

# The Concept and development of the image of Amoghapāśa (8-armed Avalokiteśvara) Dr Uday Dokras

He who is now so compassionate to the world,  
He will be a Buddha in future ages  
Humbly I bow to Avalokiteśvara  
Who destroys all sorrow, fear and suffering.

*The unknown Japanese master*

## Introductory article

*Between the fifth century and the early eighth century, South and Central Asian Buddhist texts, focused on ritual and studded with mantras and dhāraṇīs (tuoluoni), began to seep and then pour into China. This trend was a direct consequence of developments in South Asia that would lead eventually to the production of the tan-tras. This heterogeneous assortment of texts came in three varieties: as individual dhāraṇī texts that promulgated a spell and its attendant ritual for protection or some other end; as collections of dhāraṇī texts that brought together a variety of ritual practices with aims ranging from the repulsion of demons to enlightenment; and as texts reflective of comprehensive ritual systems pointing towards a growing interest in mantric ritual exemplified by the Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi sūtra and a rapid change in some Indian Buddhist communities, attributable to loss of patron-age and to competition with Śaivism (Davidson 2002a, 90, 111–112). Chapter 23. Esoteric Buddhism In The Tang: From Atikūṭa To Amoghavajra (651–780) In: Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia, Author: Charles D. Orzech*

## The Number Game

**Buddhism**, also known as **Dharmavinaya** — "doctrines and disciplines" — and Buddha Dharma, is an Indian religion or philosophical tradition based on a series of original teachings attributed to Gautama Buddha. It originated in ancient India as a Sramana tradition sometime between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE, spreading through much of Asia. It is the world's fourth-largest religion with over 520 million followers, or over 7% of the global population, known as Buddhists. It encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs and spiritual practices largely based on the Buddha's teachings and resulting interpreted philosophies.

**TWO (2):** Two major extant branches of Buddhism are generally recognized by scholars: Theravāda (Pali: "The School of the Elders") and Mahāyāna (Sanskrit: "The Great Vehicle"). Theravada has a widespread following in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand. Mahayana, which includes the traditions of Zen, Pure Land, Nichiren Buddhism, Tiantai Buddhism (Tendai), and Shingon, is practiced prominently in Nepal, Malaysia, Bhutan, mainland China, Japan, Korean peninsula, Vietnam, and Taiwan. Vajrayana, a body of teachings attributed to Indian adepts, may be viewed as a separate branch or as an aspect of Mahayana Buddhism. Tibetan Buddhism, which preserves the Vajrayana teachings of eighth-century India, is practised in the countries of the Himalayan region, Mongolia, and Kalmykia. Historically, until the early 2nd millennium, Buddhism was widely practised in the Indian Subcontinent; it also had a foothold to some extent in other places including the Philippines, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan.

**The Three (3) Jewels** (Trikyā) All forms of Buddhism revere and take spiritual refuge in the "three jewels" (*triratna*):

1. Buddha,
2. Dharma and
3. Sangha

**Four:** As expressed in the Buddha's Four Noble Truths, the goal of Buddhism is to overcome suffering (*duḥkha*) caused by desire and ignorance of reality's true nature, including impermanence (*anicca*) and the non-existence of the self (*anattā*). Most Buddhist traditions emphasize transcending the individual self through the attainment of Nirvana or by following the path of Buddhahood, ending the cycle of death and rebirth.

The **Five (5) precepts** or **five rules of training** (*pañcāśīla* or 5 edifices) is the most important system of morality for Buddhist lay people. They constitute the basic code of ethics to be respected by lay followers of Buddhism. The precepts are commitments to abstain from killing living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication. Within the Buddhist doctrine, they are meant to develop mind and character to make progress on the path to enlightenment. They are sometimes referred to as the Śrāvakayāna *precepts* in the Mahāyāna tradition, contrasting them with the bodhisattva precepts. The five precepts form the basis of several parts of Buddhist doctrine, both lay and monastic. With regard to their fundamental role in Buddhist ethics, they have been compared with the ten commandments in Abrahamic religions or the ethical codes of Confucianism. The precepts have been connected.

**Noble Eightfold (8) Path** enables us to overcome our "I", feel greater harmony with the world around us and eventually eliminate the pain we often experience. In this path, the Wheel, symbol of Dhamma, is presented with eight rays depicting the following eight principles:

1. Right View
2. Right Thought
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration

Right View is the first and most important step on the path because we must first understand the truth of the Four Noble Truths in order to begin our journey.

Right Thought follows immediately. "Right" in this case means "according to the facts". In other words, it suggests that we see things as they are and not as we would like them to be.

Right Speech, Action and Livelihood include moral barriers that prevent lying, stealing, committing violent acts, and making a living in a way that harms others. These moral barriers not only help to achieve general social harmony, but also help us to control and eliminate our sense of "I".

Right Effort is important, because the "I" thrives on inaction and the wrong effort. Inactivity because if we do not try to practice them we cannot hope to achieve anything at any level in life

and in the “wrong endeavor” because the greatest crimes have been committed by very active people. Therefore, the effort must be made and must be consistent with the teaching and with the effort to eliminate our “I”. The last two steps of the path are the Right Mindfulness and the Right Concentration. These two stages represent the path towards liberation from pain.

Being awake and aware at all times, is fundamental to a good life. This can be achieved in many ways, but in the West the formal practice is called “meditation” and is the way to achieve Right Awareness and Concentration.

**Amoghapāśa (Avalokiteśvara Bodhisatta** with the Unfailing Rope) is one of the popular esoteric forms of Avalokiteśvara, who protects all sentient, living beings by means of his rope of compassion and has their wishes fulfilled. This is why he is known as “the Bodhisatta with the Unfailing Rope (Amoghapāśa)”. Because the 49 deities in the Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa-lokeśvara cannot be found in India and Tibet, we can point out that this Maṇḍala originated in Nepal. It also contains elements of Indian Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism.

This lasso of compassion is used to rope in all wayward sentient beings to the Dhamma, so that they do not fall into the three evil realms, and always guiding them on the Correct Path.<sup>1</sup> The widespread worship of this deity first started in India, and then spread to the Himalayas, East Asia during the later part of the eighth century. Though the initiation of this Bodhisatta in East Asia remains unclear, but the examination of Amoghapāśa images suggests that the cult of Amoghapāśa in East Asia arose in the late seventh to eighth centuries. It was initiated by imperial patronage due to their devotion to the esoteric Avalokiteśvara with the concept of royalty and efficacy in protecting the state. Confounded by the lack of early Indian examples, the scholars of Indian art still believe that there must have been Indian precedents prior to the East Asian images. ( **Chapter Four. The Many Roles Of The Amoghapāśa Mandala**, From the book *Violence and Serenity*, *Natasha Reichle*, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824865474-008>)

**The Mantra of Light**, also called the *Mantra of the Unfailing Rope Snare*, is an important mantra of the Shingon and Kegon sects of Buddhism, but is not emphasized in other Vajrayana sects of Buddhism. It is taken from the *Amoghapāśakalparāja-sūtra* (Chinese translation Taisho ed. no. 1092) or *Sutra of the Mantra of the Unfailing Rope Snare of the Buddha Vairocana's Great Baptism* and is chanted as follows:

1. Roman script: om̐ amogha vairocana mahāmudrā maṇipadma jvāla pravartāya hūṃ
2. Devanagari: ॐ अमोघ वैरोचन महामुद्रा मणिपद्म ज्वाल प्रवर्ताय हूं



Records show gradually increasing use in the Heian Period, until the 13th century when it was popularized in medieval Japanese Buddhism by Myōe and later by Shingon monks Eison and Ninshō in their ministries. Both the Mantra and the nembutsu were often incorporated by medieval Buddhists at one time or another, often in the same service. A common practice for the Mantra of Light was to sprinkle pure sand, blessed with this mantra, on the body of a deceased person or their tomb, based on teachings expounded in the Sutra. The belief was that a person who had accumulated much bad karma, and possible rebirth in Hell would be immediately freed and allowed a favorable rebirth into the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha. This practice is known as *dosha-kaji* in Japanese.

## The Beginning of the 8 armed Diety

**The Buddha image**, which completely revolutionised, by its great dynamism, unimaginably diversified iconography, massive scale and unique spiritualism, the art scenario in ancient India, seems to have evolved upon human mind during the lifetime of the Buddha himself, although this image of mind took some six hundred years to emerge into stone or clay like mediums. As the Buddhist tradition has it, even during Buddha's lifetime, the idea of making his images persisted in his devotees' minds. The widely quoted legend of king Udayana, commissioning Buddha's image to represent the Great Master during his absence and that of Anathapindaka praying Buddha to allow at least the images of Bodhisattvas, suggest that his followers contemplated the possibility of covering their Master's absence by his anthropomorphic representations even before the Mahaparinirvana.

**The significant period for the popularity of multiple-armed forms of Avalokiteśvara** was the early part of the Pāla period (8th-12th centuries), for most images depicting multiple-armed forms date to either the ninth or tenth centuries. While four-armed forms are most commonly found, a smaller number of six-armed images also survive. These images were identified as of Amoghapāśa because of the presence of pāśa, which is a distinctive attribute of this form of Avalokiteśvara. Initially, the mantra received little mention in East Asian Buddhist texts, and although Kukai brought the sutra to Japan in the 9th century, there are no records that he ever utilized it in tantric practices.

**The Forms:** Today, many forms of Buddhism exist around the world. The three main types that represent specific geographical areas include: **Theravada Buddhism:** Prevalent in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos and Burma. **Mahayana Buddhism:** Prevalent in China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Singapore and Vietnam



Avalokitesvara statue found at Anglo Oriental, Bidor, Perak tin mine in year 1936. 8th-9th century bronze with eight arms. 79 cm height. National Museum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Bahasa Melayu: Avalokitesvara. Patung Buddha Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara mempunyai lapan tangan tetapi dua daripadanya telah patah. Patung yang dibuat daripada logam gangsa ini telah dijumpai di sebuah lombong bijih timah Anglo Oriental, Bidor, Perak pada tahun 1936. Patung ini telah wujud mengikut pertarikan pada kurun ke 7 hingga ke 12 Masihi zaman peradaban Hindu-Buddha. Berat patung ini ialah 140 paun dan tingginya 93sm.

Extreme right Imagr: Country: India. Site Name: Nalanda. Monument: sculpture of Khasarpana Lokesvara. Iconography: Khasarpana. Gestures: padma (lotus), varada mudra (gift-bestowing gesture). Dynasty/Period: Pala. Date: ca. ninth century CE, 801 CE - 900 CE. Material: stone. Dimensions: H - ca. 42.00 in W - ca. 15.00 in. Current Location: National Museum, New Delhi, India. description from Huntington Archive

## Avalokiteśvara

In Buddhism, **Avalokiteśvara** is a bodhisattva who embodies the compassion of all Buddhas. He has 108 avatars, one notable avatar being Padmapāṇi (he who holds a lotus). He is variably depicted, described, and portrayed in different cultures as either male or female. In Chinese Buddhism, his figures has evolved into the female form called Guanyin.

The name Avalokiteśvara combines the verbal prefix ava "down", lokita, a past participle of the verb lok "to notice, behold, observe", here used in an active sense; and finally īśvara, "lord", "ruler", "sovereign" or "master". In accordance with sandhi (Sanskrit rules of sound combination), a+īśvara becomes eśvara. Combined, the parts mean "lord who gazes down (at the world)". The word loka ("world") is absent from the name, but the phrase is implied.<sup>[3]</sup> It does appear in the Cambodian form of the name, Lokesvarak.

The earliest translation of the name Avalokiteśvara into Chinese by authors such as Xuanzang was as Guānzìzài . It was initially thought that this was due to a lack of fluency, as Guanyin indicates the original Sanskrit form was instead Avalokitasvara, "who looked down upon sound", i.e., the cries of sentient beings who need help.

It is now understood Avalokitasvara was the original form, and is also the origin of Guanyin "Perceiving sound, cries". This translation was favored by the tendency of some



Chinese translators, notably Kumārajīva, to use the variant Guānshìyīn "who perceives the world's lamentations"—wherein lok was read as simultaneously meaning both "to look" and "world." The original form Avalokitasvara appears in Sanskrit fragments of the fifth century. This earlier Sanskrit name was supplanted by the form containing the ending -īśvara "lord"; but Avalokiteśvara does not occur in Sanskrit before the seventh century.

The original meaning of the name fits the Buddhist understanding of the role of a bodhisattva. The reinterpretation presenting him as an īśvara shows a strong influence of Hinduism, as the term īśvara was usually connected to the Hindu notion of Vishnu (in Vaishnavism) or Shiva (in Shaivism) as the Supreme Lord, Creator and Ruler of the world. Some attributes of such a god were transmitted to the bodhisattva, but the mainstream of those who venerated Avalokiteśvara upheld the Buddhist rejection of the doctrine of any creator god.

In Sanskrit, Avalokiteśvara is also referred to as Lokeśvara ("Lord of the World"). In Tibetan, Avalokiteśvara is Chenrézig, and is said to emanate as the Dalai Lama, the Karmapa and other high lamas. An etymology of the Tibetan name Chenrézik is spyan "eye", ras "continuity" and gzig "to look". This gives the meaning of one who always looks upon all beings (with the eye of compassion).

## Origin

The origin of the 8 armed form as a percept and a concept is shrouded in mystery- which means that we do not know when it happened. Some credit it to the Pala empire, but nothing is sure. Some researchers say that the iconographical structure of the Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa-lokeśvara, which is described in the ritual texts referenced above, can be found in 6 cloth paintings, one of which is preserved at the Guimet Museum in Paris. Because the 49 deities in the Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa-lokeśvara cannot be found in India and Tibet, we can point out that this Maṇḍala originated in Nepal. It also contains elements of Indian Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism.

### **What role did the Pala Kings play in the spread of Buddhism?**

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3. Dharmapala, the second Pala ruler, founded the renowned Vikramshila University near Bhagalpur in Bihar attracting students from all-over India and Tibet.
4. Devapala, the Pala king of Bengal, granted five villages for the maintenance of a monastery at Nalanda.
5. Regarding the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodhgaya, many of the sculptures in the niches in the temple are dated to the 8th century Pala Period.
6. The Nalanda bronzes are reflectant of Pala Period metal sculptures.
7. Nalanda and Vikramshila were great centres of Buddhist learning, showcased art and several manuscripts with Buddhist themes and images of Vajrayana Buddhist deities on palm leaves. Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita is a good example of a Pala Buddhist palm-leaf manuscript.
8. Students and pilgrims throughout South East Asia came to these monasteries for education and religious purposes and returned with specimens of Pala Buddhist art.

9. The last great phase of Buddhist art in India is attributed to the Pala period.

A miniature terracotta image of a fasting Buddha, a six-foot-tall votive stupa and a black stone statue of Buddha in abhaya mudra (fearless mode) from the Pala period reflect the ubiquity of Buddhism then.

**Pala India, Avalokitesvara – various forms (8)**



**10th-11th century, India, Kurkihar hoard, bodhisattva on lion, bronze, photo on vmis, at the Patna Museum./// Circa 10th century, India, Bihar, Nalanda, Avalokitesvara, stone, item 4473/A24143 at the Indian Museum in Kolkata (India).// 9th century, India, Bihar, Nalanda, Avalokitesvara, stone, item 3962/A24123 at the Indian Museum in Kolkata/ 8th century, India, Nalanda, Padmapani (Avalokitesvara), stone, item 49-148 at the National Museum in New Delhi (India).**

## **A new wave of Buddhism from Northeast India**

A.J. Bernet Kempers published an important study in which he advanced his theories for a possible Indian origin of the iconography of the five main statues of Candi Jago, namely Amoghapasa Lokeshvara with his four attendants Tara, Sudhanakumara, Hayagriva, and Bhrikutr. Accordingly the Candi Jago statues have been influenced by a new wave of Buddhism from Northeast India, which reached Java in the first part of the 13th century. (Ancient Indonesian Sculpture, Series: Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Volume: 165 E-Book ISBN: Brill, 1995)

**Pala Mandala of the Amoghapāsa** One of the richest visual objects in Tibetan Buddhism is the mandala. A mandala is a symbolic picture of the universe. It can be a painting on a wall or scroll, created in coloured sands on a table, or a visualisation in the mind of a very skilled adept. In the Paladynasty there are no 8 armed images of the Buddha. Therefore how the concept of the Amoghapāsa came to be linked with the Pala dynasty is not clear. What is clear is that the

Amoghapāśa had a beginning in India and the concept was carried on to Tibet, Sri Lanka and the Indonesian kingdoms of the earlier time.



Avalokiteshvara is a bodhisattva, a divine being who is on the path to becoming a Buddha (“Awakened One”) and helps others on the path toward enlightenment. This multi-armed figure is hollow-cast from an alloy of copper and 5% tin, called bronze. Using computed tomography or CT scans, museum conservators determined that the head, arms, and body were cast in stages and joined using sophisticated metal casting techniques. Avalokiteshvara is covered with images of the Buddha, like the ones making up his necklace. Each of these small figures was originally carved or stamped in wax and applied to the model before being cast in bronze. Avalokiteshvara also wears arm and wristbands made of a different metal alloy: brass, which initially would have glistened like gold.

RIGHT PIC- Tibet Buddhism 4 Head 8 Arm Ushnishavijaya Namgyalma Kwan-Yin Buddha statue

The **Pala Empire** (r. 750-1161 CE) was an imperial power during the post-classical period in the Indian subcontinent, which originated in the region of Bengal. It is named after its ruling dynasty, whose rulers bore names ending with the suffix *Pala* (“protector” in Prakrit). The empire was founded with the election of Gopala as the emperor of Gauda in 750 CE. The Pala stronghold was located in Bengal and eastern Bihar, which included the major cities of Gauda, Vikramapura, Pataliputra, Monghyr, Somapura, Ramvati (Varendra), Tamralipta and Jaggadala.

The Palas were astute diplomats and military conquerors. Their army was noted for its vast war elephant corps. Their navy performed both mercantile and defensive roles in the Bay of Bengal. They built grand temples and monasteries, including the Somapura Mahavihara and Odantapuri, and patronised the great universities of Nalanda and Vikramashila. The empire enjoyed relations with the Srivijaya Empire, the Tibetan Empire and the Arab Abbasid Caliphate. Abbasid coinage found in Pala archaeological sites, as well as records of Arab historians, point to flourishing mercantile and intellectual contacts. The House of Wisdom in Baghdad absorbed the mathematical and astronomical achievements of Indian civilisation during this period.





**The Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, Sri Lanka, 8th century**  
**Object Place: Sri Lanka**



**Ashtabhuj Perumal temple and 8 armed Vishnu in India**

**Avalokiteshvara** is the earthly manifestation of the self-born eternal Buddha Amitabha, whose figure is represented in his headdress, and he guards the world in the interval between the departure of the historical Buddha, Gautama, and the appearance of the future buddha, Maitreya.

**Amoghapasa AvalokiteSvara** (Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva) the Unfailing Rope is one of the popular esoteric forms of AvalokiteSvara

**Durga the Hindu God with 8 arms?**

Born fully grown and beautiful, Durga presents a fierce menacing form to her enemies. She is usually depicted riding a lion and with 8 or 10 arms, each holding the special weapon of one of the gods, who gave them to her for her battle against the buffalo demon.



**Does Vishnu have 8 arms?**

According to the traditional story of this temple, Goddess Sarasvati, wanting to disturb the penance of Brahma, sent an army of demons who were all destroyed by Vishnu. She then sent Sharabha, a ferocious creature, and **Vishnu** assumed a form with eight hands with a number of weapons and vanquished him



at Angkor nwith 8 arms

**The Ashtabhuj Perumal temple in** Kanchipuram is one of the 108 divya desams of temples worshipped by the



Azhvars .The main sanctum enshrines a unique image of Vishnu in a standing posture with eight hands, worshipped as Ashtabhuj Perumal (in Sanskrit, ashta is eight and bhuj is hand. In his four left hands, Ashtabhuj Perumal holds the conch (sankha), bow (dhanus), shield (khetaka) and mace (gada), while in the right hands, this deity holds the discus (sudarshana chakra), sword (asi), lotus (padma) and arrow (bana).

According to the traditional story of this temple, Goddess Sarasvati, wanting to disturb the penance of Brahma, sent an army of demons who were all destroyed by Vishnu. She then sent Sharabha, a ferocious creature, and Vishnu assumed a form with eight hands with a number of weapons and vanquished him. This temple is also connected with the story of Gajendra Moksha when Vishnu, riding on Garuda, saved the elephant-devotee whose leg had been trapped in the jaws of a crocodile.

**Is there a connect with** the fact that many Hindu Gods( and Goddesses) had 8 arms and so this special version of the Buddha?

**At its height in the early ninth century**, the Pala Empire was the dominant power in the northern Indian subcontinent, with its territory stretching across the Gangetic plain to include parts of modern-day eastern Pakistan, northern and northeastern India, Nepal and Bangladesh. The empire reached its peak under Emperors Dharmapala and Devapala. The Palas also exerted a strong cultural influence under Atisa in Tibet, as well as in Southeast Asia. Pala control of North India was ultimately ephemeral, as they struggled with the Gurjara-Pratiharas and the Rashtrakutas for the control of Kannauj and were defeated. After a short lived decline, Emperor Mahipala I defended imperial bastions in Bengal and Bihar against South Indian Chola invasions. Emperor Ramapala was the last strong Pala ruler, who gained control of Kamarupa and Kalinga. The empire was considerably weakened by the 11th century, with many areas engulfed in rebellion.

**The Palas were patrons of Mahayana Buddhism.** A few sources written much after Gopala's death mention him as a Buddhist, but it is not known if this is true. The subsequent Pala kings were definitely Buddhists. Taranatha states that Gopala was a staunch Buddhist, who had built the famous monastery at Odantapuri. Dharmapala made the Buddhist philosopher Haribhadra his spiritual preceptor. He established the Vikramashila monastery and the Somapura Mahavihara. Taranatha also credits him with establishing 50 religious institutions and patronising the Buddhist author Haribhadra. Devapala restored and enlarged the structures at Somapura Mahavihara, which also features several themes from the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. Mahipala I also ordered construction and repairs of several sacred structures at Saranath, Nalanda and Bodh Gaya. The *Mahipala geet* ("songs of Mahipala"), a set of folk songs about him, are still popular in the rural areas of Bengal.

The Palas developed the Buddhist centres of learnings, such as the Vikramashila and the Nalanda universities. Nalanda, considered one of the first great universities in recorded history, reached its height under the patronage of the Palas. Noted Buddhist scholars from the

Pala period include Atisha, Santaraksita, Saraha, Tilopa, Bimalamitra, Dansheel, Dansree, Jinamitra, Jnanasrimitra, Manjughosh, Muktimitra, Padmanava, Sambhogabajra, Shantarakshit, Silabhadra, Sugatasree and Virachan.

As the rulers of Gautama Buddha's land, the Palas acquired great reputation in the Buddhist world. Balaputradeva, the Sailendra king of Java, sent an ambassador to him, asking for a grant of five villages for the construction of a monastery at Nalanda. The request was granted by Devapala. He appointed the Brahmin Viradeva (of Nagarahara, present-day Jalalabad) as the head of the Nalanda monastery. The Buddhist poet Vajradatta (the author of Lokeshvarashataka), was in his court. The Buddhist scholars from the Pala empire travelled from Bengal to other regions to propagate Buddhism. Atisha, for example, preached in Tibet and Sumatra, and is seen as one of the major figures in the spread of 11th-century Mahayana Buddhism.

The Palas also supported the Saiva ascetics, typically the ones associated with the Golagi-Math. Narayana Pala himself established a temple of Shiva, and was present at the place of sacrifice by his Brahmin minister. Queen of King Madanapaladeva, namely Chitramatika, made a gift of land to a Brahmin named Bateswara Swami as his remuneration for chanting the Mahabharata at her request, according to the principle of the Bhumichhidranaya. Besides the images of the Buddhist deities, the images of Vishnu, Siva and Sarasvati were also constructed during the Pala dynasty rule.

The resurgent Hindu Sena dynasty dethroned the Pala Empire in the 12th century, ending the reign of the last major Buddhist imperial power in the Indian subcontinent. The Pala period is considered one of the golden eras of Bengali history. The Palas brought stability and prosperity to Bengal after centuries of civil war between warring divisions. They advanced the achievements of previous Bengali civilisations and created outstanding works of arts and architecture. The proto-Bengali language developed under Pala rule as they laid the basis for the Bengali language, including its first literary work, the Charyapada. The Pala legacy is still reflected in Tibetan Buddhism. Gopala, the first Pala king, was a Buddhist and so all of his descendants also were. It's no surprise when you consider how involved the rulers were in the management of their empire that this also extended to religion. They used the revenue from the new tax collection methods to fund initiatives all across the region that would spread Buddhism. The most important of these were the large monasteries like Paharpur, that was founded during the reign of King Dharma Pala Deva.



**Pure Bronze Buddhist 1000 Arms Avalokitesvara Kwan-Yin Buddha Statue (B0328) | Statue, Buddha statue, Buddha // Coins minted during Dharma Pala's reign.**

Interestingly, though, most of the subjects in the area controlled by the Pala Empire were actually Hindus. The Pala rulers followed an approach of religious tolerance, granting land for Hindu temples and allowing Hindu Brahmins to hold high official posts in the Pala court. This allowed for a peaceful exchange of ideas between the faiths and is a large factor in why Hindu Tantrism made its way into Buddhism, giving rise to the Vajrayana philosophy.

The Pala kings are also considered to have been shrewd diplomats, forging relationships with different cultures to promote new trade routes. The empire enjoyed good connections with Southeast Asia and the Middle East – but it was more than just trade that was shared. Cultural ideas were also transferred and there's evidence of Islam appearing in Bengal during this time, while mathematical and astronomical achievements of the Indian civilisation were absorbed in places like Iraq. In Southeast Asia, the most prominent of this exchange of ideas can be seen in the architecture of temples that were based on the design at Paharpur.

The Pala dynasty created the environment for Buddhist monasteries to thrive and discuss philosophies without prejudice. But, importantly, it also facilitated the spread of these ideas around the world, leaving a legacy that we can still see today.

**Amoghapasa AvalokiteSvara (Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva)** with the Unfailing Rope; Ch. Bukongjuansuo Guanyin Fukukenjaku Kannon) is one of the popular esoteric forms of AvalokiteSvara, with widespread worship of this deity in India, the Himalayas, East and Southeast Asia from around the latter part of the eighth century. However, its presence in East Asia in the seventh and eighth centuries remain unclear. Scholars of Indian art have been confounded by the lack of Indian examples predating those in the east, assuming that there must have been Indian precedents prior to the East Asian images. And yet, the earliest extant representation of this bodhisattvaan imposing statue of Fuklkenjaku Kannon in the Sangatsuda 三昧 (Hall of the Third month) of Tadaiji Nara indicates the significance attached to the rise of the cult of this bodhisattva. [file:///C:/Users/UDAY/Downloads/The\\_Case\\_of\\_Amoghapasa.pdf](file:///C:/Users/UDAY/Downloads/The_Case_of_Amoghapasa.pdf) - Dorothy C. Wong

### **Bhairava, the depiction of King Adityavarman of Malayu**

Dating to around 748 and over three meters high, the dry lacquer statue was probably one of the largest bodhisattva statues created in Japan up till that. Central Javanese monument of Borobudur, one of the largest Buddhist monuments in the world and the subject of extensive scholarly scrutiny is not the only Buddhist art example to emerge from the S.E. Asian land. Some scholars believe that by the tenth century Buddhism had been completely eclipsed by the predominantly Hindu Eastern Javanese dynasties. In spite of which some, extraordinary Buddhist images were produced as late as the fourteenth century. Here the portraiture of Buddha as Prajñāpāramitā and the deity Amoghapāśa and his attendants and the meanings of the Amoghapāśa mandala. The spectacular Javanese sculptures is a four-meter-high Buddhist bhairava (demon) discovered in West Sumatra.





**The large Buddhist statue of Bhairava, the depiction of King Adityavarman of Malayu (1347-1375). Discovered in Rambahan, Padangroco, West Sumatra. The collection of National Museum of Indonesia, Jakarta.**



The iconographical structure of the Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa-lokeśvara, which is described in the ritual texts referenced above, can be found in 6 cloth paintings, one of which is preserved at the Guimet Museum in Paris. Because the 49 deities in the Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa-lokeśvara cannot be found in India and Tibet, we can point out that this Maṇḍala originated in Nepal. It also contains elements of Indian Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism.





This is one of a number of miniature versions of a large-scale cult icon depicting the Buddhist savior, the Bodhisattva Amoghapasa, in eight-armed form. The style, iconography, and dedicatory inscription on the reverse link this plaque to stone steles from Candi Jago, a late thirteenth-century royal foundation temple, in East Java. The parent icon is dated by inscription to 1286, during the reign of King Krtanagara Visvarupakumara, who is named as the patron of this metal plaque./// **Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa-lokeśvara in Nepal: Its Ritual Texts and Cloth Paintings**, Ruriko SAKUMA, 2017 Volume 65 Issue 2 Pages 892-886

### The Amoghapāśa Statue at Candi Jago

The Amoghapāśa Statue at Candi Jago ( Picture at Left above) Unlike the wealth of Buddhist temples found in Central Java, there are only a few major structures in East Java that can be definitely identified as Buddhist: Candi Jago, Candi Sumberawan, Candi Jabung, Candi Dadi, Candi Boyol-angu (Gayatri), and Candi Sanggrahan (Cungkup). For a few monuments (e.g., Candi Singasari and Candi Jawi), literary references or archaeological remains seem to indicate both a Hindu and a Buddhist presence at the site. And even at a temple like Candi Jago, for which, as A. J. Bernet Kempers writes, “the Buddhist character . . . is beyond doubt,” the bas-reliefs are of a distinctly mixed character. Jago temple (Indonesian: *Candi Jago*) is a 13th-century Hindu Buddhist temple from the Singhasari kingdom in East Java, Indonesia, located about 22 km from Malang. The Nagarakretagama written in 14th century mentioned this temple, as *Jajaghu* (English: "majestic"), as one of the temples visited by King Hayam Wuruk during his royal tour across East Java.

The Singhasari King Vishnuvardhana was deified as Shiva, in the form of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, here after his death in 1268. The temple's bas-reliefs depict scenes from the *Kunjarakarna*, *Parthayajna*, *Arjunavivaha*, and *Krishnayana*. The name of Adityawarman appears in 1343 on an image of the Bodhisattva Manjusri.



**The Amoghapāśa Statue at Candi Jago-** Candi Jago is located at Tumpang, some fourteen kilometres east of Malang in East Java.<sup>1</sup> It is commonly held that the shrine was commissioned in ad 1268 by King Kṛtanagara on the death of his father, Viṣṇuvardhana, with a date of completion around 1280 to coincide with funereal rites held twelve years after death. Its relatively small size and current state of deterioration possibly belie the scope of its importance. This monument came into existence during a dramatic period not only in Javanese history, but in the history of East and Southeast Asia. This was the time of Khubilai Khan, whose expansionist aims throughout Asia were known to include Java. However, with Kṛtanagara also keen to broaden his sovereignty well beyond Java, conflict was inevitable. Tension between China and Java may well have continued until the Yuan dynasty came to an end in 1368.

In Chapter 12, *The Tale of Sudhana and Manoharā on Candi Jago: An Interpretation of a Series of Narrative Bas-relief on a 13th-Century East Javanese Monument* author Kate O'Brien has discussed a scholarly and riveting interpretation of the tale of the Bodhisattva prince Sudhana and the kinnarī princess Manoharā.-a tale we will not get into, but this candi as well as 3 other Candi in a group (nearby)-Candi Sumberawan, Candi Jabung, Candi Dadi, Candi Boyolangu (Gayatri), and Candi Sanggrahan (Cungkup).