

as the Bodhidharma story, drawing principally upon Daoxuan's work.

See also: China

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## BODHISATTVA(S)

The term *bodhisattva* (Pāli, *bodhisatta*; Tibetan, *byang chub sems pa*; Chinese, *pusa*; Korean, *posal*; Japanese, *bosatsu*) refers to a *sattva* (person) on a Buddhist mārga (PATH) in pursuit of BODHI (AWAKENING) or one whose nature is awakening. In the Mahāyāna tradition, a bodhisattva is a practitioner who, by habituating himself in the practice of the PĀRAMITĀ (PERFECTION), aspires to become a buddha in the future by seeking ANUTTARASAMYAKSAMĀBODHI (COMPLETE, PERFECT AWAKENING) through PRAJÑĀ (WISDOM) and by benefiting all sentient beings through KARUṆĀ (COMPASSION). A bodhisattva is one who courageously seeks enlightenment through totally and fully benefiting others (*parārtha*), as well as himself (*svārtha*). A bodhisattva is also termed a *mahāsattva* or "Great Being" because he is a Mahāyāna practitioner who seeks *anuttarasamyaksambodhi* and who is equipped with the necessities for enlightenment—*puṇyasambhāra* (accumulation of merits) and *jñānasambhāra* (accumulation of wisdom)—and the quality of *upāya-kauśalya* (skillful means); that is, he knows how to act appropriately in any situation.

According to the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, the *bodhisattvayāna* (spiritual path of a bodhisattva) is considered to be superior to both the *śrāvakayāna* (spiritual path of the disciples) and the *pratyekabuddhayāna* (spiritual path of a self-awakened buddha) because a bodhisattva is destined to attain enlightenment by removing the *kleśajñeyāvaraṇa* (emotional and intellectual afflictions), whereas those on the other two spiritual paths

aspire for NIRVĀṆA, that is, extinction of emotional afflictions only.

The bodhisattva is known by different appellations; for example, in *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra* XIX: 73–74, the following fifteen names are given as synonyms for *bodhisattva*:

1. *mahāsattva* (great being)
2. *dhīmat* (wise)
3. *uttamadyuti* (most splendid)
4. *jinaputra* (Buddha's son)
5. *jinādhāra* (holding to the Buddha)
6. *vijetṛ* (conqueror)
7. *jinānkura* (Buddha's offspring)
8. *vikrānta* (bold)
9. *paramāścarya* (most marvelous)
10. *sārvavāha* (caravan leader)
11. *mahāyaśas* (of great glory)
12. *kṛpālu* (compassionate)
13. *mahāpuṇya* (greatly meritorious)
14. *īśvara* (lord)
15. *dhārmika* (righteous).

Bodhisattvas are of ten classes:

1. *gotrastha* (one who has not reached purity yet)
2. *avatīrṇa* (one who investigates the arising of the enlightenment mind)
3. *aśuddhāsaya* (one who has not reached a pure intention)
4. *śuddhāsaya* (one who has reached a pure intention)
5. *aparīpakva* (one who has not matured in the highest state)
6. *parīpakva* (one who has matured in the highest state)
7. *anīyatīpatita* (one who although matured has not yet entered contemplation)
8. *niyatīpatita* (one who has entered contemplation)
9. *ekajātīpratibaddha* (one who is about to enter the supreme enlightenment)

10. *caramabhavika* (one who has entered supreme enlightenment in this life).

Regarding the bodhisattva's practice, different texts use different categories to discuss the process. For example, the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* refers to the *daśabhūmi* (ten spiritual stages) of a bodhisattva, while the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* makes reference to twelve vihāra (abodes), adding two vihāra to the list of ten *bhūmis*: *gotravihāra* (abode of the bodhisattva family) and *adhimukticaryāvihāra* (abode of firm resolution), the latter of which continues throughout the next ten abodes. The last ten of the vihāras essentially correspond to the ten bodhisattva stages of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*, although each has a name different from the names of the stages. In each of the ten stages of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*, a distinct pāramitā is practiced so that the bodhisattva gradually elevates himself to the final goal of enlightenment. The stages of practice according to the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*, with their corresponding pāramitās, are as follows:

1. *pramudita-bhūmi* (joyful stage): *dānapāramitā* (perfection of charity)
2. *vimala-bhūmi* (free of defilements stage): *śīla-pāramitā* (perfection of ethical behavior)
3. *prabhākārī-bhūmi* (light-giving stage): *dhyāna-pāramitā* (perfection of contemplation)
4. *arcīṣmatī-bhūmi* (glowing wisdom stage): *kṣāntipāramitā* (perfection of patience)
5. *sudurjayā-bhūmi* (mastery of utmost difficulty stage): *vīryapāramitā* (perfection of energy)
6. *abhimukhī-bhūmi* (wisdom beyond definition of impure or pure stage): *prajñāpāramitā* (perfection of wisdom)
7. *dūrāṅgamā-bhūmi* (proceeding afar stage [in which a bodhisattva gets beyond self to help others]): *upāyakaūśalyapāramitā* (perfection of utilizing one's expertise)
8. *acala-bhūmi* (calm and unperturbed stage): *prañidhānapāramitā* (perfection of making vows to save all sentient beings)
9. *sadhumatī-bhūmi* (good thought stage): *bala-pāramitā* (perfection of power to guide sentient beings)
10. *dharmamaḅga-bhūmi* (rain cloud of dharma stage): *jñānapāramitā* (perfection of all-inclusive wisdom)

However, the numbers of stages of a bodhisattva are inconsistent from sūtra to sūtra and from commentary to commentary. One finds fifty-two stages in the *Pusa yingluo benye jing* (Taishō no. 1485), fifty-one in the RENWANG JING (HUMANE KINGS SŪTRA, Taishō no. 245), forty in both the FANWANG JING (BRAHMA'S NET SŪTRA, Taishō no. 1484) and the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (HUAYAN JING, Taishō no. 278), fifty-seven in the *Śūrangama[samādhi]-sutra* (Taishō no. 642), fifty-four in the *Cheng weishi lun* (Taishō no. 1591), four in the *Mahāyānasamgraha* (*She dasheng lun*, Taishō no. 1594), and both thirteen and seven stages in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (*Pusa dīchi jing*, Taishō no. 1581).

There are other classifications of bodhisattvas, such as those who enter enlightenment quickly and those who enter gradually; those who are householders and those who are not, each divided into nine classes; those who are extremely compassionate, such as Avalokiteśvara; and those who are extremely wise, such as Mañjuśrī. MAITREYA bodhisattva is considered to be the future buddha who is prophesized to appear in this world. Śākyamuni himself is understood to have been a bodhisattva in his past lives and is so called in the accounts of his previous births (JĀTAKA).

In order to distinguish him from the śrāvakas and PRATYEKABUDDHAS, who benefit only themselves, a Mahāyāna bodhisattva is characterized as one who makes vows to benefit all sentient beings, as well as himself. In the Pure Land tradition, for example, according to the *Larger SUKHĀVATĪVYŪHA-SŪTRA*, the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Dharmākara makes forty-eight vows and becomes the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life (AMITĀBHA or Amitāyus), who resides in the Western Quarter and functions as a salvific buddha.

Among the well-known bodhisattvas, Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya are probably the most popular in East Asia. In the East Asian Buddhist tradition, Avalokiteśvara, better known by the Chinese name Guanyin (Korean, Kwansēum; Japanese, Kannon), is worshiped by both clergy and laity as a mother figure, a savior, and a mentor, who responds to the pain and suffering of sentient beings. In Tibet, Tenzin Gyatso, the fourteenth DALAI LAMA, is considered to be a reincarnation of Avalokiteśvara.

Maitreya (Pāli, Metteyya) bodhisattva, who is said to dwell in Tuṣita heaven, is known as the "future buddha" because he will appear in this world to re-establish Buddhism after all vestiges of the current dispensation of Śākyamuni Buddha have vanished. Tradition holds that ASAṄGA went to Tuṣita to study



An image of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara being worshiped by the donor of the painting. (Chinese painting from the caves of Dunhuang, tenth century.) The Art Archive/Musée Guimet Paris/Dagli Orti. Reproduced by permission.

under Maitreya, where he received five treatises from him that became the basis for establishing the YOGĀCĀRA SCHOOL. Worship of Maitreya as the future buddha has also contributed to MILLENARIANISM AND MILLENARIAN MOVEMENTS in several Buddhist traditions.

Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra are bodhisattvas who are often depicted in a triad together with the primordial Buddha Vairocana. Samantabhadra stands on Vairocana's right side and Mañjuśrī on his left. Samantabhadra is also often shown seated on the back of a white elephant, holding a wish-fulfilling jewel, a lotus flower, or a scripture, exemplifying his role as the guardian of the teaching and practice of the Buddha. Mañjuśrī, by contrast, represents wisdom, and is depicted wielding a flaming sword that cuts through the veil of ignorance.

Buddhist scholars and savants of India, such as NĀGĀRJUNA and VASUBANDHU, have been referred to as bodhisattvas; in China, DAO'AN, for example, is known

as Yinshou *pusa*. In more modern times, founders of new Buddhist movements in China, Taiwan, Japan, and the United States are considered by followers to be bodhisattvas and, in some cases, even buddhas.

*See also:* Bodhisattva Images; Mudrā and Visual Imagery

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## BODHISATTVA IMAGES

Although they play a fairly limited role in early Buddhism, BODHISATTVAS came to occupy a position of preeminence in later Buddhist literature. Moreover, visual representations of bodhisattvas comprise one of the largest and most important categories of imagery in Buddhist art. Despite this popularity, however, depictions of bodhisattvas, as with anthropomorphic depictions of BUDDHAS, apparently did not first appear until at least several centuries after the lifetime of the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni. Various explanations have been proposed to account for the relatively late emergence of the cult of images in Buddhism, but the textual and archaeological record remains inconclusive on several important fronts, such as the contentious question of when—and why—the earliest images of buddhas and bodhisattvas were created. While many aspects of the origin of the bodhisattva in the context of Buddhist art thus remain unresolved, the subsequent evolution and transmission of images of bodhisattvas are easier to chart.

### Early representations

Judged on the basis of surviving stone sculpture from India, which constitutes the largest block of early evidence, the iconography of buddhas and of bodhisattvas differs in several key respects. A second-century triad from Gandhāra illustrates the typical characteristics of the two figural types. The central Buddha is depicted as an ascetic, with a simple coiffure, the plain robes customarily worn by a monk, and no other sort of adornment; the flanking bodhisattvas, by contrast, are depicted as very much of this world, with elaborate hairstyles and headdresses, rich robes, and the sorts of jeweled necklaces, bracelets, and earrings typically reserved for royalty. More than merely a reflection of stylistic preferences, these differences have long been interpreted as carrying deeper meaning. The simplicity of the Buddha's presentation, for example, can be seen as indicative of his status as one who has renounced the material world, while the ornamentation of the bodhisattva invokes analogies between earthly and spiritual power, and between material and spiritual abundance.

It should be noted that there are several other images, such as a red sandstone sculpture from Mathurā, that seem to contradict this general categorization: Although the standing figure exhibits the lack of adornment associated with images of the Buddha, the inscription labels it very clearly as a bodhisattva. In fact, such representations are reflections of a popular early motif that emphasized Śākyamuni's status as a bodhisattva, both in previous lives and just prior to becoming a buddha. This tradition, however, was certainly overshadowed by more typical imagery of the so-called *mahāsattvas*, or "Great Beings," as the well-known bodhisattvas generally associated with MAHĀYĀNA Buddhism were often called. It is this later ideal of powerful, transcendent figures dedicated to alleviating suffering in the human realm that underlies the development of the complex and multifaceted iconography of bodhisattvas that permeates the Buddhist world.

While there are, then, certain general characteristics shared by almost all bodhisattvas, there are also many specific individual traits that serve to distinguish one from another. Often these take the forms of particular attributes, such as the vase carried by MAITREYA, the thunderbolt (Sanskrit, *vajra*) held by Vajrapāṇi, or the sword and book frequently given to Mañjuśrī, while in other instances a bodhisattva might be paired with a specific animal mount, as are Samantabhadra and his

elephant. In practice, however, this kind of straightforward iconographical identification is often made more difficult by the fact that many traits evolve over time, of course, or are transformed in different geographical regions; furthermore, some bodhisattvas can assume multiple physical forms, each with its own distinguishing characteristics. A closer look at some of the traditions of representation of Avalokiteśvara, undoubtedly the single most popular bodhisattva in the pantheon, will help to illustrate the nature and scope of these complexities.

### The Bodhisattva of Compassion

The Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Perceiver of the Sounds of the World) appears frequently in Indian Buddhist literature and art, and in both arenas assumes a multiplicity of forms and plays a variety of roles. In some sūtras, the Avalokiteśvara is merely a background figure, so to speak, and pictorially and sculpturally he is often portrayed as a subordinate attendant to the Buddha; over time, however, he was increasingly represented in both mediums as the focus of attention. What remains constant, and thus serves as a unifying element in the majority of literary and artistic depictions, is an emphasis on Avalokiteśvara as the embodiment of infinite KARUṆĀ (COMPASSION). One concrete expression of this emphasis can be seen in the many literary accounts detailing how the bodhisattva can save someone from the perils of the world. Iconographically, this theme is reflected by such features as the multiple limbs and heads with which Avalokiteśvara is often endowed (underscoring this special ability to help those in distress), and by the image of AMITĀBHĀ Buddha usually found in his headdress (alluding to the Western Paradise where Avalokiteśvara may help one be reborn).

The popularity of Avalokiteśvara spread to China (where he is known as Guanyin) and other parts of East Asia (Japan, Kannon; Korea, Kwansŏm), and grew to such an extent that it essentially overshadowed that of all other bodhisattvas. Initially this was brought about in part by the widespread appeal of the LOTUS SŪTRA (SADDHARMAPUṆḌARĪKA-SŪTRA), several early translations of which were made into Chinese, in which Guanyin figures prominently; in fact, chapter 25, which details some thirty-three different manifestations of Guanyin, was often published and circulated as an independent text. Many well-known depictions of Guanyin are based on imagery from the *Lotus Sūtra*, and it is perhaps the elasticity of form described



The Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara—the Bodhisattva of Compassion—shown with a thousand arms, symbolizing his ability to help those in distress. (Chinese wood sculpture.) © Reunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY. Reproduced by permission.

in the *sūtra* that made it possible for different branches of Buddhism to be associated with different characteristic representations of the bodhisattva. Thus, to give just two examples: While PURE LAND BUDDHISM favored images of Guanyin leading souls to paradise, the CHAN SCHOOL preferred the so-called Water-Moon Guanyin and its allusions to the illusory nature of the phenomenal world.

Of all the developments associated with representations of Avalokiteśvara, none has received as much scholarly attention as the gender transformation that Guanyin underwent in China. While it is true that bodhisattvas are theoretically beyond such dualities as male and female, early depictions of Guanyin often exhibit decidedly male characteristics (such as the mustache common in both Indian and Chinese portrayals), while the *Lotus Sūtra* also lists various specifically female forms that Guanyin is capable of assuming. Whether influenced by these literary descriptions, or because compassion was perceived as a more feminine emotional trait, or in response to the cosmological tendency in traditional China to create yin/yang pairings of complementary forces such as wisdom and compassion, whatever complex combination of factors was at play, the outcome was that Guanyin emerged in

China as the goddess of mercy and compassion, and retained that status throughout later East Asian artistic traditions.

### Meanings beyond the text

Images of Avalokiteśvara, despite their great variety and multiplicity, share a common emphasis on the virtue of *karuṇā*, and exhibit remarkable continuity over time and location. To a great extent, this is due to a close correlation between text and image; indeed, the primary meanings for most representations of bodhisattvas derive from *sūtras* and other literary sources. There are, however, many instances where bodhisattva imagery exhibits different patterns of development, and derives meaning from other arenas. The Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, for example, who may have evolved from pre-Buddhist Indian earth gods, rarely appears in either art or literature in India. In China, by contrast, as the Bodhisattva Dizang, Kṣitigarbha is frequently depicted in illustrations of scenes of hell (though his popularity drops off remarkably after the thirteenth century), while in Japan, where he is known as Jizō, he has long been popularized as the protector of children. Lastly, as Chijang *posal*, he was one of the most important bodhisattvas in Korean Buddhism during the Chosŏn period (1392–1910), and most traditional Korean monastic complexes had a special Kṣitigarbha Hall where paintings of Chijang and the Kings of Hell were the focus of ritual offerings on behalf of the deceased during the mourning period for the dead. Each of these instances demonstrates the frequently localized meanings of a given theme that can evolve apart from canonical textual sources.

On an even more particularized level, bodhisattva imagery has often been linked to historical individuals, a phenomenon that certainly can alter visual meaning in a number of ways. For example, BODHIDHARMA, the reputed transmitter of Chan Buddhism from India to China, is claimed in Chan tradition as an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara. This may account for both the somewhat surprising frequency with which Avalokiteśvara is depicted in images connected with Chan, as well as the structural similarities between such images as “Bodhidharma on a Reed” and the “White-robed Guanyin” or “Guanyin with Willows”—similarities that are clearly intended to appropriate the aura of the bodhisattva for the Chan patriarch. (In a similar vein, the DALAI LAMA of Tibetan Buddhism is also viewed as an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara, and here, too, the identification certainly

serves to reinforce claims of spiritual authority.) There are also well-attested examples that link secular, rather than religious, leaders with bodhisattvas. In China, the infamous Empress Wu Zetian (d. 706) of the Tang dynasty, for example, went to great lengths to encourage belief in the idea that she was an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Maitreya, and it has been claimed that various Buddhist images that she sponsored actually bear her own likeness. In the Qing dynasty, the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736–1795) had himself portrayed on multiple occasions as the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, enshrined at the center of a complex MAṆḌALA, while in the late nineteenth century the empress dowager Zixi cast herself as Guanyin in elaborate living tableaux that were preserved in photographs. Whatever religious motivations may lie behind such acts, the ends they served can justifiably be described as more political than religious.

In short, if many images of bodhisattvas, whether painted or sculpted, are informed by sincere attempts to convey the spiritual powers associated with these Great Beings whose superhuman exploits were made famous by Mahāyāna sūtras, there are other images that attempt to borrow these connotations for different purposes. At the same time, there are also cases in which representations of bodhisattvas are so far removed from the context of Buddhism that they are essentially depleted of religious meaning altogether. For example, while it is difficult to determine whether the elegant *blanc-de-chine* ceramic images of Guanyin first popularized in the seventeenth century were originally admired and sought out primarily for their formal and aesthetic qualities, that certainly became the case for the avid collectors, mainly foreign, who started to amass them in the early twentieth century. In the end, even a bodhisattva is powerless in the face of commodification.

*See also:* **Buddha, Life of the, in Art; Hells, Images of; Mudrā and Visual Imagery; Sūtra Illustrations**

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## BODY, PERSPECTIVES ON THE

The path to NIRVĀṆA or awakening, for Buddhists, involves the entire human being as a psychophysical complex. Although known to distinguish physical processes from psychic processes for the purpose of analysis, Buddhists do not ascribe to the notion (articulated by other religious traditions originating in India) that within every person there exists an eternal nonphysical self that may be said to “have” or “occupy” a body. For Buddhists, physical processes are dependent upon mental processes and vice versa. Thus, Buddhist traditions utilize the body as an object of contemplation and as a locus of transformation.

Buddhist scriptures and meditation manuals present a wide variety of meditations that focus on the body. Many involve mindful awareness of everyday activity: MINDFULNESS of breathing; mindfulness of modes of deportment, such as standing and sitting; and mindfulness of routine activities, such as walking, eating, and resting. Others meditations are analytic in nature. The body may be broken down into its four material elements: earth or solidity, water or fluidity, fire or heat, and air or movement. Such analytic exercises are particularly helpful for overcoming the illusion of an enduring “self” (ātman; Pāli, *attan*). In the *Majjhimanikāya* (*Group Discourses of Middle Length*; III. 90–1), the analysis of the body into its four material elements is compared to the quartering of an ox; once the ox is so divided, the generic concept of “flesh” diminishes recognition of the individuality of the ox.

Although members of other religious communities in ancient India also practiced such meditations on the physical elements of earth, water, fire, and air in the