

In Champa, the dominant religion, except in the 9th-10th centuries, is Śaiva. Śiva is praised for his powers and victories; Buddha and Lokeśvara symbolized peace, benevolence and compassion. They all appear to be coexisting in great tolerance. Even the temples to Buddhist and Hindu deities follow the same architectural concepts, excluding all sectarianism.

In the 8th-9th centuries the official religion of the kings remained Śaiva, while Buddhism coexisted alongside the official religion. In the first Cham Buddhist inscription,² a governor erected 'two *vihāra* (Buddhist monastery) of Jina (Buddha)' and 'two temples of Śankara (Śiva)'. This 829-CE inscription from South Champa mentions shrines dedicated to the Buddha and to Śiva as though they formed equal parts of local belief.

A shift at the 9th century

When a new Cham lineage and its first 'king of the kings' Jaya Indravarman came to power in Indrapura (Quảng Nam province), for the first time Buddhism became the official religion. Under the reign of his father, Bhadravarman, a new form of Buddhism had already reached Central Champa. An inscription³ is proof of a rather new conception of Buddhism. Cham king Śrī Bhadravarman, in the late 9th century, authorized the foundation of a monastery dedicated to the *Bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara, here called Lokeśvara or Lokanātha. The *vihāra*, Pramudita-Lokeśvara, is a foundation made by king Bhadravarman's counsellor, the monk Nāgapuṣpa, and, in 902 CE, a later king, called Indravarman, erected a Lokeśvara statue along with the inscribed stela, which presents an actual, live act of meditation projected in a Cham monastery.

The inscription is presented as a philosophico-meditation. Three levels of meditation are indicated in three residences of the Buddhas Śākyamuni, Amitābha and Vairocana; these levels respectively represent the Void (*śūnyo*), the Great Void (*mahāśūnyo*) and Behind the Void (*śūnyātīto*). And the three Buddhas are the constructive forces or causes of three further emanations – three *Bodhisattvas*-Vajrapāṇi (also called Vajradhṛt), Lokeśvara and Vajrasattva. So, on the level of the Thunderbolt (*vajra*), Śākyamuni's teaching is transmitted to Vajrapāṇi. On the level of the Lotus (*padma*), Amitābha's teaching passes on to Avalokiteśvara. On the level of the Wheel (*cakra*), Vairocana's teaching is passed on to Vajrasattva. No sculptural

and architectural evidence has yet been found that illustrates the philosophical system of this inscription, but textual sources concerning Vajrasattva may help us get closer to recognizing the particular school of Buddhism practised in Central Champa at this time. In this *maṇḍala*, Vajrasattva is still a *Bodhisattva* and, according to the inscription, it is hard to say whether this kind of meditation scheme belongs to the Yogācāra school or to the beginning of the Vajrayāna in Champa. Moreover there are only three levels - three dimensions or manifestations of a Buddha. In the proper Vajrayāna there are five levels. It is therefore possible to say that the Cham *maṇḍala* on three levels belongs either to the Yogācāra school or to an early if not pre-Vajrayāna Buddhism. The temple in the inscription is dedicated to Avalokiteśvara, Being of Compassion.

The *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara is called Lokeśvara (or Lokanātha or Lokeśa) in Champa. As the representation of compassion, he is strongly in contrast with Śiva the violent/fierce. He can be honoured on his own or within a triad. Many monasteries were consecrated to him – each sanctuary bearing the name of the dedicator associated with that of Lokeśvara, for example Lakṣmīndra-Lokeśvara, Pramudita-Lokeśvara or Vṛddha-Lokeśvara. A large number of small bronze statues have been found. They are usually in the *varadamudrā*, i.e. the gesture of offering. A figurine of the *jina* Amitābha is usually in his chignon, conveying thus a mystical association. The prestige of Champa during the Indrapura period could have permitted a wide diffusion of the cult of Lokeśvara. He was probably introduced into Yunnan at this time. In the Đại Việt he takes the form of a Chinese-style female deity named Quan Âm. She was widely worshipped around the country. The *Bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara took on a greater importance when a specific *Sūtra* was written about him and included in the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra* or *The Sūtra of the Lotus Flower of the True Law*), whose chapter XXIV, in the Sanskrit version, became the base for many practices addressed to Avalokiteśvara.

Furthermore, one minister, member of the royal family along the female line, built a monastery⁴ to Vṛddha-lokeśvara, the compassionate Buddhist deity. The name of the deity combined Avalokiteśvara with the name of his grandmother, the *pu lyāng* Vṛddhakula. The temple is erected in the place of origin of the ancestor. This demonstrates how Vajrayāna