The iconography of Avalokiteśvara in Java
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Chapter 7

Avalokiteśvara at Candi Mendut and

Plaosan Lor in Central Java

> May I see face to face the Conquerors,
> Those Lords surrounded by the Sons of the Buddhas.
> And may I perform great reverence to them,
> Unwearied for all future eons.
> (*Bhadracarī*, ed. Osto 2010: 13)

7.1 Introduction

Stone images of Avalokiteśvara are not just found on Borobudur (Chapter 5) in Central Java, but also at two additional sites, Mendut and Plaosan Lor. Three impressive statues of the Bodhisattva can be seen at Candi Mendut and at the Plaosan complex, each found within the context of a triad.

The sole statue of Avalokiteśvara at Candi Mendut is found inside the temple and is the largest depiction of the Bodhisattva to have survived from Central Java. He sits on the Buddha's right-hand side and faces a second *bodhisattva* on the opposite side of the cella. Two further representations of Avalokiteśvara at Candi Mendut show him on the outside of the temple. These are both standing images in relief, one on the rear of the temple and the other to the right of the entrance as part of the group of eight *bodhisattva*s shown in pairs at each of the temple's corners.

At the twin temples of the Plaosan Lor complex, Avalokiteśvara faces the viewer entering the central temple chamber. He sits on the left at the back of the central chamber, while the second *bodhisattva* sits to the right. Between the two *bodhisattva*s is a pedestal for a now lost image, that must have once been seated, either cross-legged or with one leg resting on the other. It is likely this was a Buddha image, to complete the triad of a Buddha flanked by two *bodhisattva*s, as inside Mendut. At both Candi Mendut and Plaosan Lor, Avalokiteśvara has been given the same iconography: he sits in *lalitāsana*, displays the *varada-mudrā* and holds a lotus in his left hand.

7.2 The three Avalokiteśvara images at Candi Mendut: iconography and style

Avalokiteśvara in lalitāsana inside Candi Mendut

The large Avalokiteśvara statue sits in *lalitāsana* inside Candi Mendut and can easily be identified by the clearly defined Buddha figure in the *jaṭāmukuṭa* (Cat. no. 181). He is part of a triad that includes a Buddha in the centre. Scholars have used a variety of Buddhist

texts to identify the Buddha and the second *bodhisattva* in the triad. The Buddha has been identified as either the historical Buddha or the cosmic Buddha Vairocana. However, the representation of the *dharmacakra-mudrā* and the presence of a *cakra* between two deer on the pedestal seem more consistent with the former identification of Gautama Buddha. The wheel between the two deer represents Gautama Buddha at Sarnath, the site of the Buddha's first sermon. The figure to the Buddha's left has most often been identified as either Mañjuśrī or Vajrapāṇi.[115]

The Avalokiteśvara statue is more than two metres tall, with a throne of 65 cm (Bernet Kempers 1976: 226). Avalokiteśvara's right leg is supported by a lotus flower that is part of the base and his left leg rests on the throne. His right hand lies on his knee in *varada-mudrā*, while his left hand is held in front of his body, with no clearly visible attribute. Of note is a remnant of a stem attached to his left under-arm, indicating that the Bodhisattva once held a lotus. This attribute identification is consistent with Javanese iconography for the two-armed Avalokiteśvara, who commonly holds a lotus in his left hand.

Avalokiteśvara wears a bun-shaped *jaṭāmukuṭa*. At the front of the hairdo is a niche with the Buddha Amitābha. The Bodhisattva wears a tiara with three prominent prongs and two minor ones. Behind the Bodhisattva's head is a plain, leaf-shaped halo. Avalokiteśvara also wears a necklace, armbands, bracelets and anklets. The *yajñopavīta* is in the form of a sash with a tie by the left shoulder causing a small fold to fall towards his chest. He wears two belts, the belt above has a rectangular clasp, while the belt below has a circular clasp. The Bodhisattva sits on a double lotus, partly covered by fabric that hangs down on the right side, resting on a stepped base. The back of the throne has a horizontal beam ending on either side with a *makara* head. Below the *makara* heads are *vyālaka*s standing on elephants. This throne back piece is similar to the one supporting Avalokiteśvara in the second gallery of Borobudur, with *vyālaka*s facing outwards below a horizontal beam (Krom and van Erp 1920-1931: II 100, Cat. no. 121).

The use of this throne, with the iconographic features of *makaras*, *vyālaka*s and elephants, also occurs twice in the reliefs depicting the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, and once in the *Bhadracarī* reliefs on the fourth level of Borobudur (Krom and van Erp 1920-31: II 1 and 128, IV 50).[116] The first of these reliefs illustrates the Buddha at the beginning of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* narrative and the second Maitreya before the Maitreya narrative on the third level. The last use of the royal throne (Bautze-Picron 1992: 22) occurs towards the end of the *Bhadracarī* narrative reliefs. Most thrones on Borobudur show a figure seated on a throne or seat with a back piece. These back pieces commonly consist of only a horizontal top bar. At times, this is decorated with a *makara* form, either at each end of the bar or on top. The royal throne is also rare among the bronze images of Avalokiteśvara, with known examples being Cat. nos 66 and 176. The first of these is the closest in iconography to the statue found inside Candi Mendut, with the *lalitāsana* pose, the *varada-mudrā*, and the

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[115] Krom 1918, Moens 1921, Chandra 1980, Singhal 1991, Long 2009.

[116] The royal throne is also seen in two reliefs illustrating the *Lalitavistara* (Krom and van Erp 1920-31: I a 100, I a 113).

royal throne.

Standing four-armed Avalokiteśvara at the rear of Candi Mendut

On the outside of Candi Mendut, at the rear, is the second image: a four-armed depiction of Avalokiteśvara (Cat. no. 182). The damaged relief no longer shows Buddha Amitābha in the *jaṭāmukuṭa*. Avalokiteśvara stands in a frontal stance on a double lotus base resting on top of a fabric-covered base. On either side of the standing Bodhisattva are seated female figures. From the oval halo behind the Bodhisattva's head grows a tree, ending in a parasol.

Avalokiteśvara holds a rosary in his top right hand and the lower right hand is now missing. In his top left hand, he holds a book and the lower left hand is held in front of the body, holding a lotus. A lotus bud grows up from the base, with a gourd-shaped bottle resting on top. Despite the wear to the image, we see evidence of a fabric fold at the left shoulder indicating that the Bodhisattva was shown wearing a sacred thread. The damage has removed any evidence of a necklace, but armbands, bracelets and anklets are still visible. By comparing this standing figure's attributes to those defined by L.A. Waddell, Brandes identified the standing, four-armed *bodhisattva* at the rear side of Candi Mendut as a form of Avalokiteśvara named 'Mahākāruna' or the Great Pitier, described as being white in colour, standing and having four arms (Waddell 1894: 76, Brandes 1902: ccxxii).[117]

The two females sitting on either side of Avalokiteśvara cannot be identified as specific female *bodhisattva*s. One sits in *sattvaparyaṅkāsana*, the other in a near cross-legged position. Both have their hands in *añjali-mudrā*, suggesting that they are worshippers. The elaborately decorated thrones with lotus seats on which they are seated, and halos found behind their heads indicate that they are not human worshippers. They may be female *bodhisattva*s or divine beings of a generic type. This type of depiction of Avalokiteśvara with two females at his side can also be found in bronze and silver (Cat. nos 228 and 261). In both cases, the female figures are seated while Avalokiteśvara stands. However, there is a difference between the Candi Mendut relief and the second statuette with respect to the female figures' hand gestures and attributes. This includes the *varada-mudrā*, the lotus and the blue lily, but not the *añjali-mudrā*. It demonstrates that the two females in Cat. no. 261 are specific *bodhisattva*s.

The placement of Avalokiteśvara between two females can also be seen in the Buddhist caves of Maharashtra, such as in Cave 90 at Kanheri and in Cave 12 at Ellora. In these instances, when females flank Avalokiteśvara, we do not see the *añjali-mudrā*. The two standing females in the relief at Cave 90 at Kanheri do not display any specific hand gesture. The figure on Avalokiteśvara's right appears to hold the stem of a lotus in her right hand, while her left hand hangs by her side. The female on the left's right hand hangs by her side and her left hand is now missing.

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[117] "The first right hand is in *varada-mudrā* attitude on a lotus, and the second holds a pearl rosary. The first left hand holds a lotus flower, and the second a spyi-blugs (anointing vase)" (Waddell 1894: 76). As was mentioned in Chapter 4, Waddell's sources were not fully given, but he was one of the first scholars to utilise the term 'Mahākāruna' when describing Avalokiteśvara's iconography (Waddell 1894: 76).

In Cave 12 at Ellora, both females are seated. The one on Avalokiteśvara's right displays the *varada-mudrā* with her right hand. The attribute in her left hand is now missing. The female on the Bodhisattva's left has her left hand resting downwards near a vessel. Her attribute in her right hand is also missing. While Avalokiteśvara is depicted in a triad on the rear side of Candi Mendut, if viewed in combination with the two figures depicted on the two sides of the temple, we could also see him as a part of another triad. This triad includes the Buddhist deities, first identified as the two Tārās of Avalokiteśvara, Tārā and Bhṛkuṭī-tārā (Brandes 1902; Krom 1923, I: 309), and later identified as Cūnda and Prajñāpāramitā (Woodward 2004: 337). Of note, it has recently been demonstrated that Prajñāpāramitā's companion is not Cūnda, but rather Mahāpratisarā (Mevissen 1999: 107).

Both Prajñāpāramitā and Mahāpratisarā are personifications of texts, the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (Heart Sūtra) and the *Mahāpratisarādhāraṇī*. Considering that the connection of a figure, such as Prajñāpāramitā, with a text is symbolised by a book attribute, the four-armed Avalokiteśvara at the rear of the temple may also be connected with a specific text. Although the connecting text cannot be determined at present, there is a possibility that it could be a *dhāraṇī*.

The iconographic form of Avalokiteśvara with a book in his upper left hand can be seen in several bronzes. We find this iconographic form with four arms outside of Java as well, on Borneo, Sumatra and in Peninsular Thailand (Cat. nos 254-265, Table 32).[118] The four-armed standing Avalokiteśvara statuettes from Java show the upper right hand holding a rosary and the lower right hand displaying the *varada-mudrā*. The upper left hand holds a book and the lower left hand holds a lotus. On occasion, the term 'Mahākāruna Avalokiteśvara' is used to describe a standing, four-armed Avalokiteśvara. This is likely due to its introduction provided by Waddell (1894). Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter 4, the term 'Mahākāruna' is now often used for the sorrowful Avalokiteśvara, but describes Avalokiteśvara's greatest attribute, his compassion, and could apply to all his forms.

Standing Avalokiteśvara as part of the Aṣṭamahābodhisattva

A third image of Avalokiteśvara can possibly be found at one of the outside corners of Candi Mendut. It has been identified as representing either Avalokiteśvara or Gaganagañja (Cat. no. 183). Unfortunately, due to extensive damage blocks, no iconographic information can be determined.[119] The relief is part of a group of eight *bodhisattva*s, paired at each corner of the temple. The group, also known as Aṣṭamahābodhisattva, was previously discussed in Chapter 5 as depicted on Borobudur (Cat. no. 125). At Borobudur, all eight *bodhisattva*s are sitting instead of standing, as they are at Candi Mendut.

Krom identified the damaged relief at Candi Mendut as illustrating Avalokiteśvara; he also identified four other *bodhisattva*s in the group of eight. Maitreya was identified through

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[118] The bronze, four-armed Avalokiteśvaras usually show the attributes of rosary, book, *varada-mudrā* and lotus.
[119] Cat. no. 183, Krom 1918: 419-437, Long 2009: 149-152.

the *stūpa* in his *jaṭāmukuṭa* (Krom 1918: 428). The three other *bodhisattva*s, were also identified based on their attributes: Vajrapāṇi, who holds a *vajra*; Mañjuśrī, who holds an *utpala* with a book on top; and, Samantabhadra, who carries a flower with three buds and is depicted in several Borobudur reliefs carrying the same flower (Krom 1918: 429). In order to identify the remaining four *bodhisattvas*, Krom turned to the caves at Ellora, where he noted a similar set of eight images, arranged in two groups of four (1918: 430). This group of eight *bodhisattvas* consists of Maitreya, Gaganagañja, Samantabhadra, Vajrapāṇi, Mañjuśrī, Sarvanivaraṇaviṣkambhin, Kṣitigarbha and Khagarbha (1918: 430-431).

Krom applied the direction and pairing of the *bodhisattva*s given in the *Pañcakrama*[120] to his identification of the remaining four *bodhisattva*s on Candi Mendut, including the damaged relief (1918: 432). Krom identified the *bodhisattva* carrying a stem with three buds as Kṣitigarbha and the bearer of the blossoming lotus with a sword on to as Ākāśagarbha (1918: 432). Sarvanivaraṇaviṣkambhin is designated as the carrier of the lotus with a flaming attribute on top (1918: 434) and finally, the damaged relief was recognised as Avalokiteśvara, the fourth *bodhisattva* in the group (1918: 432).

In 1921, only a few years after Krom's declaration, J.L. Moens published an article, "De Tjandi Mendut". Moens disagreed with Krom's identification of the eight *bodhisattva*s. As the temple faces northwest, Krom had to turn the directional orientation recommended in the *Pañcakrama* by 45 degrees in order to get the directions from the *Pañcakrama* to fit with his identification of the *bodhisattva*s (Moens 1921: 592). Moens noted that, if the same parameters of orienting the direction up to 45 degrees were applied to other Buddhist texts, then other identifications of the *bodhisattva*s would be possible (1921: 592). Moens also criticised Krom's use of the *Pañcakrama* as a source text for Candi Mendut, since there is no evidence that this text was used in the designing of the temple (1921: 592).

Moens employed the work of Brian Hodgson to show Avalokiteśvara's central role in the group comprised of eight other *bodhisattvas* (1874: 95). With Avalokiteśvara in the central position, Gaganagañja fills Avalokiteśvara's role in the group of eight in the damaged relief (Moens 1921: 587).[121] For Moens, evidence of Avalokiteśvara's central role is supported by the image on the rear side of the temple, which shows the four-armed Avalokiteśvara described above (Cat. no. 182).

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[120] Nāgārjuna is considered as the author of the *Pañcakrama*, a tantric yoga commentary (Granoff 1968-69: 93).

[121] Moens explored the idea that the empty niches inside the temple cella once held the images of the Jina Buddhas (Moens 1921: 534). Moens assumed that there must have been nine images inside the temple cella, which means that besides the remaining three large statues, the six empty niches once held images as well (1921: 531). He identified the triad inside the cella as Vairocana, Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi by alluding to the *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan* (Moens 1921: 534).

This group of eight *bodhisattva*s is at times referred to as a *maṇḍala* and is described in the *Aṣṭamaṇḍalaka-sūtra*, or the *Sutra of the Mandala of the Eight Great Bodhisattvas*.[122] The *sūtra* describes how *mantra*s and *maṇḍala*s focusing on the group of eight *bodhisattva*s can secure the "fulfilment of one's wishes, absolution from crime, and protections from other ills" (Granoff 1968-69: 92).[123] Clearly, groups of eight *bodhisattva*s exist according to various Buddhist texts, which in turn has led to different identifications of the figures on the outside of Candi Mendut. Nevertheless, four of the *bodhisattva*s on Candi Mendut have been identified based on their iconographic features. Considering that these reliefs illustrate the group of eight *bodhisattva*s, Avalokiteśvara may be expected to have been present.

Like Moens, Lokesh Chandra connected Candi Mendut with a text known to have been present in Indonesia, the *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan* (1980: 313). He also found that the iconographic programme at Candi Mendut corresponded to the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala* (1980: 315). There are corresponding features between the two, such as the presence of a group of eight *bodhisattva*s. Based on the use of the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala*, Chandra identified its main focus as Vairocana, the large Buddha statue inside the temple, along with the second Bodhisattva in the cella triad as Vajrapāṇi (Chandra 1980: 315). Regarding the damaged *bodhisattva* in the group of eight, Chandra did not identify him as Avalokiteśvara, but referenced Krom's work (Krom 1918: 419-437, Chandra 1980: 315).

Another researcher to connect Candi Mendut to the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala* is Sudarshana Devi Singhal. In "Candi Mendut and the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*" she further explored Chandra's approach of applying the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala* in order to interpret Candi Mendut. Singhal compared the entire iconographic programme, i.e. the reliefs on the outside and the statues in the cella, with the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala* (Singhal 1991: 373). She also identified the Buddha inside the cella as Vairocana and the second Bodhisattva as Vajrapāṇi, just as Moens and Chandra had in their respective publications (Moens 1921: 534, Chandra 1980: 315, Singhal 1991: 378). The identification of the second Bodhisattva is based on the manner in which he holds his right hand, which could have held a *vajra* (Singhal 1991: 379). Once Vajrapāṇi was recognised, Singhal suggests that the Buddha inside the temple can be identified as the cosmic Buddha Vairocana based on the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala* (Singhal 1991: 379). Unfortunately, there is no way to determine if the second Bodhisattva once held a *vajra*. Singhal identified Avalokiteśvara at the back of the temple as Mahākāruṇika Avalokiteśvara, just as Brandes did in his 1902 article, based on the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala* (Singhal 1991: 378, 380).

Bautze-Picron noted that the iconographic programme of Candi Mendut was similar to those found in Caves 11 and 12 at Ellora, just as Krom had identified (Krom 1918: 430, Bautze-Picron 1997: 29). Inside Candi Mendut, the triad often seen at the Buddhist caves of Maharashtra, is depicted. It shows the Buddha flanked by Vajrapāṇi and Avalokiteśvara (Bautze-Picron 1997: 29). Unlike the figures found in the Buddhist caves, all figures in the

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[122] Granoff 1968-69: 88, Lee and Leidy 2013: 167.
[123] This text was translated into Chinese by Amoghavajra between 746-771 CE (Granoff 1968-69: 88).

Candi Mendut triad are seated. The eight *bodhisattva*s are another iconographic group frequently depicted in the Buddhist caves and in Bihar. Bautze-Picron considered the organisation of the eight *bodhisattva*s on the outside of Candi Mendut to follow that of a Buddhist text, close to *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhisūtra*, but not the actual text itself (1997: 29). The actual text is yet to be identified. Considering the direction of four of the *bodhisattva*s Maitreya (northeast), Samantabhadra (southeast), Mañjuśrī (southwest) and Avalokiteśvara (northwest), Bautze-Picron finds this feature adheres more closely to the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala* (1997: 29).

As noted above, parts of the iconographic programme at Candi Mendut fit with the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala*, but there are also elements that do not. In the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala*, the *bodhisattva*s surround the central five figures in two different circles, each *bodhisattva* facing a cardinal direction (Bautze-Picron 1997: 47). At Candi Mendut the *bodhisattva*s are grouped together, with two standing at each corner. Despite the importance of the *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan* and its possible dating back to the tenth century, we have no evidence that the text was known at the time of the construction of Candi Mendut, although elements of the text are older.[124] Klokke also pointed out that

1. the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala* contains more deities than those depicted at Candi Mendut (among them, the five Tathāgatas at the centre of the *maṇḍala*),
2. the eight *bodhisattva*s are arranged differently in the *maṇḍala*, and
3. there is no evidence existing in Java that this particular *maṇḍala* was known in Java at the time (1993: 130-131). According to the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala*, Avalokiteśvara would be joined by Tārā and Bhṛkuṭī, but at Candi Mendut he is flanked instead by two Buddhist deities who each represent a text, Prajñāpāramitā and Mahāpratisarā.

Considering the above-mentioned factors, it appears that any connection to the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala* remains unclear. On the outside of Candi Mendut, we see representations of the *Aṣṭamaṇḍalaka-sūtra*, the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (Heart Sūtra) and the *Mahāpratisarādhāraṇī*, i.e. *sūtra*s and a *dhāraṇī*, rather than a *maṇḍala*. However, the similarities in the iconographic programme at Candi Mendut and the Ellora caves are interesting. Both have been explored by both Krom (1918) and Bautze-Picron (1997), among various scholars.

The images of Candi Mendut show that Avalokiteśvara had become part of a variety of triads, not only in triads in association with Buddha as the focus (inside the temple), but also in triads with Avalokiteśvara as the focus (rear of the temple). Thus far, I have identified two metal statuettes that show Avalokiteśvara at the centre of a triad (Cat. nos

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[124] A more recent scholarly publication on Candi Mendut was published in 2009 by Mark Long. In it Long gives the history of the temple from its (re-)discovery to its renovation, giving the reader a further layer of information regarding the temple's place in history (2009: xxiii-xli). Long also did a great service to other researchers studying Candi Mendut by, at times, translating the work of previous scholars and adding good quality photographs, thus making the previous research more accessible.

228 and 261) and a further eight triads in bronze that show Avalokiteśvara as an attendant (Cat. nos 47, 67, 83, 144-145, 151, 173, 245). No groups of the eight *bodhisattva*s have been found depicted in metal. Although Avalokiteśvara may have been part of the bronze *maṇḍala*s, such as those found in Surocolo in Central Java (Lunsingh Scheurleer and Klokke 1988: 32) as well as in Nganjuk and Ponorogo in East Java. Unfortunately, no surviving images of Avalokiteśvara can be identified as having belonged to these groups. Considering the identification of Avalokiteśvara in the damaged relief found on the temple exterior at Candi Mendut, surviving images from Central Java certainly indicate that images of Avalokiteśvara were an expected part of either triads or larger groups of *bodhisattva*s. Therefore, it is likely that Avalokiteśvara was also part of the group of eight *bodhisattva*s found on the exterior corners of Candi Mendut. This suggests that Krom's identification was the most plausible.

7.3 Avalokiteśvaras at the Plaosan Lor complex: iconography and style

The Plaosan Lor complex is considered to have been built after Candi Mendut. It has been dated to 825-850 CE based on inscriptions found at the site (De Casparis 1958: 33). Plaosan Lor[125] is located outside the city of Yogyakarta, near Prambanan, 2.5 km northeast of Candi Lara Jonggrang, near the Dengok River. It consists of two twin temple buildings, a platform, and several smaller shrines.[126] Plaosan Kidul is a nearby complex further down the road. The two seem to have formed part of one larger complex. There are no *bodhisattva* images at Plaosan Kidul. At the Plaosan Lor complex, on the other hand, six *bodhisattva*s sit inside each of the twin temple buildings in three separate cellas. There is little difficulty identifying Avalokiteśvara in the southern temple, due to the presence of the Buddha Amitābha in his *jaṭāmukuṭa* (Cat. no. 184). He is the *bodhisattva* seated to the left on the stone platform in the central chamber. As the groupings of the *bodhisattva*s are the same in both temples, the statue in the central cella in the northern temple can also be identified as Avalokiteśvara, despite its missing head (Cat. no. 185).

Avalokiteśvara in the southern temple

The two-armed Avalokiteśvara in the southern temple sits in *lalitāsana* with his right foot resting on a lotus, which is part of the base (Cat. no. 184). Despite the restoration, some residual damage to the statue remains. The general outline of the *jaṭāmukuṭa* is difficult to

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[125] Plaosan Lor and its layout was described by IJzerman in his *Grens der residentie's Soerakarta en Djogdjakarta* (1891). He did not identify the *bodhisattva* figures that reside within the two temples, but compared the images at Plaosan Lor with those found at Ellora, especially the three-storey cave, Tin Thal, where the Buddha displays the *dhyāna-mudrā* with Avalokiteśvara on his right side (1891: 100). He described the statues that were found on the platform between the two temples at the Plaosan complex and there he identified Vajrapāṇi and Avalokiteśvara (1891: 105). In an appendix to the book IJzerman included a table with the visual information regarding the *bodhisattva* images at the Plaosan Lor complex, including where an image was found, how the hands are shown and the figure's pose, as well as the form of the lotus (1891: 125-127).

[126] A number of inscriptions have been found at the complex. These indicate that the smaller shrines were commissioned by dignitaries, while the large temple structures were commissioned by the king (De Casparis 1958: 3 and 18).

determine, but the Buddha Amitābha at the front is clearly visible. The *prabhāmaṇḍala* has a rim decorated with a floral pattern and alongside the rim flames point to the top of the back piece. Avalokiteśvara wears two necklaces. The necklace closer to the neck is simpler than the more elaborate one below. He also wears two sets of armbands and one set of bracelets. The Bodhisattva has two *yajñopavītas*, one in a sash form which crosses the body to the waist. The second is a braided rope falling straight down from the left shoulder to lie over the left leg. Avalokiteśvara wears a floral waist belt on top of the two *yajñopavītas*. Part of Avalokiteśvara's right arm is missing, but the hand is clearly visible and rests on the right leg in *varada-mudrā*. The left hand has broken off, but a stem remains, following the arm to the *prabhāmaṇḍala*, becoming part of the back piece and finishing in a blooming lotus with a book on top.

The Bodhisattva wears a long plain lower garment. Below the braided belt, with a floral clasp, sits a second belt with a floral pattern and sashes lie across the thighs. Avalokiteśvara sits on a double lotus throne resting on a square base.

Avalokiteśvara in the northern temple

In the northern twin temple building, Avalokiteśvara is depicted in the same position (Cat. no. 185). The general iconographic features are the same, such as the mode of sitting, the number of arms, the hand gestures and attributes, but the Bodhisattva's head is no longer in place. There are a few decorative differences between the two Avalokiteśvara statues. The necklaces of the two Avalokiteśvaras are different from each other. The Avalokiteśvara inside the northern temple wears a *yajñopavīta*, but over the chest belt, whereas in the first temple, the chest belt was worn over the sacred thread. In both cases, Avalokiteśvara wears a double sacred thread. In the northern temple sculpture the chest belt is worn over the braided *yajñopavīta*. In the southern temple statue, the braided *yajñopavīta* falls over the left leg, but in the northern image the braided *yajñopavīta* falls over the lap of the Bodhisattva and does not touch the left leg. The lotus carried by each of the two Avalokiteśvaras is similar. The blooming lotus flower supports a book. Thus, a few stylistic differences distinguish the two Avalokiteśvaras at the Plaosan complex, but there is no iconographic variance between them.

Previous studies of Plaosan Lor

Krom described the statues found at the Plaosan complex in his *Inleiding tot de Hindoe-Javaansche kunst* (1923 II: 7-9). He started with the northern temple and there identified Maitreya through the *stūpa* in his *jaṭāmukuṭa* (1923 II: 9). Next to him sits a *bodhisattva* carrying a flower with three buds. Krom used his previous study on Candi Mendut to identify this figure as either Samantabhadra or possibly Kṣitigarbha (1923 II: 10). He identified Avalokiteśvara in the next central cella because of the Buddha Amitābha in the *jaṭāmukuṭa* and the lotus attribute (1923 II: 10). Next to him, Krom recognised Vajrapāṇi by the Bodhisattva's connection to Avalokiteśvara, as seen in the Borobudur reliefs, and because of the *vajra* resting on the flower (1923 II: 10). In the third cella, to the right from the entrance, we find a *bodhisattva* carrying an *utpala* with flames on top.

He was identified as Sarvanivaraṇaviṣkambhin, based on a comparison with the iconography at Candi Mendut. Next to him in the cella sits Mañjuśrī, who can be identified by his attribute, an *utpala* with a book on top (Krom 1923 II: 10).

The Plaosan Lor complex has not been as intensively studied as the other two monuments where we can find *in situ* images of Avalokiteśvara, Candi Mendut and Borobudur. J.L. Moens identified eight *bodhisattva*s in each of the twin temples at Plaosan Lor (1921: 584). Moens hypothesised that the six *bodhisattva* statues inside the temples were part of the group of eight *bodhisattva*s, where the missing two would then sit in the antechamber niches (1921: 589-600). These two statues consist of Maitreya and Mañjuśrī. C. Bautze-Picron countered this hypothesis many years later as there cannot be two depictions of the same *bodhisattva* in the Aṣṭamahābodhisattva (1997: 38, footnote 73), or it would necessitate re-identifying two of the *bodhisattva* statues within the temple. Bautze-Picron discussed Candi Plaosan in a section of her article on the group of eight *bodhisattva*s, in which she noted that the iconographic programme of the Plaosan Lor complex fitted well with the iconographic programme at the Ellora cave complex, particularly that of the guardians (Maitreya and Mañjuśrī) in Cave 12 (1997: 30). There are also similarities with the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala*, although this has eight separate *bodhisattva*s, instead of doubling two (1997: 30).

Like earlier scholars, she identified Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi in the central cella in the northern and southern temple, based on the presence of the Buddha Amitābha in Avalokiteśvara's *jaṭāmukuṭa* and the fact that Vajrapāṇi is often depicted together with Avalokiteśvara (Bautze-Picron 1997: 30). In the cella to the left of the entrance, in both the temples, she identified the *bodhisattva*s the same as Krom, but gave a firm identification of Samantabhadra based on his attribute of a flower with three buds (Bautze-Picron 1997: 30). In the third cella, to the right of the entrance, Bautze-Picron identified Mañjuśrī and Ākāśagarbha. The identification of these *bodhisattva*s was made by comparing Plaosan's iconographic programme with that found at Ellora, as well as on the basis of Mañjuśrī's attribute (Bautze-Picron 1997: 30). Krom, on the other hand, had previously identified Mañjuśrī and Sarvanivaraṇaviṣkambhin (Krom 1923 II: 10).

Aṣṭamahābodhisattva have been depicted in various configurations in Buddhist art. In the Buddhist caves in Maharashtra, we see them divided into two groups of four; shown in a line on either side of the Buddha; in two squares with two *bodhisattva*s above a lower two in each square; in a line of all eight together; and in a square that depicts the eight *bodhisattva*s around a central Buddha. On the Thai-Malay Peninsula, they are stamped into clay in a ring pattern, with the Buddha in the centre, and at Candi Mendut we see two at each corner of the outside of the temple. In all of these cases, there are eight *bodhisattva*s on display. However, at the Plaosan Lor complex there are only six.

If these six *bodhisattva*s are to be interpreted as the Aṣṭamahābodhisattva, there are two missing *bodhisattva*s, namely Sarvanivaraṇaviṣkambhin and Kṣitigarbha. Bautze-Picron suggests that these two *bodhisattva*s may have played a secondary role within this pantheon locally, as seen in one of the reliefs at Borobudur (1997: 30, Krom and van Erp 1920-

1931: IV 3). Bautze-Picron notes that Plaosan Lor's iconographic programme may combine elements of the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala*, but that the secondary positions of Sarvanivaraṇaviṣkambhin and Kṣitigarbha show that they have been pushed outwards from their original place in the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala* away from the centre (Bautze-Picron 1997: 30).

Apart from the six *bodhisattva*s that have been identified inside the three cellas inside the northern and southern temples, there were a further two *bodhisattva*s on either side of the entrance porch, Mañjuśrī and Maitreya. While this is an unusual pairing in Javanese Buddhist art, Bautze-Picron identifies the same guardian pair at Cave 12 at Ellora as well as at Ratnagiri (1997: 30). In Java, we see instead the combination of Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara, Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi or Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī. As both Mañjuśrī and Maitreya are found twice within the Plaosan Lor pantheon, it is possible that the Aṣṭamahābodhisattva group was not intended to be represented (Bautze-Picron 1997: 30). However, these porch statues are smaller than those inside the temple cellas, fit well within the niches and were likely intended for that space. However, this may simply be a matter of the stone statues recovered at the site fitting the placement and as more excavations and reconstruction work is performed, the figures in the guardian niches may change.

This grouping of three *bodhisattva* pairs, and the guardian pair at the entrance may have been a local iconographic development. It rather suggests three triads consisting of two *bodhisattva*s and a Buddha each, rather than a group of six *bodhisattva*s. The fact that the Buddhas are now missing may have led to a focus on the six *bodhisattva*s as forming a group.

Miksic et al. did not address the Aṣṭamahābodhisattva group in an article from 2001, but they did address the idea of Plaosan Lor being a *maṇḍala*. According to Miksic et al., the Plaosan complex does not have a concentric layout and can therefore not be a *maṇḍala* although they noted similarities with a *maṇḍala* at the Tôji monastery in Kyoto, Japan (Miksic et al. 2001: 328). There, 21 images were organised into three groups, not in a concentric layout, but rather in a linear east-west orientation (Miksic et al. 2001: 328). The Tôji *maṇḍala* was completed in 839 CE (Miksic et al. 2001: 328), within the same time period as the Plaosan complex was constructed. Even though this *maṇḍala* has three groups of images, this is where the similarity with Plaosan Lor ends, as the Tôji *maṇḍala* has a central image of the Vairocana Buddha surrounded by four deities (Miksic et al 2001: 328).

We need to consider the missing component of each triad in each cella viz., the central figure who was most likely a Buddha. There remains a lotus seat between each *bodhisattva* pair that is slightly higher than the two flanking seats. Taking into account the amount of space between the two *bodhisattva*s, it is possible that the central figure was depicted as seated. Since there are no small lotus pedestals below for the feet, as in the case of a *bhadrāsana* Buddha, the Buddha images were likely seated in *padmāsana* or *sattvaparyaṅkāsana* (although not as common for Buddhas in Java as for Avalokiteśvara). Krom noted that the pattern of the double lotus seat indicated that the Buddha would have

been seated in an "Indian manner", i.e. *padmāsana* (1923 II: 9). Therefore, I suggest that the Plaosan Lor temples illustrate three triads, with the two spaces at the entrance representing guardians.

The idea or symbolism of three is a major tenet of Buddhism, which we see in the Three Jewels and also in triads. The triad of a Buddha in the centre, flanked by two *bodhisattva*s was a repeated feature in Central Java. We saw this repeatedly in Chapter 5 in the examination of the reliefs on the fourth level of Borobudur illustrating the *Bhadracarī*, where the sculptors often depicted the Buddha flanked by two *bodhisattva*s. Yet, the use of triads in three separate cellas only occurs at Plaosan Lor. While we do not have a Buddhist text that we can refer to for an explanation of this triple triad, we have the *Bhadracarī*, with its reference to Buddhas (Conquerors) surrounded by *bodhisattva*s (Sons of the Buddhas).

> May I see face to face the Conquerors,
> Those Lords surrounded by the Sons of the Buddhas.
> And may I perform great reverence to them,
> Unwearied for all future eons
> (*Bhadracarī*, ed. Osto 2010: 13).

Apart from portraying the Buddhas as surrounded by Bodhisattvas the *Bhadracarī* also describes the Buddhas as existing in "all three times" (*Bhadracarī*, ed. Osto 2010: 9), i.e. the past, present and future.

> Filled with faith, I honor with my body, speech and mind
> All the Lions among Men without exception
> Who abide in all three times,
> In the world with its ten directions
> (*Bhadracarī*, ed. Osto 2010: 9).

By creating three rooms with a Buddha flanked by *bodhisattva*s in each, representing the past, present and future, the architects of the Plaosan complex attempted to illustrate that the Buddha exists continuously in the three times outside our linear time.

7.4 Other statues that may have been within a temple setting

Not all large depictions of Avalokiteśvara have been found in a temple or monument setting. Remnants of large metal Avalokiteśvara statues have been found in Central Java, which were likely used in a temple building. One is a silver-coated, standing Avalokiteśvara, now in the Museum Nasional Indonesia in Jakarta (Cat. no. 259). It was found at Tekaran in Wonogiri, an area to the east of Yogyakarta and south of Surakarta. It currently has a height of 98 cm, but the legs are broken at the knees. Two of the figure's arms have been recovered and the silver-coated Avalokiteśvara holds a book in his upper

left hand and displays the *varada-mudrā* with his lower right hand. The statue is decorated with three necklaces, but only has one armband.

The Prambanan complex museum contains three notable free-standing stone statues (Cat. nos 190-192). Two of these statues lack the Buddha Amitābha figure in the *jaṭāmukuṭa*, but the first one shows some remnants of him (Cat. no. 190) and the second statue is missing part of its head (Cat. no. 191). I identify the first stone statue as Avalokiteśvara based on his pose, as well as the remains of the *jaṭāmukuṭa*. The second statue is identified as Avalokiteśvara by comparing this stone statue to the four stone Avalokiteśvaras found at the Plaosan Lor complex. The Bodhisattva carries a lotus with a book resting on the flower, the attribute carried by Avalokiteśvara in each of the Plaosan Lor statues. The third stone statue at the Prambanan museum can easily be identified as Avalokiteśvara, due to the Buddha figure in his *jaṭāmukuṭa*. In this image, which does not originate from the Prambanan complex, Avalokiteśvara holds a lotus and displays the *varada-mudrā*.

A bronze head of Avalokiteśvara is also on display at the Prambanan complex museum. It has a height of at least 20 cm, indicating that the original statue was probably placed in a temple context (Cat. no. 193). Many of the approximately 200 secondary shrines at Candi Sewu have three pedestals, suggesting that triads were a common depiction. It may have been part of one of the triads at Candi Sewu or its minor chapels. A second head, this one in stone, now at the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden, can be identified as Avalokiteśvara based on the Buddha Amitābha in the *jaṭāmukuṭa* (Cat. no. 194). The head alone has a height of 39 cm, suggesting that the original statue must have been at least one metre tall, when seated, and certainly large enough to have been displayed in a temple such as Candi Sewu, in the neighbourhood of which it was found.

A smaller statue, with a height of 34 cm, but still large enough to have been displayed in a temple building, is an impressive ten-armed, standing Avalokiteśvara now on display at the Musée national des arts asiatiques - Guimet in Paris (Cat. no. 198). It could have been in a smaller cella, possibly located in one of the additional chapels found around larger temples. A further two large, free-standing, stone Avalokiteśvara statues can be seen at the Sonobudoyo Museum in Yogyakarta (Cat. nos 188 and 189). Both show the Bodhisattva seated in *sattvaparyaṅkāsana*.

These larger statues show that Avalokiteśvara images were not just placed at Candi Mendut and at the Plaosan complex. They may have been part of other Buddhist temples, such as Candi Sewu, or the smaller shrines. However, even after adding these statues to the known *in situ* images, there is still a clear discrepancy between the large number of smaller images in bronze and the relatively modest number of larger ones, mostly in stone, made for worship in temples.

7.5 The importance of triads

A solitary Avalokiteśvara image speaks to a focus on the individual Bodhisattva, but a bronze triad carries a more extensive narrative. There are at least eight bronze triads found in Java with the Buddha as the central figure flanked by Avalokiteśvara and a second *bodhisattva* (Cat. nos 47, 67, 83, 144-145, 151, 173 and 245). A triad that shows some iconographic similarity with the group of statues inside Candi Mendut, can now be seen at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (Cat. no. 67). Just as inside Candi Mendut, Avalokiteśvara sits in *lalitāsana* and the Buddha in *bhadrāsana*. The second *bodhisattva* sits in a pose without his left leg resting on the seat as in *lalitāsana*. Instead, the *bodhisattva*'s left foot rests on a separate lotus emerging from the base. What makes him similar to the second *bodhisattva* statue inside Candi Mendut is the manner in which he holds his right hand, in front of the chest. Just as in Candi Mendut, however, the likely attribute, a *vajra*, is now missing. Another difference is the Buddha's hand gesture. At Mendut, Buddha displays the *dharmacakra-mudrā*, while in the bronze triad he shows the *vitarka-mudrā*.

A second bronze triad showing some iconographic similarity with the triad inside Candi Mendut, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Cat. no. 83). The main difference between this triad and the in stone is that Avalokiteśvara is depicted with four arms. His attributes and hand gesture are similar to those seen on the rear of Candi Mendut. This bronze Avalokiteśvara holds a rosary in his upper right hand and displays the *varada-mudrā* with his lower right hand. He holds a book in his upper left hand and a lotus in his lower left hand. Both bronze *bodhisattva*s sit in *lalitāsana*. In this triad, we see a marked difference between how Avalokiteśvara and other *bodhisattva*s are depicted. Avalokiteśvara is the only male *bodhisattva* who is seen with four, or more, arms. This iconographic development can be seen in the ascetic Avalokiteśvaras from Insular Southeast Asia and continues to be a feature in Javanese Buddhist art.

Considering that Avalokiteśvara is the only male *bodhisattva* to be shown with four arms (or more), the choice of the number of arms may be a textual or an iconographic development. There is a strong iconographic similarity in how both Śiva and Avalokiteśvara are depicted. In texts, such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, Avalokiteśvara is described as being able to take on the form of Śiva or Viṣṇu, both of whom are depicted with four arms.[127] The use of the four arms may have initially illustrated the ability to take on the form of Hindu gods and with time it became part of Avalokiteśvara's iconography.

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[127] "…to those who are to be converted by Īśvara, he preaches the law in the shape of Īśvara" (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, ed. Kern 1884: 411). Studholme discusses Avalokiteśvara's role as Īśvara, which has been used to refer to both Viṣṇu and Śiva (2002:37). According to Studholme, the *Kāraṇḍavyūha-sūtra* "presents Avalokiteśvara as an Īśvara in the mould of two *purāṇic* deities, but particularly of Śiva" (2002:59).
"To those who are to be converted by Cakravartin, he shows the law after assuming the shape of a Cakravartin" (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, ed. Kern 1884:411). Kern notes that the term 'Cakravartin' is ambiguous as it may refer to Viṣṇu, but also "an emperor" (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, ed. 1884: 411, note 1).

Two other triads, one in silver and the other in bronze (Cat. nos 228 and 261) illustrate a standing Avalokiteśvara in the centre, with a female figure sitting on either side, just as we saw on the rear wall of Candi Mendut. Both metal statuettes illustrate stylistic features that place them in the Central Javanese period. Specifically, the statuette now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York (Cat. no. 261), shows a standing Avalokiteśvara with four arms and the same attributes and hand gesture as on the rear of Candi Mendut. However, the depiction of the two female figures is different. In the triad they each display the *varada-mudrā* and hold a floral attribute, while in the Candi Mendut relief they hold their hands in *añjali-mudrā*. The halo, behind each of the three bronze figures' heads, has s-shaped foliage along the rim, as we saw for the group of eleven *sattvaparyaṅkāsana* Avalokiteśvaras in Chapter 6. The halos have a similar silhouette as those behind the heads of the statues inside Candi Mendut.

The iconography of the triads at Plaosan Lor, with the Buddha seated in *padmāsana* and the two *bodhisattva*s in *lalitāsana* is also represented in bronze. A bronze triad, initially found at Kediri in East Java but now shown in the Museum Nasional Indonesia in Jakarta, shows the Buddha seated in *padmāsana*, while Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi sit in *lalitāsana* (Cat. no.47). While the Kediri bronze and the statues inside the central cella of Plaosan Lor are similar iconographically, there are many stylistic differences. This includes the style of the bronze triad's back pieces, which have a pearl-style rim, discussed in Chapter 3, and a parasol directly above the back piece, showing a style relating to the bronze images from Northeast India and Bangladesh. There are no depictions in bronze of the other two triads inside the Plaosan Lor temples, with either Maitreya and Samantabhadra or Mañjuśrī and Ākāśagarbha.

Although these bronze and silver triads show both stylistic and iconographic similarities with the triads depicted in stone at Candi Mendut and Plaosan Lor, I do not consider these triads to be copies of the stone triads. I suggest that they are the result of a Javanese knowledge of iconography and style, shared by those working in stone and bronze.

In a temple, any triad is part of a larger narrative, such as at Candi Mendut where there is the triad inside the temple, as well as a second triad with Avalokiteśvara at the centre as well as the Aṣṭamahābodhisattva. Yet, the bronze triads now appear more singular, without a larger context. Both Plaosan Lor and Candi Sewu have smaller shrines connected with the larger temples, and I propose that this may be where some of the bronze triads were on display. These shrines may have contained images that emulated the imagery on the larger temples. In one of the Candi Sewu shrines (Pl. 3I), evidence of a triad remains in the form of three frames for separate images. Here we see three lotuses grow up out of the base and on them rest three separate palaces, which could have contained smaller bronze figures together forming a triad. Parts of a Buddha statue also remain in another one of the shrines (Pl. 3J). We can see the Buddha sitting in *padmāsana*, with his right hand in *bhūmisparśa-mudrā* and his left hand in his lap, similar to the iconography seen in Cat. no. 47.

The same bronze triad shows a similar type of seat growing out of a central stem (Cat. no. 47, Pl. 3I). This bronze image may have been produced in order to emulate the

stone design of three separate seats growing from a lotus and could have been displayed in connection with one of the shrines. The *Amitāyurdhyānasūtra* describes a comparable situation in which Avalokiteśvara sits inside a lotus in Sukhāvatī.

> Under every tree there are also three lotus-flowers. On every lotus-flower there is an image, either of Buddha or of a Bodhisattva… When this perception has been gained, the devotee should hear the excellent Law
> (*Amitāyurdhyānasūtra*, trans. Takakusu 1965: 179).

We must note that there is no textual evidence that this *sūtra* was known in Java during the late eighth and ninth century CE. Yet, considering the evidence of the bronze triad and the three frames for a triad in a shrine at Candi Sewu, this *sūtra*, or a similar text, may have been the sculptors' inspiration to design lotus seats emerging from stems.

Inside this Candi Sewu shrine, there are a further two lotus plants on the side walls, therefore, there would once have been three triads on display inside the small shrine, just as at Plaosan Lor. While the iconographic combination of three triads, with six *bodhisattva*s does not appear to have been used outside of Java, it was likely used more than just at the Plaosan Lor complex.

7.6 Comparison with South Asian iconography

It is difficult to determine the origin of the iconography that we see at Candi Mendut and Plaosan Lor. My comparison with imagery from South Asia is not exhaustive, but rather an attempt to see the possible cultural exchange with Java. By the end of the seventh century CE there was, as suggested in Chapter 2, a cultural connection between Maharashtra and Java. This appears either to have existed until Candi Mendut was built or it was resumed during that time for we also see such connections as concerns the triad inside the temple, in the triad at the rear of the temple as well as in the group of eight *bodhisattva*s, the Aṣṭamahābodhisattva, with the Buddhist cave complexes in Maharashtra, particularly with Ellora Cave 12.

The triad of the Buddha, Avalokiteśvara and a second *bodhisattva* can also be found in Odisha, Bihar, West Bengal and Bangladesh from the seventh century onwards (Huntington and Bangdel 2003: 27). A triad as seen on the rear of Candi Mendut with the standing Avalokiteśvara at its centre, is not only encountered in Maharashtra, but in Bangladesh as well. However, I did not come across the combination of three triads showing six *bodhisattva*s as found at the Plaosan Lor complex in any other place.

The Aṣṭamahābodhisattva group is not only found in the cave complexes of Maharashtra, but also at Nalanda in Bihar, Mainamati in Bangladesh and Ratnagiri in Odisha (Bautze-Picron 1997: 25-27). This Buddhist iconographic group made its appearance during the eighth century CE and may be a development of generic figures that were depicted as

listening to the Buddha in Gandhara (Bautze-Picron 1997: 31).[128] The group of eight *bodhisattva*s is not depicted in isolation, but rather with a Buddha as the group's focus, as seen in the Ellora caves (Malandra 1993: fig. 4.5). While the eight *bodhisattvas*' directionality has been given in Buddhist texts, such as the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhisūtra* or the *Aṣṭamahābodhisattvamaṇḍalasūtra*, this information does not appear to have been followed specifically in the art depicting the Aṣṭamahābodhisattva but has certainly inspired the depictions (Bautze-Picron 1997: 32).

Peter Skilling, who included the group of eight *bodhisattva*s in his discussion on circulation of ritual, theorised that this iconographic group spread to the Thai-Malay Peninsula from eastern India, before reaching the rest of Southeast Asia, and not directly from Maharashtra (2011: 377). This theory is supported by clay tablets found in the Thai-Malay Peninsula illustrating the group of eight *bodhisattva*s. However, while the knowledge of Aṣṭamahābodhisattva may have travelled over land from Northeast India to the Peninsula, it is possible that the same information reached Java directly from Maharashtra.

The combination of attributes for the standing four-armed Avalokiteśvara on the rear wall of Candi Mendut, specifically the presence of the book in the upper left hand, is not as easily traced back to the Buddhist caves in Maharashtra or elsewhere within the Indian subcontinent. There Avalokiteśvara is most often portrayed with two arms rather than four (one exception is to be found in one of the later caves at Aurangabad). Therefore, during the intervening years between the ascetic Avalokiteśvara and the construction of Candi Mendut, the idea of a multi-armed Avalokiteśvara must have made its way to Java.

We do find examples of a four-armed, standing Avalokiteśvara throughout Insular Southeast Asia. Several of these statuettes may have been the next step in a development starting from the ascetic Avalokiteśvara as discussed in Chapter 2 and later evolving towards the princely form of Avalokiteśvara (Cat nos 15-16, 18, 22). The earliest images of the ascetic Avalokiteśvara can be dated to the 700s. This later iconographic form of the four-armed, standing bejewelled Avalokiteśvara statuettes holding a book in the upper left hand continued to be produced throughout the Central Javanese period (Cat. nos 254-265).

The manner in which the book is depicted can be found in both South Asia and Insular Southeast Asia. While we do not see the book attribute in the reliefs in the Buddhist caves of Maharashtra, there are a few examples of Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi carrying a book as an attribute at Ratnagiri, in Odisha. No images of Avalokiteśvara carrying a book attribute have, however, been found in Odisha.

The only image with the exact same iconography that we see in the standing, four-armed Javanese Avalokiteśvara, is a bronze statuette from Kurkihar in Bihar with the sizeable height of 71 cm (Raya, Khandalavala and Gorakshar 1986: 42, Pl. 104a).[129] It has been

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[128] This style of generic figures also occurs at Borobudur as well as at Candi Mendut.

[129] A six-armed statuette found at Jhewari appears to hold a book in the upper left hand (Raya, Khandalavala and Gorakshar 1986: Pl. 231). While the figure has been identified as Avalokiteśvara, there appears to be a

dated to the ninth century CE, based on the bejewelled crown and organic treatment of the ornaments (Raya, Khandalavala and Gorakshar 1986: 42). The Bodhisattva holds a rosary in his upper right hand and displays the *varada-mudrā* with his lower right hand (Pl. 7B). The primary left hand holds a book and the lower left hand holds the stem of a lotus. In the *jaṭāmukuṭa*, we see the same type of fan protrusions as in the *lalitāsana* Avalokiteśvara discussed in Chapter 3 (Cat. no. 48), which belongs to the group evidencing a stylistic connection with Northeast India. In the more common iconography for the four-armed Avalokiteśvara in Northeast India, his upper left hand holds a lotus and the lower left hand a water vessel. Of the two hands on the right, the upper right holds a rosary, while the lower right hand displays the *varada-mudrā* (Raya, Khandalavala and Gorakshar 1986: Pls 148a, 260). All in all, the two-armed bronze form of Avalokiteśvara appears to have been more popular in the Indian subcontinent at the time than the four-armed form.

At the Ratnagiri *vihāra*, we do find several depictions of four-armed stone Avalokiteśvaras, attributed to the eighth century CE (Donaldson 2001: 198). The most common attributes in these reliefs are prayer beads in the upper right hand, while the lower right hand displays the *varada-mudrā*. The left hands hold a lotus and a water vessel (these attributes are interchangeable). The attributes correspond partly with those held by Avalokiteśvara at the rear of Candi Mendut, such as the rosary, the lotus and the water vessel gourd. However, the book, as frequently seen in four-armed Avalokiteśvara images from Java, is not represented with the four-armed Avalokiteśvaras from Ratnagiri.

A stone statue of Avalokiteśvara, found on Sumatra, shows him with four arms (Cat. no. 38). The statue has suffered some damage, but we can still determine that the Bodhisattva holds a book in his upper left hand.[130] He does not wear any jewellery, an iconography discussed in Chapter 2. The statue is dated to the seventh or early eighth century by scholars such as Shuhaimi (1984). This would make it one of the earliest four-armed depictions of the Bodhisattva in the area. While this may have been one of the initial four-armed Avalokiteśvaras, the idea of a statue with four arms was not new in the region, as many of the mitred Viṣṇus discussed by Dalsheimer and Manguin (1998) have four arms. Possibly, there was a theological shift that required Avalokiteśvara to be depicted with twice the number of arms, e.g. to give him a rosary and a book. The book could indicate a stronger focus on Avalokiteśvara's textual connections, such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, and the rosary for reciting a *mantra* or *dhāraṇī*.

Insular Southeast Asia may have been the area where the book attribute was first introduced in depictions of Avalokiteśvara in Buddhist art. A few metal statuettes illustrate the four-armed Bodhisattva without jewellery, but wearing a sacred thread and holding a book in his upper left hand. These statuettes, made in silver, were found in Peninsular Thailand,

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skull in the *jaṭāmukuṭa* indicating that the image actually represents Śiva. A stone image of a standing Avalokiteśvara, from Kurkihar, with six arms and a book in the middle left hand, has been described by Sahai (2005: 203).

[130] The Bodhisattva statue has a back inscription, just below the hanging hair, referring to the donor of the statue (Tan 2010: 23).

Sambas on Borneo and at Borobudur (Cat. nos 15-18). The spread of these statuettes shows a link with the pan-Southeast Asian cultural response to external input of the seventh century CE as discussed in Chapter 2. Perhaps the iconography for the four-armed Avalokiteśvara holding a book was developed towards the end of that period, as we do find images with this iconography across Insular Southeast Asia (Cat. nos 15-18, 254-265).

Taking into account the date of the Sumatran, four-armed stone statue (600-750 CE, Cat. no. 38) and the period of popularity for the ascetic Avalokiteśvara statuettes, it is likely that such four-armed, ascetic, silver statuettes holding a book show a further development in the iconography of ascetic Avalokiteśvaras (650-750 CE, Cat. nos 15-18). These may therefore pre-date the production of imagery at Candi Mendut and the other *in situ* images of Avalokiteśvara in Central Java, as well as the standing princely four-armed Avalokiteśvaras in bronze holding a book, many of which have survived from the Central Javanese period (Cat. nos 254-265). Thus, in this case, the sculptors at Candi Mendut may have been inspired by an iconographic tradition that first developed in metal art.

Considering the limited number of metal images of four-armed Avalokiteśvaras with the book attribute from Northeast India, we could speculate that this specific combination of attributes for Avalokiteśvara was developed locally in Insular Southeast Asia. It may be due to the connections with Java and the rest of Insular Southeast Asia that we find it in India. This would show that 'Indianization' is not a one-way process and included iconographic information travelling from Java and Insular Southeast Asia to India.

7.7 Conclusion

The imagery at Candi Mendut suggests a cultural link with the Buddhist caves of Maharashtra, as well as the northeastern Indian subcontinent. This pertains in particular to the triad inside the temple, the triad with Avalokiteśvara and two females at the rear of the temple, as well as the group of eight *bodhisattva*s. The iconography of the four-armed, standing Avalokiteśvara at the back of Candi Mendut can also be seen in a number of Avalokiteśvara statuettes from Insular Southeast Asia. As the four-armed Avalokiteśvaras, with a book in the upper left hand, appear to pre-date the Indian imagery of the same, the book attribute appears to be a local invention in Insular Southeast Asia. The use of the book may indicate a shift locally in the worship of Avalokiteśvara where he needed to be depicted with twice the number of arms in order to carry a book and a rosary. These attributes may illustrate a stronger focus on Avalokiteśvara's textual connection to Buddhist texts. The book could have represented a *sūtra*, such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, and the rosary symbolised the recitation of a *mantra* or *dhāraṇī*.

At the Plaosan Lor complex we see Avalokiteśvara, and a further five *bodhisattva*s, depicted in three separate triads in three rooms, consisting of two *bodhisattva*s and a Buddha. This is an iconographic grouping not seen in either Java or India before. On the basis of the *Bhadracarī* and its depictions on Borobudur, I suggest that the three cellas with a triad each symbolise the Buddha's existence outside of our linear time, in the past, present

and future all at once. The consistency of Avalokiteśvara's iconographic features at the two temple sites implies a limited iconographic development in stone imagery of Avalokiteśvara in terms of pose and attributes from the time of the construction of Candi Mendut, to that of the two temple buildings in the Plaosan Lor complex. Perhaps the construction of the two temples was not far removed in time.

The types of depictions of Avalokiteśvara differ, depending on the material used. In stone, Avalokiteśvara is only depicted on his own in the context of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* reliefs on Borobudur. On the fourth gallery of Borobudur as part of the *Bhadracarī* and at Candi Mendut and Plaosan Lor, he is part of a triad or a six- or eight-fold group. In contrast, he is commonly depicted as a solitary figure in bronze. Only a few statuettes show him as part of a triad. Avalokiteśvara is not depicted in bronze as part of the group of eight *bodhisattva*s at this time, again indicating a difference in the development of the iconography of Avalokiteśvara in the two separate media.

Plate 9. Bronze plaque showing Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara with retinue, from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Cat. no. 201).