity had taken the shape of a beautiful *śloka* and that all the happenings were part of the mysterious *līla* of God (transforming the emotion). Then, he went into meditation (meditating). In the realm of meditation he met the four-faced Brahmā and received the detailed instructions about the story of Rāma (communicating with the deep source of creation).

In the *Dhvanyāloka* (Dh.), the *Rāmāyāṇa* along with the *Mahābhārata* is cited as an example where *dhvani* is clearly seen to be at work (Dh. I.1.e A). While pronouncing *dhvani* as the soul of poetry, he shows that the sorrow of Vālmīki, as the heightened emotion of *rasa*, has flown into the whole verses of the *Rāmāyāṇa*:

"... it was that the grief (*śoka*) of the first poet, Vālmīki, born of the wailing of the cock curlew desolated by loss of its slain mate, turned into verse (*śloka*). For grief is the basic emotion of the flavor of compassion (*karuṇārāsa*).” (Dh. I.5 A)⁷

It is significant that grief is stated as the basic emotion of *karuṇārāsa* in Indian aesthetics, which may give a clue as to how the emphasis on suffering in the Original Buddhism developed into the concept of *karuṇā* in Mahāyāna Buddhism and its efflorescence in the image of *karuṇā*, Avalokiteśvara. Vālmīki's "grief became verse" (Rām. 1.2.39). Throughout the poetry, he adheres to the *karuṇārāsa* which he experienced at the time of its impregnation. Therefore, *karuṇārāsa* becomes "one primary *rasa*, being woven into the work, gives it the special meaning and extra beauty" (Dh. IV.5 A).⁸ Abhinavagupta's *Locana* comments in detail on how the emotion of *śoka* leads to the creation of poetry:

"... that grief, by the poet's ruminating upon its [*ālambana*] *vibhāvas* in their [unhappy] state and on the *anubhāvas* arising therefrom, such as the wailing [of the surviving bird], met with a response from his heart and with his identifying [of the bird's grief with the grief in his own memory] and so transformed itself into a process of relishing. It thus became the flavor of compassion (*karuṇārāsa*), which differs from ordinary grief by its being experienced primarily as a melting of one's thoughts (*druti*)."

(Dh. I.5 L)⁹

This connection between grief and compassion is in the very next *kārikā* further expanded to the transcendental concepts of *pratibhā* and *sphurattā*, which are regarded as the source of creation in Indian aesthetics:

“Sarasvatī, [working] within great poets, in pouring forth this sweet matter (*arthavastu*) [viz. the *bhāvas* and *rasas*] reveals a special, vibrant (*sphuranta*) and genius (*pratibhā*), which is superhuman (*aloka*).” (Dh. I.6)¹⁰

In the *Locana* that follows *kārikā* I.5, Abhinavagupta analytically explains how basic emotion (*sthāyibhāva*) becomes *rasa*: the collection (*jāta*) of states of mind (*cittavṛtti*) is first experienced earlier in one’s own life; then it is inferred (from outer symptoms) to be existing in others; then by the arousal of the latent impressions (*saṃskāra*) it creates a sympathetic response in the spectator’s heart; and then it leads to the identification of the spectator with the situation.¹¹ His analysis is relevant to our present discussion because it is connected to how *karuṇā* has been derived and transformed from suffering in Buddhist practice. It certainly shows that the transformation from the subjective emotion to transcendental *rasa* is the outcome of relating ‘I’ to ‘others’ and the successive identification in the heart, which corresponds to the practice of *karuṇā* in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Abhinavagupta continues: “For the basic emotion is put to use in the process of relishing; through a succession of memory-elements it adds together a thought-trend which one has already experienced in one’s own life to one which one infers in another’s life, and so establishes a correspondence in one’s heart (*hrdayasaṃvāda*).”¹²

As we clearly see also in Śrīśaṅkuka’s comment that *karuṇā* is the heart-felt compassion which includes a desire to help another in suffering or distress,¹³ *karuṇā* results from the dissolution of conventional concepts of ‘I’ and ‘others’ in one’s heart. This is the reason why Ānandavardhana wrote: “In the *rasa* of love in separation and that of compassion (*karuṇārasa*), sweetness (*madhurya*) is intense. This is because in these cases the heart is softened to a greater degree.” (Dh. II.8 K) When *karuṇā* arises in the heart of the aesthete, it is called *karuṇārasa*. As Abhinavagupta explains in the *Locana*, here ‘softened’ means that “the heart of the sensitive audience hereby abandons its natural hardness, its imperviousness, its liability to the flame of anger and its passion (*rāga*) for the marvelous and for laughter. This is as much as to say that in the relish of compassion the heart completely melts” (Dh. II.8 L).¹⁴ The prominence of the heart melting away all the fixation of conventional thoughts and emotions is discerned in the concept of *karuṇā* and distinguishes it from ordinary sorrow, which Abhinavagupta succinctly mentioned in the *Locana* I.5.

Karuṇā in Buddhism

In Buddhist doctrine, *karuṇā* is most commonly found as the second of the 'Four Immeasurable Attitudes' (*catvāri apramāṇāni*) that are to be cultivated by meditative practice: *maitrī* (friendliness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic joy), and *upekṣā* (equanimity). The word *karuṇā* is derived from the root *kr*, 'to act'¹⁵; therefore, the word itself implies action. In Guenther's account on *karuṇā* we find the elucidation of how empathy is not a mere emotion, but a catalyst for the annihilation of a subjective self and the arousal of imagination, which is comparable to the above observation in Indian aesthetics:

"Empathy is the perception of an object in terms of its movement or its tendency to move, whether actual or supposed. The object is not merely noted cognitively but it is felt to be. The object is thereby experienced in a new light. It becomes the guide, while the self submits to its lead so that a more intimate and lively appreciation of the object is achieved. This involves imagination and feeling which are brought to prominence by empathy. Through this ability to see more and more aspects of the many sidednesses of a person or even a thing, the perceiver and the perceived become more like each other as they both move toward unity, which has a special flavour of perfection, aliveness, finality and bliss."¹⁶

Finally, *karuṇā* leads to the identification of the subject with the object.

The following verses from the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* of Śāntideva teach that *karuṇā* is considered from two points of view: the realization of the equality of oneself and others (*par-ātma-samatā*), and the substitution of others for oneself (*par-ātma-parivartana*).

"... In this manner one should first make a sincere effort to meditate upon the equality between oneself and other beings owing to identically experiencing joy and sorrow. Just as the body alone has to be nurtured in spite of the variety of its parts like hands etc. so is this world of wide variety indivisible owing to joy and suffering being common to all sentient beings... Similarly, even if others' pain is not borne by myself but that pain too becomes unbearable for me when others are conceived as my own self." (*Bodhicaryāvatāra*, ch. VIII 'Dhyāna-Pāramita', 90-93)¹⁷

Here, in the practice of *bodhisattva*, what is crucial is to dissolve the conventional thought of 'I and Thou' or 'Mine and Thine'.

The career of the *bodhisattva* is traditionally held to begin when the devotee first conceives the aspiration for enlightenment (*bodhicitta*). Such pity, mercy, love

and compassion are at the very root of the concept of *bodhisattva*.¹⁸ The *Daśabhūmika* (ch. II) maintains that the *bodhisattva* enters the first stage (*bhūmi*) immediately upon giving rise to *bodhicitta* (*cittotpāda*). A *bodhisattva*'s *karuṇā* is manifested for his own purpose (*svārtha*) and also for others (*par-ārtha*). It is thought to be the major means to realize enlightenment. However, this motivation of *svārtha* disappears in later texts of Mahāyāna Buddhism because the mind of a *bodhisattva* should be so saturated with the feeling of pity for others that he does not think of his own enlightenment. All *bodhisattva* practitioners take a vow that one's own enlightenment will be indefinitely postponed while endeavoring to save others. Therefore, even the idea of enlightenment itself is dissolved.¹⁹

Karuṇā and Prajñā

Karuṇā is philosophically rooted in the notion of *śūnya* (nothingness), which breaks through all divisions and discriminations. Nāgārjuna (c. 150-250 A.D.) who developed the Madhyamaka philosophical system from the *Prajñā-pāramitā* system says in his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 25, 19-20:

“There is not the slightest difference between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. There is not (the) slightest difference between *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra*. What is the limit of *nirvāṇa*, that is the limit of *saṃsāra*. There is not even the slightest difference between them or even the subtlest thing.”²⁰

Prajñā is explained in terms of his philosophy of *śūnya*. *Nirvāṇa* does not exist subsequent to the extinction of *saṃsāra*: if one realizes that *saṃsāra* is empty and nothing but an illusion, then *saṃsāra* itself becomes *nirvāṇa*. *Nirvāṇa* is in the very midst of *saṃsāra*; it is not in another time or place.²¹ According to Nāgārjuna, conceptual constructions are motivated by ignorance (*avidyā*), and the process of unveiling the true reality is activated by *prajñā* and *karuṇā*.²²

Karuṇā is manifested in the non-dichotomous mode of *prajñā*. *Karuṇā* is inseparable from *prajñā*, which is the penetrating insight into the ultimate truth: *śūnya*.²³ Avalokiteśvara, the *bodhisattva* of compassion, is also the beholder of *prajñā*.²⁴ This indivisibility of *śūnyatā* and *karuṇā* is *bodhicitta* (lit. ‘enlightenment mind’). Therefore, we read in the fifth *mañjarī* of Abhayākara Gupta's *Āmnāya-mañjarī*: “Thus, the reality arising from the ‘together-born’ (pleasure) is the *bodhicitta* that is the inseparability of voidness (*śūnyatā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*).”²⁵

Prajñā and Pratibhā

Prajñā is, to put it simply, defined as an intuitive insight into reality as a whole and described as infinite, inexpressible, universal and unfathomable. Its object is the inexpressible and indescribable nature of things. *Prajñā* penetrates into the absolute and views it without making distinctions or differentiations, which is similar to *pratibhā* in its absorption of multiplicity in Oneness in a flash. The word *prajñā* is sometimes used in Yoga works as a synonym of *pratibhā*.²⁶ Abhinavagupta's use of *pratibhā* in *Tantrāloka* (13.139) can be understood in connection to *prajñā*: "Even in the case of a person who has acquired infinite knowledge from others, Śiva's nature within him is present with greater evidence in that which he perceived by the power of his intuition (*pratibhā*)."²⁷

In the *Locana* of Dh. *kārikā* I.6, Abhinavagupta defines *pratibhā*: "*Pratibhā* is a *prajñā* capable of creating new things".²⁸ This definition is close to the definition of his teacher Bhaṭṭatauta: "*prajñā navaṇavonmeṣaśālīnī pratibhā matā*" ('*prajñā* which keeps blooming with ever new things is called *pratibhā*').²⁹

Pratibhā in Indian Aesthetics

For Bhartṛhari, *pratibhā* is the intuition through which the meaning of words and sentences is grasped, and it is due to a capacity innate in all human beings, to a power which is that of the original, primordial Word, the very substance of everything.³⁰ Bhartṛhari considered *pratibhā* as common to all beings, birds and beasts; it was regarded as a flash of intelligence and also as constituting the meaning of a sentence (cf. *Vākyapadīya* II. 117, 143, 148, 152).³¹ In the *vṛtti* of the VP, *pratibhā* is identified with *vāk*, which is spoken of as the *parāpara* or the ultimate cause.³²

In *Abhinava-Bharati*, Abhinavagupta remarks on *pratibhā* as the source of artistic creation, identified with the highest level of the Divine: "... For the poet is endowed with a power to create wondrous and unheard of things. This power arises from the grace of *Parāvāc*, which is just another name for *pratibhā*, which has its seat in the poet's own heart, and which is eternally in creative motion (*udita*)."³³ In his *Parātrīśika Vivaraṇa*, the divine primordial consciousness (*saṃvid*), which Buddhists could term *bodhicitta*, is called *pratibhā*.³⁴ In Āgamic literature, *pratibhā* stands for the Highest Divinity, understood as Principle of Intelligence and conceived of as female, known as *Parā Saṃvit* or *Citi Śakti*.³⁵ Therefore, we have ample examples in Indian aesthetics where *pratibhā* is the supreme reality as well as the means to realize it.

Karuṇā, Śūnya-Prajñā, Pratibhā and Śakti

Just as *pratibhā* is understood as the intuitive insight into the supreme reality, so is *prajñā*. In Buddhism the realization of absolute reality transcends all intellectual categories. Its realization can only be achieved through *prajñā*. *Prajñā* is the ultimate wisdom itself, which is *śūnya*, and, at the same time, the means to realize it, therefore being inseparable from *karuṇā*. *Śūnya* is the ultimate reality and also phenomenal reality. As phenomenal reality, it is not only the non-substantiality of things, but also the attitude needed to realize the ultimate reality.

The conceptual relations among *karuṇā*, *śūnya-prajñā*, and *pratibhā* are counter-posed in *Tantrāloka*. The dissolution of conventional divisions of 'I and Thou' or *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* in the practice of *karuṇā* is reflected in Abhinavagupta's explanation on how the degree of *pratibhā* develops in chapter 11.67ff: *Pratibhā* (creative intuition) increases in accordance with the gradual freedom from linguistic conventions (*saṃketa*), which form successive chains of conventional thought constructions. In chapter 6, he mentions that consciousness having the nature of Light manifests itself as the void of all things, and the void of consciousness is the supreme state yogins reach by meditating on objects with an attitude of negation. It is designated as the 'middle way', which is neither being nor non-being. He further explains that this void self (*khātman*) is called the vital breath of consciousness. The vitalizing power of the breath is called *spanda* (vibration), *spḥurattā* (vibrant), *viśrnti* (repose), *jīva* (life) *hṛdaya* (heart) and *pratibhā* (intuition) (cf. TĀ 6.9-13). Therefore, these concepts are restored to the various synonyms of *śakti*.

Karuṇā and Śakti³⁶ of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara

The characteristics of Avalokiteśvara, which stand out in the hymn to the Thousand Armed Avalokiteśvara, are omnipotence (*bala-bala mahābala*), light (*ālokādhipati*) and transcendence (*lokātikrānta*). As *sahasrabhuja* (a thousand-armed), he is the incarnation of *sahas*, 'strength, power, force, victory'.³⁷ In the later version of the hymns (T 1056) by Amoghavajra (8th cent. A.D.), Avalokiteśvara is invoked in the form with a thousand eyes, heads, feet, tongues, arms and having the strength of a thousand heroes (*sahasra-vīra*). His ferocious might and intense fury are invoked to grant imperium to the devotee.³⁸ He is *mahāvīra*, bestows prowess: *balamḍada*, *vīryamḍada*. He is violent (*ugra*, *atyugra*, *mahā-ugra*).³⁹ How can we interpret the *bodhisattva* of compassion in the form of a powerful hero? The conceptual relation of *karuṇā* to *Śakti* would help in understanding the configuration of a thousand-arms for Avalokiteśvara, sometimes ferocious or softly feminine. We get an insight on how furious action is related to compassion from the

opening of *Dhvanyāloka*. In interpreting the benedictory verse⁴⁰ of Ānandavardhana before starting *Dhvanyāloka*, Abhinavagupta draws the example of Nṛsiṃha's action towards Hiranyakaśipu in order to explain what the claws (a destructive arms) mean there:

“The power to cut is appropriate to claws and while it is impossible for [ordinary] claws to cut away mental anguish, it becomes possible in the case of these claws because God's creations are conformable to his desires. Or [we may take it as follows]: Hiranyakaśipu was the thorn of the three worlds, a torment to everyone, and so in reality he himself was pain in concrete form to those who come to God as their sole refuge. When these claws destroyed him, it was the very pain [of God's devotees] that was rooted out; so this shows how God, even in such a state [i.e., even while engaged in an act of destruction], is still exceptionally compassionate.” (*Dhvanyālokalocana* I. 1)⁴¹

On pondering upon the relation of compassion to the ferocious act in the above verse, we find a clue to the question why the compassionate bodhisattva has innumerable arms to hold different attributes, many of which are fatal weapons.

The major practice of the Avalokiteśvara cult - the calling of the name of the *bodhisattva* - could have been derived from the power of the meaning that his name carries forth. In the *Saddharma-pundarīka* (ch.24), the merit of cherishing the name of Avalokiteśvara is repeated. The narration of how effectively one can be freed from dangers by adoring the name of Avalokiteśvara is to emphasize the power or might of the *bodhisattva*. As described, Avalokiteśvara moves everywhere with the faculty of transformation. His transformation originates from his power and skillful means of teaching the law. He transforms not only into the shape of Buddha or Bodhisattva but also “in the shape of a Pratyekabuddha to some beings; to others he does so in the shape of a disciple; to others again under that of Brahman, Indra or a Gandharva. To those who are to be converted by a goblin, he preaches the law assuming the shape of a goblin; to those who are to be converted by Īśvara, he preaches the law in the shape of Īśvara; to those who are to be converted by Mahesvara, he preaches assuming the shape of Maheśvara...”⁴²

Following the narration of the miraculous acts of Avalokiteśvara, Citradhvaja questions for what reason Avalokiteśvara is so called. Akshayamati answers: “Listen to the conduct of Avalokiteśvara.” We read in another verse from the same chapter: “One should think of Avalokiteśvara, whose sound is as the cloud's and the drum's, who thunders like a rain-cloud, possesses a good voice like Brahmā (a voice) going through the whole gamut of tones.”⁴³ Lokesh Chandra's study shows that the earliest Sanskrit name was Avalokita-svara⁴⁴ on the basis of

which his East Asian name was created: Kwan-yin, Gwan-um, Kannon. This original name became Avalokit-eśvara later because of the Śaiva influence. The two terms *svara* and *īśvara* could have alternated on the background of the ancient Indian thought in that Śabda is identified with Brahman, and Svava with Īśvara.⁴⁵ In the *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra* Avalokiteśvara is the great Vidyādhpati, and he is in possession of hundreds of mantras (Aneka-mantra-śatā-vyākṛṇa), which correspond to the conception that Brahmā envisions the mantras (*mantra-draṣṭā*).⁴⁶

If we look into the above lines from the *Saddharma-pundarīka* and the conceptual relation of Avalokiteśvara to Brahmā, the meaning of the name Avalokiteśvara becomes more than the 'one who sees the suffering sound (of the world)', which would only apply to his aspect of *karuṇā*. Etymologically, *avalokita* means 'seen or viewed' rather than 'seeing or viewing'.⁴⁷ And, *svara* can be 'the true sound of the world' or 'omnipresent sound which is the law', if we take into consideration the alteration of the term with Īśvara in the later stage. The omnipresence of the *bodhisattva* is confirmed by the title of the chapter, 'All-sided One'.

Thus, the name of Avalokiteśvara can be interpreted as 'omnipresent sound being in the sight', which could be understood in association with the philosophical and spiritual concept of sound in India, *vāk*. And the practice of calling his name could lead to communion with the true sound of the world.

Conclusion

The concept of *karuṇā* in connection to that of *pratibhā* and Śakti is reflected in the image of thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara. The emphasis of Mahāyāna Buddhism on *karuṇā* could have been the backdrop of its spread and the subsequent efflorescence of art in new lands where the language and cultural convention differed from its birth place. *Karuṇā* is nurtured in one's heart. All the distinctions and differentiations are melted away in a great wave of compassion. It stirs the imagination and intuition, therefore, opening the way to communion with the Reality through true sound. The sound of communication returns and echoes in the world.

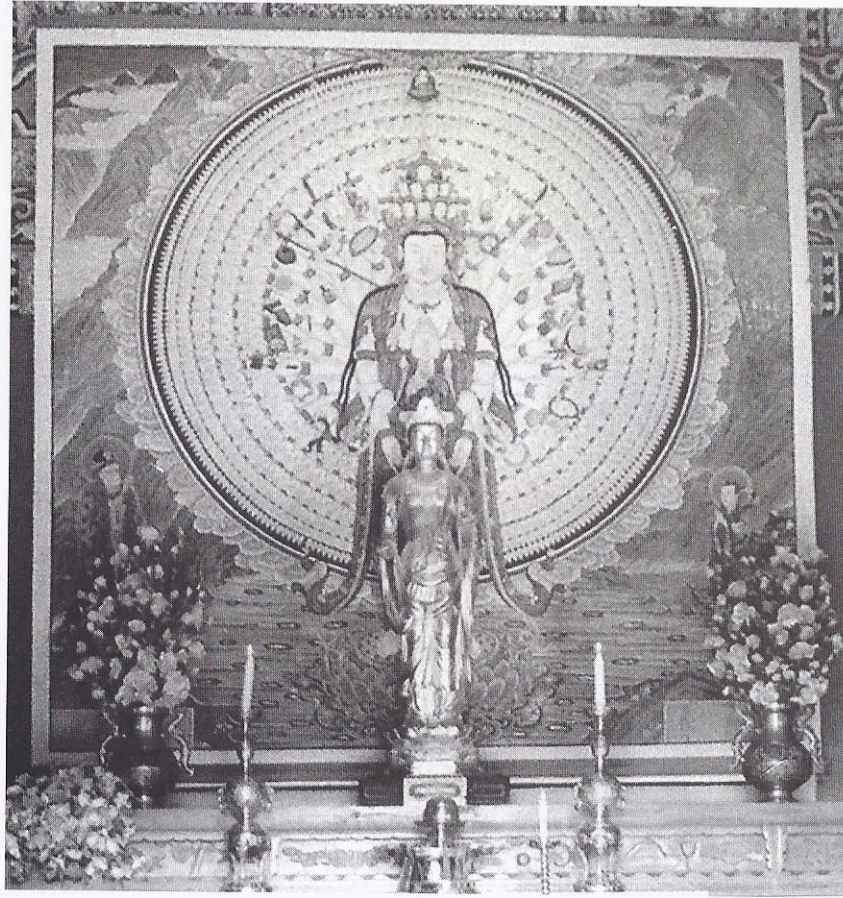
Having given instructions for Rāmayaṇa, Brahmā blessed Vālmīki: "You shall sing it, with my blessings, *for the benefit of the world.*"

End Notes :

1. Cf. *Hanguk Minjok Munhwa Dabaekgwa Sajeon* (Encyclopaedia of Korean Culture), Hanguk Jungsun Munhwa Younguwon, Vol. 21, 1991; 2nd print 1997: 839.
 2. In Tang China, around ten different translations of the text were in use. In Korea, the translation of Bhagavaddharma has been popularly recited. The date of translation lies in between 650-661 A.D.; Lokesh Chandra. *The Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara*. New Delhi: IGNC/ abhinav, 1988, 92. It became widespread in Korea from the 12th cent. A.D.
 3. *Lalita-vistara* 352.11; 162.6; 180.6; *Mahā-vastu* I, 78.16; ii 340.22; *Śikṣā-samuccaya* 8.2; 232.10; 184.12; *Dasabhūmika* 11.13; 13.13; 18.17; 19.8; 43.8; 42.12; 46.3; 47.23; *Sata-sāhasrikā Prajñā-pāramita* 1455.8; 282.11; 1461.8 (cf. Har Dayal. *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1932 [1st ed.]; Reprint: Delhi/ Patna/ Varanasi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975, 359 n.).
 4. *Śikṣā-samuccaya* 286. 8ff (*Śikṣā-samuccaya. A Compendium of Buddhist Doctrine Compiled by Śāntideva. Chiefly From Mahāyāna Sūtras*. Trans. Cecil Bendall and W. H. D. Rouse. London, 1922 (1st ed.); Reprint: Delhi/ Varanasi/ Patna: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981).
 5. A thousand arms of a divinity is found in the text as early as *Ṛgveda*; the universal Puruṣa has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet (ch.10, *Puruṣasukta*). In the hymns to the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, he is called Nīlakantha, Varahāmukha, Singhamukha. He holds a lotus, wheel, conch and club and wears a tiger skin which are reminiscent of Śiva and Viṣṇu. Chandra (*Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara*, op. cit.) shows that the text was originally the hymns for Nīlakantha pronounced by Avalokiteśvara, and the iconography of Avalokiteśvara is the outcome of incorporating the popular deities (*loka-nātha*), particularly Harihara, into the Buddhist worship of Buddhas and the bodhisattvas. He narrates several examples of a thousand arms and of a thousand eyes depicted in Indian literature (ibid., 48-49).
- Avalokiteśvara's quality of transformation given in the *Saddharma-pundarīka* ch.24 may have laid the foundation for easy acceptance of other deities into the iconography of Avalokiteśvara.
6. For the detailed description of the attributes and mudrās of the forty hands of thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara see Chandra. *Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara*, op. cit., 50-61.
 7. Daniel H.H. Ingalls (Ed.) *The Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana with the Locana of Abhinavagupta*. Trans. Daniel H. H. Ingalls, Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson and M. V. Patwardhan. Cambridge, Mass./ London: Harvard University Press, 1990, 114.
 8. Ibid., 690.
 9. Ibid., 115.
 10. Ibid., 119.
 11. Jeffrey L. Masson/ M. V. Patwardhan. *Śāntarasa and Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Aesthetics*. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, reprint 1985, 88. The last part of the sentence is based on the text of the Kuppuswami Sastri edition.

12. Ingalls (Ed.) *Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana*, op. cit., 117. It is this *hṛdayasaṃvāda* ('response of the heart') which permits the expansion and depersonalization of one's own emotions (ibid., 119, n.11).
13. Cf. Kanti Chandra Pandey. *Comparative Aesthetics Vol. I. Indian Aesthetics*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1995 (3rd ed.), 28-29.
14. Ingalls (Ed.) *Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana*, op. cit., 253-254.
15. Herbert V. Guenther. *The Tantric View Of Life*. Berkeley/ London: Shambala, 1972, 126.
16. Ibid., 127.
17. *Śāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra. Original Sanskrit text with English translation and exposition based on Prajñākarmati's Panjikā*. Trans. Parmananda Sharma. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1990; 2001 (2nd reprint), 323-324.
18. *Sukhāvativyūha* 15; *Lalita-vistara* 124. 22; 181. 5; *Dasabhūmika* 11. 13.
19. Cf. Dayal. *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, op. cit., 180.
20. Jay L. Garfield (trans). *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, 331.
21. Cf. Yuichi Kajiyama. 'Mahāyāna Buddhism and the Philosophy of Prajñā', in: *Studies in Buddhist Philosophy (Selected Papers)*. Ed. Katsumi Mimaki, Kyoto: Rinsen Book Co. Ltd., 1989, 89-98, here: 95.
22. Cf. Tadeusz Skorupski. 'prajñā', in: *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. Ed. Mircea Eliade, vol. 11, New York: Macmillan, 1987, 480.
23. In Yoga philosophy, as represented by Patañjali, we find the connection between compassion and prajñā. "Before the actualization of Kaivalya, when the *citta* stands still at the crest of the universe, ready to sink, the Yogin feels within him, as it were, a fresh emotional stir. For it is said that the rise of Prajñā is accompanied by the awakening of a deep compassion on suffering humanity. In the *Yogabhāṣya*, the sage (*prajñā*) is likened to one standing on the hilltop and looking down from his tower of glory on the toiling moiling multitude below. This infinite compassion is the only justification of his abstention from a plunge into the Kaivalya, which is immediately to follow. Under deep compassion (*kāruṇa*) he then builds up a new *citta*, the so-called *nirmāṇa citta*, from the stuff of *asmitā*, and a new body called *nirmāṇakāya*, from the *tanmātrās*, and having assumed these, these teaches wisdom to the world sunk in ignorance." (M.M. Gopinath Kaviraj. 'Doctrine of Pratibhā in Indian Philosophy' in *Selected Writings of M.M. Gopinath Kaviraj*, Varanasi: Centenary Celebrations Committee, 1990, 1-45; here: 12).
24. *Saddharma-pundarīka*, ch. 24: "He (Avalokiteśvara) with his powerful knowledge beholds all creatures who are beset with many hundreds of troubles and afflicted by many sorrow, and thereby is a saviour in the world, including the gods." (*The Saddharma-pundarīka or The Lotus Of The True Law*. Trans. H. Kern. [The Sacred Books Of The East. Vol. XXI. Ed. F. Max Muller. Oxford University Press 1884]; reprint: Delhi/Varanasi/ Patna : Motilal Banarsidass, 1974).
25. Quoted from Alex Wayman. *Yoga of the Guhyasamājantra. The Arcane Lore of Forty Verses* (Buddhist Tradition Series) Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977. Reprint 1999, 266.
26. Cf. Kaviraj. 'Doctrine of Pratibhā', op. cit., 2.

27. *The Tantrāloka of Abhinavagupta with the Commentary of Jayaratha* (KSTS), Srinagar, 1918-1938. Reprint, ed. R. C. Dwivedi/ Navjivan Rastogi, 8 vols., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987.
28. Ingalls (Ed.) *Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana*, op. cit., 120. – Ingalls translates *prajñā* as 'intelligence', and *pratibhā* as 'genius'.
29. Ibid., 121, fn. 6.
30. Cf. André Padoux. *Vāc. The Concept of the Word in Selected Hindu Tantras*. Trans. Jacques Gontier (Sri Grib Dass Oriental Series: 155) Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1992, 187.
31. *Vākyapadīya of Bhartṛhari* (University of Poona, Sanskrit and Prakrit Series; Vol. 110), ed. K.V. Abhyankar and V.P. Limaye, Poona, 1965.
32. Cf. R. C. Dwivedi. 'Bhartṛhari and Kashmir Śaivism' in *ABORI* LXXII/ LXXIII (1991/92), 95-107; here: 104.
33. Masson/ Patwardhan. *Śāntarasa*, op. cit., 13.
"kaverapi svahṛdayāuatanasatatokitapratibhābhithanapravagdevatānugrahotthitavicitrāpūrvārtha - nirmanasaktiśālinah prajāpatyriva kāmajanitajagatah."
34. "Do consider this divine primordial consciousness (*saṃvid*), free from all traces of the impurity of contraction (*saṅkoca*), which is called illuminating intuition (*pratibhā*)." Quoted from Padoux. *Vāc*, op. cit., 181.
35. Kaviraj. 'Doctrine of Pratibhā', op. cit., 1-2.
36. In fact, the word *śakti* is hardly found in Buddhist Tantras, whereas it is frequently used in Hindu Tantras. Cf. Guenther. *Tantric View of Life*, op. cit., 2.
37. Chandra. *Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara*, op. cit., 188.
38. Ibid., 13.
39. Ibid., 265.
40. Dh. I. 1: "Of Madhu's foe/ incarnate as a lion by his will,/ may the claws, which put the moon to shame/ in purity and shape,/ by cutting off his devotees' distress/ grant you protection." (Ingalls [Ed.] *Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana*, op. cit., 43).
41. Ibid., 44.
42. *Saddharma-pundarīka*, op. cit., 411.
43. Ibid., 416.
44. Chandra. *Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara*, op. cit.
45. Ibid., 23.
46. Ibid., 26.
47. In the translator's (H. Kern) note: "*Avalokita* means 'beheld'; it is as such synonymous with *drishta*, seen, visible, and *pratyaksha*, visible, manifest, present. Bodhisattva is everywhere present." (*Saddharma-pundarīka*, op. cit., 407).



Eleven headed Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara,
Hall of Gwanum, Boolguksa, Republic of Korea
(Photo from Hanguk Minjok Munhwa Dabaekgwa Sajeon 3.
Hanguk Jungsin Munhwa Younguwon, 1991; reprint 1997)



Thousan-armed Avalokiteśvara, the Guru Iha-khan,
Saspol, Ladakh (Photo from Buddhist Wall-paintings of
Ladakh. Charles Genoud (text) and Taeko Inoue
(photographs). Geneva: Olizane-Olivier Lombard, 1981)



Blue form of the Multiple-armed Avalokiteśvara, Sumtsek, Alchi, Ladakh, 11th Cent A.D. (Photo from A Buddhist Paradise, The Murals of Alchi, Western Himalaya. Pratapaditya Pal. Basel/New Delhi: Ravi Kumar, 1982)



Multiple-armed Avalokiteśvara, Sumtsek, Alchi, Ladakh, 11th cent. A.D. (photo from A Buddhist Paradise, The Murals of Alchi, Western Himalaya. Pratapaditya Pal. Basel/New Delhi: Ravi Kumar, 1982)

SAHRDAYA

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