



The Temples of Western Tibet and their Artistic Symbolism

TSAPARANG

by
GIUSEPPE TUCCI

English version of
INDO-TIBETICA III.2

edited by
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This volume of the *Indo-Tibetica* is dedicated to the six temples of Tsaparang, the temples of Śaṃvara and of Vajrabhairava, the White Temple, the Red Temple, the Temple of the Prefect, and the Lo-thaṅ dgon-pa. These temples are unique examples of early Tibetan mural paintings as well as sculptures, all direct derivations from Indian traditions, and some of them even from the brush of Indian masters. In the feminine deities frescoed on the walls we can discern the continuation of the tradition of Indian miniatures. Professor Tucci speaks at length about the importance of the art of these temples. He discusses the evident traces of Indian inspiration in the accuracy of execution, the delicacy of drawing, *chiaroscuro* effects, figures in profile rather than in frontal aspects, and so on. The art of Tsaparang has unique importance for the last phase of Buddhist art in India, especially in its Kashmiri idiom. He deals at length with the iconography and symbolism of Śaṃvara; his maṇḍala along with its *ḍākinīs* and *aṣṭa-śmaśāna*. The maṇḍala of Vajrabhairava, various cycles of Vairocana, Tārā, Vajrapāṇi and Guhyasamāja are also detailed.

In a long preface Prof. Lokesh Chandra elucidates the problems left open by Tucci, like the role of photism in the developments from Amitābha to Mahavairocana, and the transformation from the orgiastic Akṣobhya cults to *yab-yum mahāyoga* deities, dichotomy of square and circle in the maṇḍala, various classifications of the forms of Tārā, and so on.

The volume is a must for the History of Art, Buddhism, Indian Art of the post-millennium, Tibetology, Cultural Anthropology and Himalayan Studies.

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CONTENTS

Page	§
xi	– PREFACE: Lokesh Chandra
5	– INTRODUCTION The importance of the temples of Tsaparang for the study of Tibetan art
Chapter I. The temple of Śaṃvara/Bde-Mchog	
16	1 General description
17	2 The cycle of Śaṃvara/Bde-mchog
22	3 Iconographic type of Śaṃvara and its symbolism
27	4 The maṇḍala of Śaṃvara
42	5 The twentyfour vīras and the cosmic man
44	6 Meaning of the maṇḍala of Śaṃvara
48	7 The maṇḍala of Śaṃvara as represented at Tsaparang
50	8 The frescoes. The eight cemeteries.
54	9 The minor deities
59	10 The Five Tathāgatas
64	11 The “circle of protection”
65	12 The ten ḍākinī
74	13 A terracotta triptych
Chapter II. The Small Temple of Vajra-Bhairava/Rdo-rje-hjigs-byed	
75	14 General aspect of the temple
76	15 The maṇḍala of Vajrabhairava
78	16 Vajrabhairava
85	17 The maṇḍala represented at Tsaparang
92	18 The minor deities
96	19 Rematī in India and in Tibet
104	20 Other deities of the cycle of Bstan-sruṅ-ma
110	21 The series of the “masters”

Chapter III. The White Temple

112	22	General characteristics
113	23	The iconographic types represented in the temple
117	24	Cycles of Vairocana
122	25	Amitābha or Śākyamuni
124	26	The cella
127	27	The kings of Guge

Chapter IV. The Red Temple

130	28	General description
133	29	The legend of the Buddha depicted
151	30	Scenes of the foundation of the temple

Chapter V. The Temple of the Prefect

155	31	General description
156	32	The cycle of Tārā
164	33	The cycle of Vajrapāṇi

Chapter VI. The Lo-thaṅ dgon-pa

167	34	General description
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Appendices

173	I	The eight cemeteries of liturgical literature
182	II	The thirtytwo deities of the cycle of Guhyasamāja
187	III	The cycle of protection
189		Bibliographic List
193		Index

LIST OF PLATES

1. General view of Tsaparang, an immense ruin, p. 5
- THE TEMPLE OF ŚĀMVARA
2. The Temple of Śamvara, p. 16
3. A protector of the vajrakāya, p. 48
4. A protector of the vajrakāya, p. 48
5. Kākāsyā/Khva-gdon-ma, p. 48
- 6a. Yama-dākinī = Gśin-rje-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma, p. 48
- 6b. Yamadūtī dākinī = Gśin-rje-pho-ṅa-mo, p. 48
- 7a. Yamadādhi = Gśin-rje-brtan-ma, p. 48
- 7b. Narteśvarī (?) = Gar-gyi-dbañ-phyug-ma (?), p. 48
8. Rasavajrī, Naivedyā, Gandhā, Dīpā, p. 55
Lower scene: one of the eight cemeteries, p. 50
9. Puṣpā, Dhūpā, Dīpā, Gandhā, p. 54
Lower scene: one of the eight cemeteries, p. 50
10. Puṣpā, Pādyā, Arghyā, p. 54
Lower scene: one of the eight cemeteries, p. 50
11. Caṇḍikā, Skrag-byed-ma, Skyod-byed-ma, Pramohā, p. 56
Lower scene: one of the eight cemeteries, p. 50
12. Ratnasambhava, p. 59
13. Vairocāna, p. 9, 60
14. Amitābha, p. 9, 60
15. Amoghasiddhi, p. 60
16. Vajrasattva, Vajrayakṣa, pp. 64, 187
17. Vajra-mahābala, Vajrakāla, pp. 64, 187

18. Vajra-bhairava, Vajra-pātāla, pp. 65, 187
19. Vajroṣṇīṣa Hūmkāra
 Vajrasūrya Vajranitya
 ----- -----, pp. 65, 187
20. Samaya-ḍāka, p. 66
21. Kāya-ḍāka, p. 66
22. Vāg-ḍāka, p. 66
23. Mahāsukha-ḍāka, p. 66
24. Ratna-ḍāka, p. 66
25. Buddha-ḍāka, p. 66
26. Vajra-ḍāka, p. 66
27. Padma-ḍāka, p. 66
28. Caṇḍa-mahāroṣaṇa, p. 73
29. Īrṣyāvajra-Yamāntaka, p. 90
30. Padmapāṇi, Buddha, Vajrapāṇi, p. 74

THE TEMPLE OF VAJRABHAIRAVA

31. Moha-Yamāntaka, p. 89
32. Mātsarya-Yamāntaka, p. 90
33. Rāga-Yamāntaka, p. 90
34. Vajra-bhairava, coupled with his consort, p. 89
35. Daṇḍa-Yamāntaka, p. 91
36. Khaḍga-Yamāntaka, p. 91
37. Vārāhī, p. 91
38. Rakta Sarasvatī, p. 92
39. Yama, Agni, Indra, Brahmā, p. 93
40. Nirṛti, Yama, Vāyu, p. 93
41. Īśāna, Yakṣa, Vāyu, Varuṇa, p. 93
42. Indra, Upendra, Yama, Varuṇa, p. 93
43. Srin-po, Vāyu, Agni, p. 93

44. Kubera, Gaṇapati, Iśāna, p. 93
45. Acala, Kṛṣṇa Jambhala, Pīta Jambhala, p. 94
46. Vaiśravaṇa, Virūpākṣa, Virūḍhaka, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, p. 94
47. Mahācakra, p. 94
48. Rakta Yamāntaka, p. 94
49. Dgra nag, p. 94
50. Guhyasādhana Hayagrīva, p. 94
51. Kālacakra, p. 94
52. Dam-sri-ma nag-mo, Sreg-ma
Hbebs-ma, Śakarali p. 93, 104
53. Phyag-saṅs, Pho-ña-mo nag-mo
Rol-pa-tshar-dgu-ma p. 93, 104
54. Bsod-ma, Dus-mtshan-ma, p. 93, 104
55. Dus-zhags-ma, p. 93, 104
56. Avalokiteśvara, Rematī, p. 93
57. Jñāna-dākinī, p. 93, 104
58. East: White Yama, North: Blue Yama, p. 93, 95
59. West: Red Yama, South: Yellow Yama, p. 93, 95
60. Kākāsyā, p. 93, 96
61. Jñāna-Nātha brgyan-can, p. 93
62. Myur-mdzad Mgon-po, p. 93, 108
63. Rematī, p. 93, 96
64. Caturbhujā ŚrīNātha/Mahākāla, p. 93, 96
65. Krodharāja Sme-brtsegs, p. 93, 104
- 66.
67. Sampradāya of Vajrabhairava, 110

THE WHITE TEMPLE

68. Red Hayagrīva, p. 113, 114
69. Ṣaḍakṣara Avalokiteśvara, p. 115

70. Vairocana, p. 117, 118
71. Vairocana, p. 117, 118
72. Vairocana, p. 117
73. Sarvavid Vairocana, p. 118, 119
74. Vairocana, p. 117, 118
75. Vairocana, p. 117
76. Amoghasiddhi, p. 118
- 77.
78. Details of plate 73, p. 118
79. Details of plate 73, p. 118
80. Laukika-mahādevas, p. 119
81. Laukika-mahādevas, p. 119
82. Īśāna with his retinue, p. 120
83. Īśāna with his retinue, p. 120
84. Viṣṇu with his retinue, p. 120
85. Consort of Brahmā, p. 120
86. Brahmā, p. 120
87. Retinue of Īśvara, p. 120
88. Īśvara with his retinue, p. 120
89. Gaṇapati, p. 120
90. Retinue of Gaṇapati, p. 120
91. Brahmāṇī, p. 120
92. Yakṣa and retinue, p. 120
93. Agni with his retinue, p. 120
94. Retinue to the right of Agni, p. 120
95. Retinue to the left of Agni, p. 120
96. Vajrapāṇi, p. 121
97. Identification not clear, p. 122-124
98. Tsoṅ-kha-pa with his two disciples, p.
99. Śākyamuni, p. 125

100. Śākyamuni, p. 125
101. Śākyamuni, p. 125
102. p. 125
103. Foundation of the temple, p. 126
104. Foundation of the temple, p. 126
105. Foundation of the temple, p. 126
106. Rin-chen-bzañ-po (?) as a Vajradhara, p. 126
107. Kings of Guge, p. 127
108. Kings of Guge, p. 127
109. Vairocana (?), p. 128
110. White Tārā, p. 128
111. Ceiling of the temple, p. 128

THE RED TEMPLE

112. Door, p. 130
113. Details of the door, p. 130
114. Details of the door, p. 131
115. Siddhas on the door, p. 131
116. Prince of Guge, p. 131
117. Buddha, p. 131
118. p. 131
119. p. 131
120. Eight Bhaiṣajyaguru, p. 132
121. p. 132
122. Akṣobhya, p. 132
123. Other Bhaiṣajyaguru, p. 132
124. Vijayā, p. 133
125. Legend of Śākyamuni, p. 136
126. Legend of Śākyamuni, p. 139
127. Śākyamuni's enlightenment, p. 140

128. Śākyamuni calling the Earth to witness, p. 140
129. Legend of Śākyamuni, p. 141
130. Buddha meeting Yaśas on the banks of river Vāraṇā, p. 143
131. Buddha converts by showing a miracle, p. 145
132. Miracle of Śrāvastī, p. 145, 147
133. Buddha proceeds to the city to beg alms. Elephant Dhana-pāla flees, p. 147, 148
134. Monkey offers a vase to Śākyamuni, Nirvāṇa, p. 149-150
135. Eight stūpas, p. 150
136. Eight stūpas, p. 151
137. Foundation of the temple, p. 151
138. Foundation scene of the temple, p. 151-152
139. Lamas performing the consecration of the temple, p. 151
140. Consecration ceremony (contd.), p. 151

THE TEMPLE OF THE PREFECT

141. Vajrabhairava, p. 155
142. Vajrapāṇi (164), Various forms of Tārā, p. 156
143. Various forms of Tārā, p. 156
144. Various forms of Vajrapāṇi, p. 164
145. Various forms of Vajrapāṇi, p. 164-165
146. Various forms of Vajrapāṇi, p. 164
147. Vighnāntaka, Ṭakkirāja, Acala, p. 165
148. Bodhisattvas, p. 166
149. Bodhisattvas, p. 166
150. Bodhisattvas, p. 166

THE LO-THAN DGON-PA

151. Abhijñārāja, p. 168
152. Maṇḍala of Uṣṇīṣavijayā, p. 169

PREFACE

SYNOPTIC VIEW OF THE BOOK

This volume of the *Indo-Tibetica* is dedicated to the six temples of Tsaparang, the first two named after their central deity namely Śaṃvara and Vajrabhairava and the remaining four termed by their general characteristics: the White Temple, the Red Temple, the Temple of the Prefect, and the Lo-thaṅ dgon-pa. These temples are unique examples of early Tibetan mural paintings as well as sculptures, all direct derivations from Indian traditions, and some of them even from the brush of Indian masters. In the feminine deities frescoed on the walls we can discern the continuation of the tradition of Indian miniatures. Professor Tucci speaks at length about the importance of the art of the chapels of Tsaparang in his introduction. He discusses the evident traces of Indian inspiration in the accuracy of execution, the delicacy of drawing, chiaroscuro effects, figures in profile rather than in frontal aspects, and so on. The art of Tsaparang has unique importance for the last phase of Buddhist art in India, especially in its Kashmiri idiom. The vanishing murals and images of the great Kashmiri monasteries evoked the admiration of Somendra the son of Kṣemendra as early as the eleventh century. Already then, the light of Buddhism and its artistic glories were flickering out in Kashmir. Kṣemendra set himself to capture the moral purity, enlightenment and beauty of the fading cloister walls in the varied flow of metres in the Avadāna-kalpalatā, as his son Somendra says in the 108th chapter:

येषां सुवर्ण-प्रतिमा-प्रतान-जिनावदानान्यभवन् गुहासु ।
संसक्त-नेत्रामृत-चित्र-चित्राः कालेन ते तेऽपि गता विहाराः ॥
सरस्वती-तूलिकया विचित्र-वर्ण-क्रमैः संकलितावदानः ।
तातेन योऽयं विहितो महार्थः सन्नन्दनः पुण्यमयो विहारः ॥
न तस्य नाशोऽस्ति युगक्षयेऽपि ...

“Gone are the monasteries in the flow of time whose cloisters were painted with charming murals of Buddhist avadānas in golden hues and which held the eyes in rapture. My father has collected these edifying tales, painted them in variegated hues of the poetic art, and it has verily become a magnificent and sanctifying vihāra that transcends oblivion even by time”.

The agony of this void found an epiphany in the work of Tsaparang artists in all the purity of faith and faithfulness to the original inspiration.

Vīra, dāka. The twentyfour deities in the Śaṁvara-maṇḍala are termed vīras (NSP text p. 27). Tucci calls them twenty-four vīras throughout this book.

A number of anuttara yoga deities are termed vīra. In Vaiṣṇavism, the images are classified into “yoga, bhoga, vīra and ābhichārika varieties in consequence of certain slight differences in their descriptive characteristics. These varieties are intended to be worshipped by devotees with different desires and objects in view: thus, the yogi should worship the yoga form of Viṣṇu, the persons who desire enjoyment should worship the bhoga form, those who desire prowess the vīra form, and kings and others who wish to conquer their enemies the ābhichārika form”. (Raó 1914:1.79).

When the deity is without his consort he is termed eka-vīra that is, the solitary or lonely hero. In the Sanskrit titles of

works in the Tanjur, *ekavīra* refers to *Cakrasamvara* or *Śamvara* (Cordier 2.40/13.11, 2.46/13.41, 3.102-103/73.13, 14, 15, 3.104/73.19). It is applied to *Heruka* in *Ekavīra-Heruka-sādhana* (ibid. 2.43/13.25), *Ekavīra-ṣoḍaśabhujā-śrīHeruka-sādhana* (ibid. 2.86/21.59). It should apply to *Hevajra* in Cordier 2.76/21.8. In Cordier 2.338/69.9 and elsewhere the deity to which *ekavīra* refers to is not clear.

The alternate title of *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantrarāja* is *Ekalla-vīra-tantra*, which means that *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa* a form of *Acala* is referred to as *ekalla-vīra* (Filliozat 1941: 9 no.18), and *Shastri* (1917: 181-191 nos. 84, 85, 87) has the title *Ekallavīra-caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantra*.

The Greek *hērōs* denotes a famous hero promoted to divine rank. The heroes and hero-gods are a universal phenomenon. There are allusions to heroes in the classical and folk traditions of India, for example, *Hanumān* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is a heroic god. Epic heroes like *Rāma* and *Kṛṣṇa* reached the highest rank. The belief in heroes plays a very important part in the development of Greek religion (ERE. 6. 652). The promotion of a hero to the status of a god was common in Greece: the god *Dionysus* is addressed as a hero in the old ritual chant of *Elis*. The worship of heroes as gods was firmly established in Greece from the seventh century B.C. (ERE. 6. 655).

Heruka. The word *Heruka* is used in two meanings, specific and generic: (i) *Heruka* proper and (ii) *Heruka* as a generic term of the classification of the *yoginī-tantras*. In the first he is an independent deity in his own right, as in the nine-deity *maṇḍala* of *Heruka* in the *Niṣpanna-yogāvalī* (text p. 20) where he has four forms with two, four, six and sixteen arms. The second meaning of *Heruka* is generic, as he is the head of the *Buddha-kula* of the *anuttara-yoga tantras*. In this capacity *Heruka* is equivalent to a *Buddha* and he heads the dieties *Śamvara*, *Hevajra*, *Buddhakapāla*, *Mahāmāya*, *Ārali* (Wayman

1973: 235). At times Cakrasaṃvara is referred to as Heruka, but that does not mean that Heruka = Cakrasaṃvara or vice versa. It simply implies that Cakrasaṃvara belongs to the larger group of the hypostases of Heruka.

Tucci comments on p.22 that Heruka is called Śaṃvara as the central deity of the maṇḍala. In the Niṣpanna-yogāvalī Heruka proper has two, four, six or sixteen arms (text p.20-21), while Śaṃvara has twelve arms (text p.26). The present maṇḍala of Tsaparang pertains to Śaṃvara. Thus on p.48 too the central deity has to be named Śaṃvara and not Heruka.

The etymology of Heruka is not clear. Its phonetics reminds of the Greek *hērō-s* + 'hero', *hērōs* 'Eros, the god of love', and *herūkō* 'to keep in, hold back, restrain, hinder; to control, curb, keep in check' (Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1916). Eros brings to mind the yab-yum form of Heruka coupled with his consort (prajñā) Nairātmā. All the gods of the Heruka group are coupled with their goddesses. The word *herūkō* 'to restrain, etc.' recalls saṃvara 'vow'. Edgerton (1953 : 539) translates *saṃvara* 'restraint, control, obligation, vow'. The Tibetan equivalent *sdom-pa* also covers the same semantic spectrum 'restraint, obligation, vow'. *Prātimokṣa-saṃvara* are 'the moral restraints imposed in the code called Prātimokṣa'.

The word *ḍāka* is equal to *antaka* in Padma-ḍāka = Padmāntaka. The Tamil word *ṭākku* means '1. strength, robustness: 2. petulance, pride' (Tamil Lexicon 3.1696). Do *ḍāka* and *vīra* converge? In Tibetan *ḍāka* is translated as *mkhaḥ-ḥgro* 'skygoer' and its feminine form *ḍākinī* as *mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma* 'the skygoing female'.

The importance of *ḍāka* and *ḍākinī* can be discerned in Mkhas-grub-rje's observation that the anuttara-yoga tantras are divided into two divisions under different names by the various tantras:

(mahā)yoga-tantra	yoginī-tantra	Sāmbarodaya etc. (Toh.373)
upāya-tantra	prajñā-tantra	Kālacakra etc. (Toh.362)
dāka-tantra	dākinī-tantra	Vajrahṛday-ālaṅkāra (Toh.451)
mahāyoga-tantra	anuttara-yoga- tantra	Atīśa

(Wayman 1968: 251, 100 for the classification of Atīśa).

These two divisions are further sub-divided into six:

<i>yoga-tantras</i>	<i>yoginī-tantras</i>
Akṣobhya	Heruka
Vairocana	Vairocana
Ratna-kula	Vajraprabha = Ratnasambhava
Padma-kula	Padma-narteśvara = Amitābha
Karma-kula	Paramāśva = Amoghasiddhi
Vajradhara	Vajradhara

Amitābha & *Akṣobhya* lead to *Vairocana* & *Heruka*. Prof. Tucci has raised the question of the spectrum covered by Mantrayāna. He rightly questions the belief that Mantrayāna is identified with Vairocana, under the influence of Chinese Vajrayāna where the figure of Vairocana is preeminent. In fact, we can notice two major tendencies in the development of Vajrayāna, centred around Amitābha~Vairocana and Akṣobhya~Heruka. From Amitābha developed Rocana of the Avataṃsaka, thence Vairocana of the caryā-tantras and finally Mahāvairocana of the yoga-tantras. From the Akṣobhya tradition evolved Heruka and other deities of anuttara-yoga, coupled in yab-yum. Sukhāvātī the western paradise of Amitābha was devoid of women, while Abhirati the eastern paradise of Akṣobhya had beauties (*strī-ratna*), involving orgiastic traditions. The evolution of

Akṣobhya to yab-yum figures was a natural course. In Akṣobhya's paradise women played a leading role and this fact "distinguishes it sharply from other buddhakṣetra. It we bear in mind that the pessimistic views concerning women, expressed in the majority of mahāyānic sūtras, will finally prevail, the specific ideas expressed in the Chinese and Tibetan translations of the Akṣobhyavyūha, should receive due consideration". (Dantinne 1987: 31).

Women play a role which is both unexpected and essential in the Akṣobhyavyūha: here Akṣobhya preaches the law to women; there is talk of jewels of women (*strī-ratna*); there is frequent allusion to feminine ornaments, and childbirth is described with a profusion of unusual details.

The interest in women may be considered as one of the numerous manifestations of sympathy with regard to lay persons of both sexes, to which free rein is given in certain sūtras of early Mahāyāna. This specific attitude, perceptible from the first Prajñāpāramitās, has led E. Conze to formulate the opinion that the notion of wisdom (prajñā) is an elaborate product of the feminist ideal from the beginnings of Mahāyāna. (Dantinne 1987:31).

The Akṣobhya tradition evolved into the anuttara-yoga tantras with their emphasis on the yoginī or ḍākinī. Mrs. Miranda Shaw of the Harvard University says that the tantric female adept/companion was characterised by proud self-assurance and physical robustness. *Ḍākinī* the feminine form of *ḍāka* can be traced to Tamil where it refers to 'strength', as already pointed out. The role of women in the emergence of the anuttara-yoga tantras with their yab-yum images was a development of *strī-ratna* in Akṣobhya's Abhirati paradise. There were two major currents in the evolution of tantras. The other current of photism or light-symbolism was the collateral development of the cult of Amitābha 'Infinite Light'. From Amitābha evolved

Rocana 'Light, Shine', and thence Vairocana 'Effulgence, Sun' which developed further into Mahāvairocana 'The Great Sun, the Supreme Light'. It was further contra-distinguished from Akṣobhya's paradise by his Sukhāvātī Paradise with no women.

The cults of Amitābha and Akṣobhya were collateral as their paradises of the west and east were natural pairs. The first extant Chinese translations of the Sukhāvātī-vyūha and Akṣobhya-vyūha were done simultaneously by Lokakṣema in A.D.179-180 (Dantinne 1983 : 2). Bodhiruci translated the Mahāratnakūṭa between the years A.D.706-713 during the T'ang dynasty. In this collection too, the two sūtras devoted to Amitābha and Akṣobhya are placed consecutively (K22/5, 22/6). While the Sukhāvātī-vyūha was translated into Chinese five times the Akṣobhya-vyūha only twice and that too along with the former. The cult of Amitābha continued to prevail, but that of Akṣobhya evolved into the anuttara-yoga tantras like the Guhyasamāja with their orgiastic symbolism and practices, and as such they were taboo in the Confucian world of East Asia.

The lord of the family (kuleśa) of the deities of the anuttara-yoga tantras is mostly Akṣobhya. In the Niṣpanna-yogāvalī the maṇḍalas of Mañjuvajra (no.1), Vajradhara of the Samputa-tantra (no.3), Hevajra (no.5), Heruka (no.8), Mahāmāya (no.9), nine-deity Buddhakapāla (no.10), Śaṃvara (no.12), twentyfive-deity Buddhakapāla Heruka (no.13), Yogāmbara (no.14), Yamāri (no.15) have Akṣobhya as the lord of the family. It reinforces the fact that Akṣobhya is a prototype of the anuttara-yoga deities.

Vajrapāṇi. Prof. Tucci (p.13) has rightly pointed out that the painters were not following whims but were reproducing pre-determined tantric schemes. According to this principle we should be able to discern a classification in the various hypostases of Vajrapāṇi depicted on the walls of the Temple of the Prefect. Tucci has named five forms on p.164 and illustrated

ten forms on plates 142, 144-146. The following forms are named by him:

Jagadbhadra Vajrapāṇi

Vajrapāṇi similar to Garuḍa

Alpaçaṇḍa Vajrapāṇi

Mahāçaṇḍa Vajrapāṇi

Acala Vajrapāṇi

The Rin-ḥbyuñ, that is illustrations to the Sādhanamālā of the Panchen Lama Bstan-paḥi-ñi-ma, illustrates ten forms of Vajrapāṇi:

662 Phyag-rdor u-tsa-rya = Ucārya Vajrapāṇi

663 Phyag-rdor gos-sñon-can = Nīlāambaradhara Vajrapāṇi

664 Phyag-rdor sa-lugs = Vajrapāṇi of the Sa-skyapa

665 Phyag-rdor gtum-chen bsruñ-baḥi mkhar-ras-chuñ-lugs =
Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Vajrapāṇi of Mkhar-ras-chuñ

666 Phyag-rdor gtum-po khra-thogs = Khra-thogs Caṇḍa
Vajrapāṇi

667 Phyag-rdor gtum-chuñ dmar-po = Red Alpacaṇḍa Vajra-
pāṇi.

The three mahāçaṇḍa, çaṇḍa and alpacaṇḍa form a
gradation.

668 Phyag-rdor gos-sñon-can ḥgro-bzañ-lugs = Nīlāmbara-
dhara Vajrapāṇi of Jagadbhadra.

669 Phyag-rdor khañ-brtsegs = Kūṭāgāra Vajrapāṇi

670 Phyag-rdor ḥbyuñ-po-ḥdul-byed = Bhūtaḍāmara Vajra-
pāṇi

671 Phyag-rdor ḥbyun-ḥdul-byed gsar-ma = the New Bhūta-
ḍāmara Vajrapāṇi

The Vajrapāṇi Acala of Tucci should be Ucārya Vajrapāṇi. The serial numbers are from the *Buddhist Iconography* of the writer of this preface.

Another series of three Vajrapāṇi is illustrated in the *Skubrñan gsum-brgya*/Three Hundred Icons, a pantheon by Lcañskya Hutukhtu Rol-paḥi-rdo-rje. They are as follows:

2372 Phyag-rdor gtum-chuṅ = Alpacaṇḍa Vajrapāṇi

2373 Phyag-rdor gos-sñon-can = Nīlāmaradhara Vajrapāṇi

2374 Phyag-rdor drag-po-gsum-dril = Tri-rudra-damana
Vajrapāṇi

The text 454 in the Kanjur, Nīlāmaradhara Vajrapāṇi Tri-rudra-vinaya and 455 Tri-rudra-damana help us to correct the Sanskrit equivalent of the Tibetan name in the above pantheon. In both titles the Tibetan is drag-po-gsum-ḥdul (not ḥdril) though the Sanskrit expression varies.

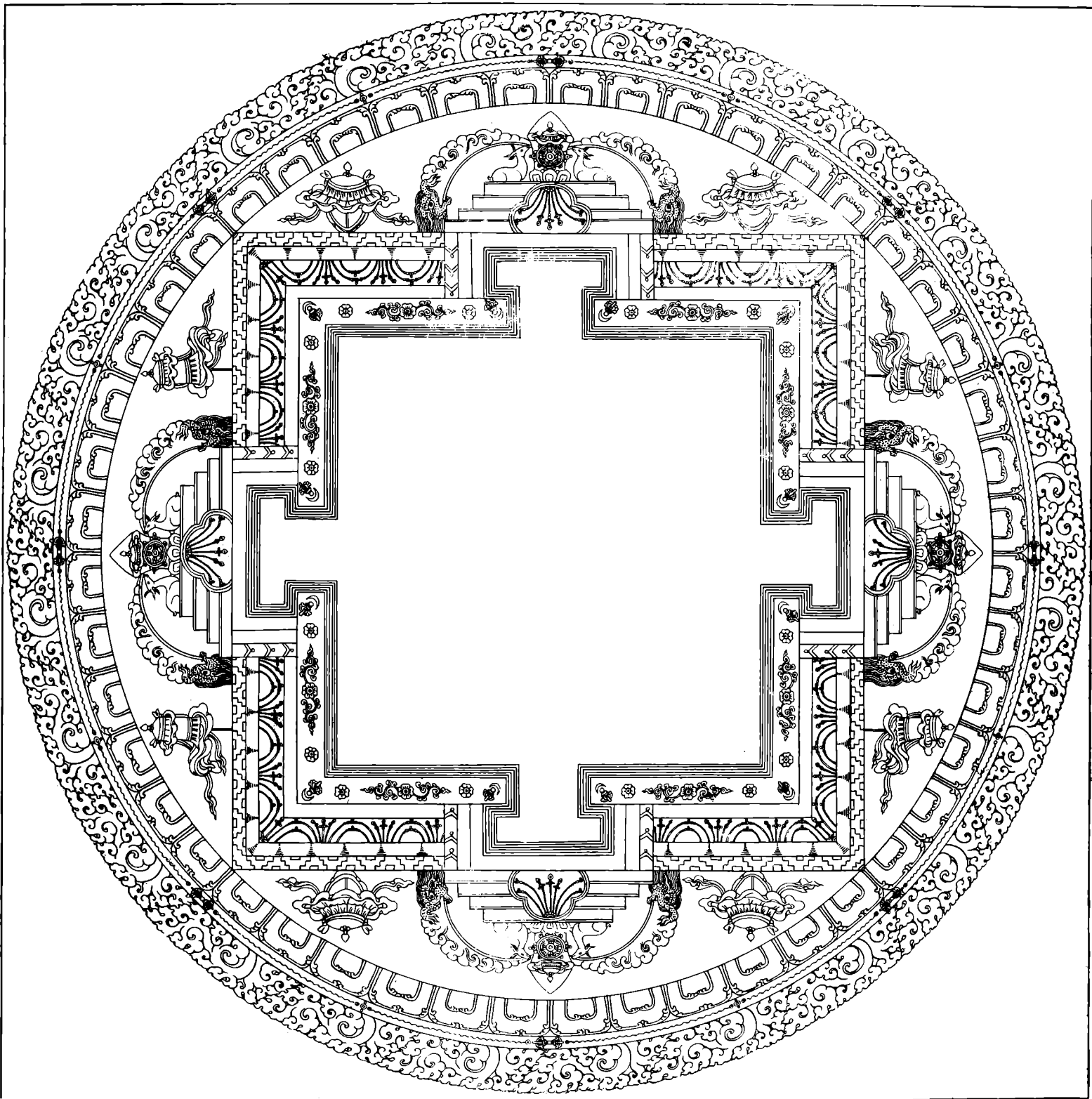
The ten forms of Vajrapāṇi at Tsaparang will have to be re-identified after reading the inscriptions accompanying them. This can be done only at the monastery in Tsaparang.

Vajrapāṇi comes in the first grouping of the father tantras of anuttara-yoga. His presence at Tsaparang was natural as these temples were primarily dedicated to the many manifestations of anuttara-yoga. The Kanjur has eleven tantras of Vajrapāṇi (Toh. 454-464).

Dichotomy in the configuration of the maṇḍala. In the centre of the temple, the sixtytwo deities of the Śamvara-maṇḍala are represented as three-dimensional images of wood and stucco and the accompanying deities are represented on the walls in two dimensions (p.49). The eight cemeteries frescoed on the walls of our temple, when shown in a two-dimensional maṇḍala, are a circle between the vajra-circle and the lotus-circle. This dichotomy is highly significant. In a maṇḍala drawn on a flat surface we can see two configurations, squares and circles:

The square parts of the maṇḍala are a two-dimensional diagram of a sanctum dedicated to a central deity and its olympian assembly. It has four gates in the four cardinal directions. The inner portion of the diagram has square structures which are the walls, pillars and other architectural elements of the sanctum. The round parts are psychic elements. Its inner psychic chore is constituted by the eight-petalled lotus of the heart of the devotee wherein resides the main deity with his prominent acolytes. The other psychic elements are also round, like the outermost circle of fire to burn the sins of the meditator. The vajrāvalī or circle of vajras represents the solidity of the adamantine plane wherein the Vajrayāna practitioner has become a vajra-being, a vajra-sattva, one empowered to undertake Vajrayāna practices and rituals. The circle of lotuses, padmāvalī, is the purity of heart with which the devotee approaches the sanctum. Thus the psychic components of the circles of fire, vajras and lotuses in the maṇḍala are round, while the solid material components of the architectonic temple are square. A maṇḍala is thus a square and circle, the squared material space and the circularity of psychospheres.

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The maṇḍala is the dwelling of a sugata, a *sugatālaya*, in the work Prajñopāya-viniścaya-siddhi (Tucci 1949 : 1.249). The “maṇḍalas are square” (ibid.267). They are encircled by circular meditative barriers which have given rise to the misconception that the word maṇḍala means ‘circle, globe which is round, circular, a magic circle’ (e.g. in Tajima 1959 : 33). In fact both the Japanese maṇḍalas of Garbhadhātu and Vajradhātu are rectangular. The word maṇḍala was usually transliterated into Chinese because of the variety of its meanings. In the Sarvathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha, Amoghavajra (A.D.753) has translated maṇḍala by 會 which means ‘assembly’. It has no reference to the form of the maṇḍala. The maṇḍala represents the scheme of the palace of a cakravartin, whose conceptualisation followed the Iranian ideal metropolis. The Japanese Garbhadhātu has seven lines around the central enclosure of the Five Tathāgatas. These recall the palace of a cakravartin surrounded by seven ramparts made of gold, silver, beryl, crystal, ruby, coral and one of all jewels in the Dīghanikāya 2.170. In the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya Kuśāvati has seven enclosures, ‘but made of four precious stones only: gold, silver, beryl and crystal. Dīpavati, the capital of the Cakravartin Arciṣmat, has seven vedikā-jālas of seven colours of gold, silver, mother-of-pearl, beryl, crystal, coral and ruby (Mahāvastu 1.194.3, 19). The maṇḍala of Vairocana has to be patterned after the metropolis of a cakravartin, for he is Ekākṣara Cakravartin. As a cakravartin, a universal monarch, his residence is equated with

Sudarśana, the palace of Indra. The city of a cakravartin recalls the royal city of the Medes Ecbatana (ancient Hagamatana, modern Hamadan) whose seven enclosures were of gold, silver, orange, blue, purple, black and white (Herodotus, 5th century B.C., 1.98).

The terraces of the Sumeru of Vairocana are of various jewels. "The seven walls rising up one within another—recalling the seven tiers of the cosmic temple towers of Babylonia and Assyria—obviously are an image of the seven cosmic spheres, in the middle of which the Sun-King is seated; the golden wall around the royal palace reflects the brilliance of the sun, the silver wall next to it apparently that of the moon. The cosmic significance of this kingly city is clear ...". Vairocana verily means the Sun and his Sino-Japanese name is Dainichi "the Great Sun".

"The residence of the Indian Cakravartin like that of the Babylonian monarch, is made after the model of the terraced towers surmounted by a temple. The universal monarch resides there because being like the sovereign of the gods, he must live like him at the summit of the cosmic mountain. Sumeru and the Zikkurat, the imperial city and the celestial temple, might be juxtaposed as equivalent symbols in the political and the religious order". (Przyluski 1935 : 26).

In a painted maṇḍala, within the circumscribing four circles of fire, vajra, cemeteries and lotus leaves is the *square* maṇḍala. On its four sides "are drawn four doors (*sgo*) in the shape of a T. ... These doors are flanked by five bands, each painted in one of the five colours. On the sides of each of them are two or more pillars (*ka-ba*) supporting the toraṇa (*rta-hbabs*) which surmounts the door. The doors are joined by a belt which is itself divided into five parts. ... Above all, the balcony, called

mdaḥ-yab or *padma*, because it is decorated with lotus flowers. Over the doors rises the arch, *toraṇa*, made of eleven fringes (*snam-bu*) or storeys, resting on the small pillars on both sides of the doors: beginning from below, they are called *rin-chen sar-bul* jewelled band, *rin-po-chel*/the gem, *rta-rmig*/the horse's hoof, *gser*/gold, *chu-srin*/makara; *gser*/gold ... On the top of the *toraṇa* there must be a lotus, on which rests the wheel of the Law with its twelve spokes; on its right and left two gazelles *kṛṣṇāsāra*, a symbol of the preaching of Sarnath.

“Above the wheel we see the umbrella (*gdugs*) a badge of royalty; on its sides *ba-dan*/small flags, stuck on staffs resting on vases (*bum-pa*, *kalaśa*). All round, on the edge of the belt from door to door, paradise trees (*dpag-bsam-sin*) are born out of the *bhadrakalaśa* (*bum-pa bzai-po*), “vase of the water of longevity” and next the seven gems, emblem of the Cakravartin are placed: eightspoked wheel, six-toothed white elephant, green horse, girl of sixteen, gem with six rays, a red minister with an inexhaustible treasure, a general of a dark colour, with cuirass, spear and sword”. (Tucci 1949 : 1.319).

Kavaca deities. The six *kavaca* deities in *yab-yum* are intended to protect from contrary influences. Prof. Tucci names five. The pantheon *Rin-ḥbyun* (Lokesh Chandra 1987 : 222-227) illustrates them in the third chapter entitled “main deities of the maṇḍala”. The male and female deities are shown separately. The male deities *Go-chaḥi dpaḥ-bo drug* ‘six *kavaca-vīras*’ (nos.566-577) are:

- 566 *Kavaca-Vajrasattva/Go-chaḥi Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ*
- 567 *Kavaca-Vairocana/Go-chaḥi Rnam-snañ*
- 568 *Kavaca-Padmanarteśvara/Go-chaḥi Padma-gar-dbañ*
- 569 *Kavaca Kṛṣṇa Heruka/Go-chaḥi He-ru-ka nag-po*
- 570 *Kavaca-Vajrasūrya/Go-chaḥi Rdo-rje-ñi-ma*
- 571 *Kavaca-Paramāśva/Go-chaḥi Rta-mchog*

The six Kavaca-yoginīs/*Go-chaḥi dpah-mo drug* are:

572 Kavaca-Vajravārāhī/*Go-chaḥi Rdo-rje-phag-mo*

573 Kavaca-Yāminī/*Go-chaḥi Gsin-rje-ma*

574 Kavaca-Mohinī/*Go-chaḥi Rmoṅs-byed-ma*

575 Kavaca-Santrāsini/*Go-chaḥi Skrag-byed-ma*

576 Kavaca-Sañcālinī/*Go-chaḥi Bskyed-byed-ma*

577 Kavaca-Çaṅḍikā/*Go-chaḥi Tsaṅḍi-kā*

The six goddesses are mentioned by the Hastapūjā-vidhi in the Sādhanamālā (p.498-500). Sādhanamālā has *Vajravārāhīm yoginī-cakranāyikām* in the opening maṅgalācaraṇa stanza, whence we have translated *dpah-mo* as *yoginī*. Both the six kavaca-vīras and the six kavaca-yoginīs are described on pages 55-59 of this book.

Maṅḍalas of the mother and father tantras. Prof. Tucci raises the question: “should one think that in the small temple of Tsaparang the painters have superimposed or overlapped the two cycles, on one side that of the Guhyasamāja, which would have inspired these five figures, and on the other side the one of Śaṁvara, to whom the chapel is essentially dedicated?” He rightly says that Akṣobhya is a point common to both, yet the precise relationship of the two maṅḍalas is not clear to him. The anuttara-yoga tantras are divided into mother and father tantras and each of them is further subdivided into six groups:

<i>Mother tantras</i>	<i>Father tantras</i>
(i) Heruka i.e. Akṣobhya	Akṣobhya
(ii) Vairocana	Vairocana
(iii) Vajraprabha i.e. Ratnasambhava	Ratna-kula (lacking)
(iv) Padmanarteśvara i.e. Amitābha	Padma-kula
(v) Paramāśva i.e. Amoghasiddhi	Karma-kula (lacking)
(vi) Vajradhara	Vajradhara

Heruka-kula refers exclusively to the mother tantras, namely: Śaṁvara, Hevajra, Buddhakapāla, Mahāmāya and Ārali. Akṣo-

bhya is the head of the family (kuleśa) of the father tantras, namely: Guhyasamāja and Vajrapāṇi. The painters of Tsaparang depicted in the temple, Śaṃvara of the mother tantras besides Guhyasamāja and Vajrapāṇi of the father tantras. Thus both the classes of anuttara-yoga tantras were shown at the Temple of Śaṃvara. The statement on p.62 about the two cycles of Śaṃvara and of Guhyasamāja has to be corrected accordingly.

The presence of the Five Tathāgatas in the maṇḍala of Śaṃvara (p.63) can be defined after seeing their placement in the temple. In the mother tantras the Tathāgatas are:

Heruka	corresponds to Akṣobhya
Vairocana	= Vairocana
Vajraprabha	corresponds to Ratnasambhava
Padmanarteśvara	corresponds to Amitābha
Paramāśva	corresponds to Amoghasiddhi
Vajradhara	—

These Tathāgatas do not form part of either the maṇḍala of Śaṃvara or of Heruka proper. They must have been represented to cover all the six groupings of the mother tantras.

The ten ḍākinīs. On p.65 Tucci mentions the ten ḍākinīs. The five on the right wall are in the maṇḍala of Mahāmāya (NSP. no.5 on p.22 of the text) and in that of the Ṣaṭ-cakravartin (NSP.no.25 on p.79-80 of the text). In the latter maṇḍala the ḍākas and ḍākinīs are coupled. May be the coupled deities of Tsaparang pertain to the latter maṇḍala.

THE TEMPLE OF VAJRABHAIRAVA

In Tibet the three tutelary deities or *gsan bde hjiḡs gsum* are Guhyasamāja, Śaṃvara and Vajrabhairava. They are illustrated on folio 21 of the Three Hundred Icons (Lokesh Chandra 1987 : 705). While the first two were painted in the Temple of

Śaṁvara, this temple was dedicated to Vajrabhairava to complete the trio. Vajrabhairava is the same as Yamāntaka, who represents the second group of the Vairocana-family in the father tantras.

Tucci refers to Sme-brtsegs as unknown. In the Kanjur, a text is devoted to him (Toh.756) where his Sanskrit name is Bhurkuṁkūṭa. He is illustrated in the pantheon of the Mongolian Kanjur (Lokesh Chandra 1987 : 171), and in the Rin-ḥbyuñ (ibid.733-35). The Rin-ḥbyuñ is interesting for its mantra of this deity, which runs: *om bhurkhum mahāprāṇāye bhurci bhurkhi vīmanase ucchuṣma mahākrodha hūm phaṭ*. It is the same for both its smoke-coloured and dark forms. As a king of anger/krodharāja, bhurkuṁkūṭa is equivalent to Bhṛkuṭa, whose feminine form Bhṛkuṭī is well known. The feminine form Khro-mo Sme-brtsegs (ibid.735) has the mantra *arkham cirkham vīmanase ucchuṣma mahākrodha hūm phaṭ*. In the Narthang deities of the Rin-ḥbyuñ, the Angry Sme-brtsegs is repeated (ibid.949) with the mantra *om bhurkuṁ mahāprāṇāya bhurci bhurki vīmale ucchuṣma krodha hūm hūm phaṭ phaṭ svāhā*. The goddess Khro-mo Sme-brtsegs has the mantra *om arkham cirkham vīmanasi ucchuṣma mahākrodha hūm phaṭ* (ibid.2381/178).

THE WHITE TEMPLE

Like the Temple of Śaṁvara, here too the central deity is represented in a plastic form (p.116). On p.117 Prof. Tucci refers to six figures of Vairocana, whom he cannot assign to a specific tantric cycle. These six Vairocanas represent the central deities of the six maṇḍalas of Vairocana in one of the samayas of the Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha (STTS):

I.1 Vajradhātu-mahāmaṇḍala (Lokesh Chandra 1986: fig.1-37).

I.2 Guhya-dhāraṇī-maṇḍala (ibid.38-71).

- I.3 Sūkṣma-maṇḍala (ibid.72-104).
 I.4 Karma-pūjā-maṇḍala (ibid.105-137).
 I.5 Catur-mudrā-maṇḍala (ibid.140-144).
 I.6 Eka-mudrā-maṇḍala (ibid.145).

These six maṇḍalas correspond to the first part of the STTS pertaining to abhi-samaya. The remaining three parts pertain to vajra-samaya, dharma-samaya, and karma-samaya. Each of these three samayas has six maṇḍalas. Thus in the complete text of the STTS there are twentyfour maṇḍalas (4 samayas × 6 maṇḍalas = 24). The six Vairocanas represent the six maṇḍalas of any of the four samayas.

THE TEMPLE OF THE PREFECT

Prof. Tucci enumerates a series of Twentyone Tārās. There are other series too: the Rin-ḥbyun illustrates Twentyone Tārās according to Sūryagupta (Lokesh Chandra 1987 : nos.784-805). Their names are:

- 784 Ārya-[Mūla] Śyāmā Tārā/Hphags-ma [rtsa-baḥi] Sgrol
ljañ
 785 Pravīrā? Tārā/Rab-tu-dpaḥ-baḥi Sgrol-ma
 786 Candrakānti? Gaurī Tārā/Dkar-mo zla-mdañs-kyi
Sgrol-ma
 787 Kanakavarṇā Tārā/Gser-mdog-can-gyi Sgrol-ma
 788 Uṣṇīṣavijayā Tārā/Gtsug-tor-rnam-par-rgyal-baḥi
Sgrol-ma
 789 Hūmsvara-nādinī Tārā/Hūm-sgra-sgrog-paḥi Sgrol-ma
 790 Trailokya-vijayā Tārā/Hjig-rten-gsum-las-rnam-par-
rgyal-baḥi Sgrol-ma
 791 Vādi-pramardinī Tārā/Rgol-ba-hjoms-paḥi Sgrol-ma
 792 Varadā? Tārā/Dbañ-mchog-ster-baḥi Sgrol-ma
 793 Mārīci/Hod-zer-can-ma
 794 Khadiravaṇī Tārā/Señ-ldeñ-nags-kyi Sgrol-ma

- 792 Ekajaṭī/Ral-gcig-ma
793 Varadā Tārā/Mchog-stsol-baḥi Sgrol-ma
794 Śoka-vinodana Tārā/Mya-ñan-sel-baḥi Sgrol-ma
795 Āpada-vimocanī Tārā/Phoñs-pa-sel-baḥi Sgrol-ma (st.11)
796 Maṅgalāloka Tārā/Bkra-śis-snañ-baḥi Sgrol-ma
797 Paripācaka Tārā/Yoñs-su-smin-par-mdzad-paḥi Sgrol-ma
798 Bhṛkuṭī Tārā/Khro-gñer-g.yo-baḥi Sgrol-ma
799 Mahāśanti Tārā/Zhi-ba-chen-moḥi Sgrol-ma
800 Rāga-niśūdana Tārā/Chags-pa-hjoms-paḥi Sgrol-ma
801 Sukha-sādhana Tārā/Sgrol-ma bde-sgrub-ma
802 Saṁkusumita Tārā/Sgrol-ma rab-rgyas-ma
803 Duḥkha-dahana Tārā/Sgrol-ma sdug-bsñal-bsreg-ma
804 Siddhi-sambhavā Tārā/Sgrol-ma dños-grub-ḥbyuñ-ma
805 Paripūraṇa Tārā/Sgrol-ma yoñs-rdzogs-byed-ma

Another series is from the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Pantheon (Lokesh Chandra 1987: nos.2145-2165) where the names again differ:

- 2145 Turā-vīrā/Myur-ma-dpaḥ-mo
2146 Sarasvatī/Dbyañs-can-ma
2147 Puṇyavaradā/Bsod-nams-mchog-ster-ma
2148 Uṣṇiṣavijayā/Gtsug-tor-rnam-rgyal-ma (st.4)
2149 Vidyā/Rig-byed-ma
2150 Bhairavī/Hjigs-byed-ma
2151 Aparājitā/Gzhan-gyis-mi-thub
2152 Paramjayā?/Gzhan-las-rgyal
2153 Khadiravaṇī Tārā/Señ-ldeñ-nags Sgrol-ma
2154 Trailokyavijayā/Hjig-rten-gsum-rgyal
2155 Nor-gter-ma
2156 Maṅgalārthakarī?/Bkra-śis-don-byed
2157 Ripucakra-vināśinī/Dgra-dpuñ-hjoms-mdzad-ma (st.13)
2158 Bhṛkuṭī/Khro-gñer-can (st.14)
2159 Praśāntā?/Rab-zhi-ma
2160 Ujjvaladyutī?/Hbar-baḥi-ḥod-can-ma

- 2161 Amita-parākramā[?]/Dpag-med-gnon-ma
2162 Mahāmāyūrī/Rma-bya-chen-mo (st.18)
2163 Mi-pham-rgyal-mo
2164 Śabarī/Ri-khrod-ma
2165 Mārīci/Hod-zer-can-ma

Eight Tārās which protect from the eight fears (Sgrol-ma h̄jigs-pa-brgyad skyob-ma) are as follows in the Aṣṭasāhasrikā pantheon (Lokesh Chandra 1987: nos.2169-2179):

- 2169 Māna-simha-bhaya-trāṇa/Na-rgyal-señ-gehi-h̄jigs-skyoñ
2170 Moha-hasti-bhaya-tāriṇī devī/Gti-mug-glañ-poḥi-h̄jigs-sgrol lha-mo
2171 Dveṣ-āgni-praśamani/Zhe-sdañ-me-dpuñ-tshogs-rnams-rab-zhi-ma
2172 Īrṣyā-sarpaviṣ-āpaharaṇī/Phrag-dog-sprul-gyi-dug-rnams-yoñs-sel-ma
2173 Kudrṣṭi-cora-upadrava-nivāraṇī/Lta-ñan-rkun-poḥi-ñer-ḥtshe-las-bzlog-ma
2174 Ghora-mātsarya-śṛṅkhalā-mocanī/Mi-bzad-ser-snaḥi-lcags-sgrog-ḥgrol-mdzad-ma
2175 Rāg-augha-vegāvarta-śoṣaṇī/H̄dod-chags-chu-boḥi-rba-klon-skems-mdzad-ma
2176 Saṁśaya-piśāca-bhaya-trāṇa Tārā/The-tshom-śa-zah̄i-h̄jigs-skyob Sgrol-ma

There are corresponding eight acolytes of Avalokiteśvara who protect from the eight fears (ibid.632-638).

Prof. Tucci says that the literature on the eight cemeteries is not very large (p.173). There are quite a few descriptions of them, e.g. Amritananda (Lokesh Chandra 1973 : 40) details the eight śmaśāna from the Kriyā-samuccaya and from the Svayambhū-purāṇa, along with dikpāla, siddha, preta, animal, bird, tree, caitya and līnga of each cemetery.

Since Tucci chronicled his expedition to Western Tibet in 1933 and wrote the present scientific monograph in 1936, no real progress has been achieved in the study of the temples at Tsaparang. A decade later (1947-49) Lama Anagarika Govinda and his wife Li Gotami Govinda undertook an expedition to Tsaparang. Gotami photographed the statues and some murals at Tsaparang. Thirtyone photographs of the statues of these temples were published by Gotami in 1979. These photographs provide excellent details of the statues and their backgrounds. They have been concorded with the plates at the end of this volume. Gotami illustrates images which have not been illustrated by Tucci. From the Temple of Vajrabhairava she illustrates the statues of Maitreya (161), yab-yum Hevajra with eight heads and sixteen arms (164), ekavira Yamāntaka (165) and yab-yum Yamāntaka (167), and an unidentified yab-yum image (166). Two photographs of the interior of the White Temple in Gotami (179-180) merit special mention for showing the general layout of the whole. Gotami has the photographs of the eight Bhaiṣajyaguru (153-158, with two images on 153 and 155). Only two of them are illustrated in Tucci. She wrongly identifies them as the Five Tathāgatas. Gotami illustrates murals of White Tārā (168) and Mañjuśrī which are not to be seen on the plates of Tucci. Colour photographs by Adelaide de Menil accompany a popular writeup by Frits Staal in the *Natural History*, July 1986. An hour-long film on the treasures of Tsaparang and Thöling has been directed and photographed by Brian Beresford, produced by Sean Jones and sold by the Meridian Trust, 330 Harrow Road, London.

The temples at Tsaparang await detailed investigations in the light of the evolution and symbiosis of the various classes of Tantras. They can lead to a precise identification of the surviv-

ing frescoes on the walls surrounding the stucco figures. They are excellent visual representation of Vajrayāna, which dominated India, Central Asia, Tibet, China, Japan and Indonesia in centuries around the millenium.

Lokesh Chandra

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MAIN BOOK

INTRODUCTION

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEMPLES OF TSAPARANG FOR THE STUDY OF TIBETAN ART.

This second volume on the temples of Western Tibet is exclusively dedicated to Tsaparang.

About Tsaparang I have already spoken in my diary of the travel of 1933 (1). There is no need to repeat here what I have already said or to describe the region again. It is useful only to remember that the place is an immense ruin today (Plate I). Only the temples remain of its glorious past, and they also are desecrated, in danger to fall, and if the Tibetan authorities do not provide for them in time they are fated to crumble down.

In this way monuments of Indo-Tibetan art, of great value from the point of view of history, iconography and aesthetics will disappear. In fact, the temples which still remain, have long panels of tantric deities in many colours. In them are expressed with inexhaustible imagination, a great portion of the Mahāyānic Olympus, but there is also a harmony of colours

(1) Tucci-Ghersa 1933: 330, English edition: *Secrets of Tibet* 1935: 171.

which was never again reached in these parts of Tibet. Their paintings represent the best productions of the Western Tibetan schools. In them we may admire the full maturity of an art which, as I have said elsewhere, is of direct derivation from Indian traditions. The masters, invited to the province of Guge at the time of Rin-chen-bzan-po and of his royal patrons around the millenium, introduced the artistic manner of their original regions and in this school of painting are still alive the shadows of the great Indian monasteries, which have survived the slow and fateful dissolution of Buddhism. The Tibetan disciples had continued it with great fidelity and with a reverential respect with which the neophytes maintain the inheritance of their masters.

This is the great value of the frescoed chapels of Tsaparang: in them, in fact, we can still admire the not indignified work of a school of painting which can be said to represent a province of Tibetan art well defined in characteristics and peculiarities of style. It is still totally free from Chinese influences that are seen very strongly in the more recent paintings. Since only these are generally known in Europe, it is natural that the historians of Oriental art have in general considered Tibetan paintings as a more or less direct affiliate to the Chinese. It is beyond doubt that when cultural and political relations of Tibet and China start gradually growing, while those with India start diminishing, the art of the Land of Snows was influenced by the Chinese. But here, in Western Tibet, we are in very different conditions. In fact, even if during the greatest flourishing of Guge's reign Chinese caravans were coming to Tsaparang (as can be deduced from the testimonies of Catholic missionaries and by the indirect documentation of the historical frescoes

painting foundations of temples where occasionally Chinese merchants are also represented), nevertheless, the not always friendly relations with Central Tibet and the geographical distance, were two elements contrary to the penetration of cultural motifs from China in this far-away region. The relations with India, instead, starting with the time of Rin-chen-bzan-po, were never interrupted both via Kashmir and via Nepal.

On the other end, we know that in Western Tibet also, the work of Rin-chen-bzan-po, of his students and of his patrons was not only an intelligent apostolate, but a progressive work of civilizations made through the constant penetration of Indian motifs. This penetration was at the same time a creation because Buddhism and its missionaries found here only large groups of shepherds and mostly nomads. It is to say that, as the biography of Rin-chen-bzan-po teaches us, whole schools of artists came to live in Western Tibet and slowly they formed a school, where they however left traces of their personal work. The fragments of wooden sculpture published by me in the previous volume, the doors of Tabo, Toling, Tsaparang and Khojarnath are without doubt the few surviving documents of these masters' schools that the piety of the kings of Guge and the sad political events of India collected on the deserted planes of Mñah-ris.

These wooden works are conserved in large numbers. Nevertheless, an ancient frescoed chapel has survived for us. This chapel has to be considered as being due to the brush of Indian masters. I want to point to the chapel of Mangnang. This chapel,

as I have already hinted at elsewhere and later I shall demonstrate in a more lengthy manner, has revealed to us suddenly a great monument of Indian painting where worthily survive the pictorial traditions till now known to us only through Ajanta, Ellora and Sigiriya. Here in Tsaparang the first stage is lacking. As always happens in important cities mostly subjected to political events, the most ancient pictorial documents, even if they were there, were substituted by new frescoed walls, during the successive rebuilding of the temples. Nevertheless, if the point of departure such as we find in Mangnang is there no more, the pictorial processions preserved in the surviving temples, allow us to have an idea of the evolution of the schools which we shall call of Guge. If in any case it cannot be said, as it can be said for Mangnang, that we are facing Indian works, it is nevertheless certain that we witness a slow adaptation or acclimatization of painting in the temples of Tsaparang. They assume characters and forms peculiar to them without however losing evident traces of the primeval Indian inspiration, also in the latest examples.

Those nearest to Indian models can be considered the small paintings, which are true miniatures and are at the background of the series of sculptures of the White Temple. And they are 'Indian' for the accuracy of execution, the delicacy of drawing, lightness of movements, and for those chiaroscuro (light and shade effects) which have disappeared in the late paintings. We find in them also the preference, wherever the iconographical scheme could allow it, for the figure in half profile rather than

(1) *Illustrated London News*, 28 January 1936.

for the frontal. Yet, the group begins to be fragmented in single independent figures, all circumscribed in the halo. The isolated figure substitutes the group.

Immediately after this, there are the frescoes of the small temple of Śaṃvara/Bde-mchog on the summit of the hill, in the middle of the royal palace. The goddesses constituting the various followers of Śaṃvara are drawn with such a softness of line and with such an agile lightness, although in a certain schematism of forms, imposed by iconographic rules, that they do not have an equal counterpart in the customary Tibetan paintings. The figures of the Five Buddhas (plates XIII, XIV), although having lost their relief and being so to say flattened down according to the pictorial criteria later prevailing in Tibetan art, still maintain some traces of the ancient models. Faces have not yet been rounded, and the tiara is with triangular points and not with olive leaves as it will become subsequently in Tibetan iconography. The final developments of this art are found in the Red Temple where the art of Guge, already far from its primaeval inspirations, seems to feel the political decadence incumbent as a fatal thread on the reign where it first prospered. We are at the eve of the conquest of Guge by Senge-rnam-rgyal, the king of Ladakh and this conquest has slightly preceded the submission to Lhasa. The grace of the first works has disappeared. In its place comes the craving for the grandiose; enormous and out-of-proportion figures stand out with their trivial and uniform physiognomy on the historied walls. The interest of the artist seems to concentrate no longer on the figures but on the details, and the refinements of the dresses and the chiselling of the throne and the volute surrounding it and the purely ornamental developments. In them, however, survive with persistent resistance characteristic Indian motifs:

the volute containing in its field animals and lions rampant and winged horses. That is to say, although the artists love the grandiose, their skill is still manifested in the small figures and in the schemes framing the great images and especially in the historical legends running all along the basement of the temple. And these figures, though having assumed a decisively Tibetan aspect have not totally forgotten the Indian inspiration and are moving in an unreal passage such as could have only been imagined by people who, by working through imagination, did not want to insert in the pictorial representations of the life of the Buddha elements taken from the country where they were living. There is not yet any trace of those pavilions of Chinese style or of those little Tibetan houses leaning on to one another with white walls and red framed roofs constituting the normal background of the later representations of Buddha's life in thankas or in the more recent temples.

Here is the importance of these frescoes of Tsaparang. They document for us the developments and fortunes of pictorial art in these Western regions. They also prove the independence of these paintings from the schools prevailing in other parts of Tibet and give to this art of Guge its character proper, also manifesting itself in the thankas produced by its schools, which I will study in a following book.

Useless to add that this art of Guge takes its motifs of inspiration especially from Tantric Buddhism. Rin-chen-bzan-po, as I have already often said, had introduced in his own region just this Tantric literature, and introduced it not as a series of texts understood exactly philologically, but as mystic doctrines in

which he was initiated in India by the most celebrated masters of his age. They, by giving him the sacred baptism, had made him worthy of transmitting to his disciples, purified by long exercises of asceticism and meditation, the torch of the same initiatic teaching. I have also already said how many among the temples built by him were actual maṇḍalas each consecrated to a special god and to his cycle. Also in Tsaparang the same criterium is respected; in every chapel we see a following not of figures of independent deities without connection among them, but harmonic processions convergent toward a unique experience. This, as central point from which they emanate, confers on them a proper meaning and a particular symbolic value, in whose knowledge and full realization there is salvation. This central point or this germinal being is mostly, although not exclusively, Vairocana. One has not to believe, however, as often it seems to me that it is done, perhaps under the influence of Chinese Vajrayāna where the figure of Vairocana is preeminent, that Mantrayāna (as it is called by the very Buddhists of India and Tibet themselves, the Tantric form of Buddhism) is identified with Vairocana and his symbolism. It is true that some of the most important cycles centre around this symbol of the germinal essence of all, but it is also true that many other mysteriosophic trends, not less important than it, followed other ways expressed by other cycles. Among these cycles first of all there is that of Akṣobhya in his multiple forms as Heruka, as Hevajra, as Guhyasamāja or as Cakrasaṃvara. This fundamentally tantric content of Buddhism, sponsored by the kings of Western Tibet and spread in Guge most, and therefore not

to be forgotten if one wants to understand deeply the meaning of the paintings that we are going to study. It has to be ever present in order to judge the aesthetic value of this art, which seems to almost ignore the human form and not to draw any inspiration from the reality in which man lives and works. With the exception of the historic legend of the Buddha's life, there is never any landscape in the background; almost as to mean that with this total lack of a point of reference, we are in an abstract world of symbols. This abstract world is emphasized in the larger space of the walls by the multicoloured procession of his apparitions, while the bands running on the lower space are particularly dedicated to the human level, either with the earthly events of Śākya-muni, i.e. the incarnation of the Supreme truth descended among us to teach, with the mirage of his life, the way of redemption, or with historical events as the scenes where the episodes of the foundation of the temples are recorded. These scenes, with their vivid movement of masses, the realism of the types and the harmony of the groupings, demonstrate that, when the opportunity arose, the painters of Guge knew how to reproduce with efficacy the complex and varied rhythm of life. But this was not the world attracting them. It could not fill with its vision their religious souls. Their spiritual world was totally else. It appeared as a frightening dream or a fantastic pandemonium where the very human figure seems to decompose itself in monstrous types; heads, hands and legs multiply, the body becomes deformed, animal elements are inserted with a strange union with human characters.

The first impression that these paintings make is that of a nightmare, almost a visible projection of tumultuous vision in

sick minds. But Tantric literature and the exegesis of tantric masters gives us the key to understand them in their real meaning. They are a figurative language in which the highest systems of Indian gnosis expressed their experiences. It is, therefore, an art of symbols, a kind of pictorial hieroglyphics with which the initiatic schools, often by accepting very old religious types and by transfiguring in their systems of mystic traditional figures of popular demonology, shadowed their realizations. They expressed in the convention of an iconography, predetermined in all its details both of colours and proportions and gradations, the spiritual conquests that they proposed to reach or the numerous series of planes to which they imagined that the mystics would ascend in the processes of ascesis and liturgy.

This is, therefore, so to say an art of evocation. The painter did not follow the whims of his fantasy, but reproduced according to predetermined technical schemes the visions appearing to his devoted mind, during those trances that yoga and the formulae of meditation (*dhyāna*) were able to produce. Nothing was copied or reproduced; but everything was experienced, seen with the eyes of the soul, lived again in that ecstasy in which the painter monks knew how to sink in before they started putting their hand to work. I even think that the sure efficacy of many of these paintings depends on the fact that they have come out alive almost from the meditative process; the terrors and the beatitudes experienced by the painter seem reflected in his work. Later on, the iconometry and the schemes became traditional and then they were the only norm for the painter and took the place of his visions. Then art had become decadent, become flat, uniform, trivial and lost that power of expression that once was its principal characteristic.

There remained only the great vivacity and harmony of colours constituting even today the most notable value of Tibetan paintings.

Everything in this art has symbolic value and meaning: from colours to arms and to instruments in the hands of the deities, from the ornaments by which they are covered to the orgiastic dance that most of them dance in the rapture of the embrace. I have said in many places what these couplings mean, and I shall speak about them more extensively in a book, nearing publication, on tantric psychology. This is not, therefore, the moment to insist on the complex symbolism of these figures. They, in my opinion, have a beauty which is their own; a grotesque beauty, if you want, but nevertheless a sure power of expression. There is no doubt that the type of Vajrabhairava heading with his monstrous figure on the walls of the little temple dedicated to him, is an impressive and efficacious representation of that uncomposed world of tumultuous forces in creation and in the human subconscious that the Indian masters felt and tried to picture in the symbol of concrete figures in order to dominate them and to address them finally towards redemption.

We are then faced by an attempt to reproduce pictorially states of the soul, spiritual impressions and motifs, that no other art has known how to inspire such a variation of forms nor has had such a preponderant part. And, as I was saying above, we see the domination of the rhythms of dance, not always so graceful and sweet as in the small figures of the feminine deities, constituting the train of Śaṃvara, in the small

temple dedicated to him, but more often violent and orgiastic as in the type of the coupled deities. In the first case, the thin legs, posed in different positions for each figure, seem to convey almost the idea of a living cadence, in a manner that by running over the images with the eye, it seems that this delicate pictorial procession is animated and moves to the rhythm of a mystic dance, as coming to a new life by mysterious evocations.

In the second case, instead, the gigantic figures grimacing, with horrible faces crowned with macabre diadems, with the foot placed over human bodies twisted under the horrible pressure, reproduce with evident symbolism the various movements of cosmic dance; rhythms of life and death, of creation and involution, in the great and terrific dance of becoming, where, however, uniting gnosis to praxis the initiated may experiment the ineffable ecstasy of liberation.

This art, of Indian origin, seemed the most apt to be transplanted in a country like Tibet. The ancient Bonpo beliefs, the cult of underworld spirits presiding over places and mountains, ready to ambush the life of men, the macabre liturgies accompanying many ceremonies that Buddhism found in the Land of Snows, and had difficulty to transmute and to refine, and specially the great popularity of magical rites, all this could have made Tibet a field particularly adapted for the diffusion of Tantrism and of its art; an art that, as I have said, is at first sight not at all serene. It is the pictorial projection of the soul of India and Tibet, in which there is connaturated and deepened the sense of tragedy of life and therefore there is a powerful desire to overcome it.

CHAPTER I

THE TEMPLE OF ŚAMVARA/BDE-MCHOG

§1. *General description.* I shall start this description of the surviving temples of Tsaparang by speaking about a chapel standing on the top of the steep clayey mountain, around which the town was constructed, and around which was spread the crown of the caves of its inhabitants, dug out in the ravine. This small temple is built just in the middle of the royal palace (plate II) so that it seems that even today it insists to protect it with its immense ruins. It was to host the tutelary spirit (yi-dam) of the country, as it is the custom in all the fortified cities of Western Tibet. It was a kind of *sancta sanctorum*, holy of holies, the inviolate residence of the God to whom the royal family, and thus the city and therefore the whole country prayed for protection and help during difficult moments. At the same time it was an initiatic sacred place. It contained, as we shall see, the maṇḍala or mystic diagram in whose presence the disciple was admitted after long years of learning in order to receive from the master the sacred initiation into the mysteries of the gods and into the experiences that it symbolized.

It is desecrated and abandoned. Most of the statues that adorned the plastic maṇḍala contained in it, have been taken away. The disconnected roof begins to let water seep in, and

that water has already cancelled or disfigured the frescoes. The door has been uprooted and entrance to the temple is open to any desecrator. Perhaps the merchant-caravans of Garhwal passing on the road of Tsaparang going to the fair at Gartok have already taken away the few things still surviving.

The guide accompanying us in the visit, one of the few inhabitants of Tsaparang, assured us that the temple is known as the "Temple of Śaṃvara/Bde-mchog". The frescoes show that the tradition is exact.

§2. *The cycle of Śaṃvara/Bde-mchog.* Śaṃvara/Bde-mchog is the name of a very important Tantric cycle which commands special favour among the Tibetan mystic schools. It is centred in an original nucleus which has parted, so to say, into two lines, each of them having inspired numerous series of comments, ritualistic manuals and methods of mystical realization (i.e.: *sādhana*, Tib. *sgrub-thabs*). These two lines are designated by the name of the central divinity, that is to say by the symbol around which evolves the whole mystic theory expressed by them: Cakraśambara and Śambara; so at least according to the reading of the manuscripts (1). The tantras which contain their

(1) Śrīcakrasambara in no. 100 of the catalogue of Buddhist manuscripts of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (*Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Government Collection*, Buddhist manuscripts) by H.P. Shastri, p. 167 (but in the English text on p. 167 Cakrasaṃvara): thus also in no. 101 H.P. Shastri, transcribes sometimes Cakrasambara and sometimes Cakrasaṃvara.

In the catalogue of the Nepalese manuscripts preserved in the Durbar of Kathmandu published by the same H.P. Shastri, vol. II p. 48: Cakrasambara.

revelations respectively known as the (śrīmad-bhagavat) Cakraśambara and the Śambara-Tantra. But that the two lines are fundamentally identical is shown by the maṇḍalas symbolically expressing them. These maṇḍalas make both deities the hypostasis of another well-known divinity of the Mahāyānic school, that is to say Heruka. Tibetans have hesitated a little in rendering these two names; Cakraśambara or Cakrasaṃvara is usually translated (1): Ḥkhor-lo-sdom-pa. They then were reading: saṃvara, giving to this word the meaning of “union” (2). Śambara instead has been rendered as: Bde-mchog, which literally means: “supreme (*mchog*) beatitude (*bde*)”.

In the first case, that is as Cakrasaṃvara (Ḥkhor-lo-sdom-pa), the significance is different: according to the fact that the word cakra, in Sanskrit meaning “wheel” or “disc”, is taken in the meaning of “elements of existence (dharma)”, or of weapon, because the mystic of these tantras cut the false imaginings

In the catalogue of the manuscripts of Cambridge edited by Bendall: Cakrasambara p. 186 and Śambara p. 202.

In the *Catalogue of the Sanskrit and Prakrit manuscripts in the library of the India Office*, edited by A.B. Keith, and for the Buddhist part by F.W. Thomas, vol. II, p. 1394 no. 7712 n. 3: Cakrasambara.

The Sanskrit titles preserved in the Tibetan collection waver between Śrīcakrasaṃvara, Cakraśambara, Sambara (in Sambara-maṇḍala-vidhi, Sambara-kalita etc.) (edition of Sde-dge) Śrīcakraśambara; see catalogue of the *Bkaḥ-gyur*, by Beck or the indexes of Lalou to the catalogue of Cordier; *Catalogue-index of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons*, published by the Tohoku Imperial University. Of this cycle the Śrīcakrasaṃvara (transcribed however Shricakrasambhāra) has been let known by Kazi Dawa Samdup in the *Tantrik Texts of Avalon* (vol. VII).

(1) But there are exceptions due to the very incertitude of the name in Sanskrit sources. See for instance, Cordier, *Catalogue* III.115.

(2) *Samvara* means, as the Tibetan *sdom*, not only “precept, rule”, but also “union (Tib. *hdus*)”. The synonymity of saṃvara and samāja is attested by Nāropā in the *Sekoddeśa-ṭīkā* p. 33: *sarva-dhātūnām samāhāro melāpakāḥ samājah samvarah*

which keep us attached to life, or of “existence” because these texts reveal the law of karmic connection. Śaṃvara, then, i.e. union, or point of meeting, wants to point at the essence of the whole, that is to say the gnosis of the essential luminosity which is the ground of things. Or “wheel” are the four prime gnosés (1), and “union” is the gnosis of the absolute (*chos-kyi-dbyiñs=dharmadhātu*). “Wheel” is symbol of the *ḍākinī* (that is of the divine potencies of whom we shall speak later) and “union” instead of Heruka. Or “wheel” means the four species of mystical inferior beatitudes and “union” the supreme or inborn (*sahaja*) beatitude. “Wheel” can be the four Tathāgata: Akṣobhya, Amitābha, Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi, while “union” is Vairocana and so on (2).

In the second case, it is clear that the Lotsava or the Indian milieux, in whose tradition they were formed, read: Śaṃvara, giving to *śaṃ* the meaning of “beatitude” (3). They, then, took Śaṃvara as a composite name: “the supreme (*vara*) pleasure (*śaṃ*), the supreme beatitude”. The very name tells us about the fundamental doctrines of this school. It taught, with the help of well-defined meditations, the way to realize a state of perfect beatitude. For these sects of the Tantric period the supreme goal of the Buddhist teaching still remains liberation. But this liberation comes neither only from moral praxis, as in the

(1) On this see *Indo-Tibetica* III/1.55, 152.

(2) see *Guhyavajra-tantrarāja-vṛtti*, Bstan-ḡgyur, rgyud Ta 264.

(3) That is *śaṃ sukham*, see the comment of Mādhavācārya to *Sūta-saṃhitā* (Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series) p. 27.

early period of Buddhism, nor from knowledge *per se*; mystic knowledge remains, it is true, the most important point of spiritual ascesis, but it is no longer considered—as we have said in the preceding volume—as a mere cognitive act, but it is adequate to the consubstantiation with the Eternal Truth. This consubstantiation is therefore a possession, a full experience, and thus a supreme beatitude. It derives from the perfect fusion (*yoga* or *samāpatti*) of the two indissoluble coefficients of salvation; that is to say the gnosis of the fundamental unsubstantiality of things and compassion, i.e. the contemplative element and the active element. It is also the *bodhicitta*, the thought of illumination understood as cause and effect at the same time; that is, not only as initial motive of the long career towards liberation, but as synonymous both with the eternal background of things and with the germinal essence of the all. In this possession, is the beatitude: and this beatitude is identified with knowledge (*akṣara-sukhaṃ jñānadhātu* in *Vimala-prabhā* VIII a) and, which is identical with the state of Buddha (*Buddhatvaṃ paramākṣara-sukhaṃ*, *ibid.* VII. 6). The indefinite *nirvāṇa* of the more ancient schools assumes, therefore, a positive meaning. It is repeated, moreover, as a phenomenon not rare in mystical schools; this beatitude and the ascesis which has to prepare for it are described in terms of love. The thought of illumination identified with supreme beatitude sprang from the contact and the fusion of its two coefficients as the seed from sexual union. That is why many tantric deities symbols as they are, as I have said many times, of religious experiences are represented in the act of embracing (according to Tibetan terminology; *yab-yum*, father-mother). In their desire

to experience and to possess this beatitude, during the various stages of the meditative process, some schools come to identify in fact the thought of illumination with the seed and impose the rite of the initiatic circle culminating in union with the śakti or mudrā. She is a girl of sixteen years, and of varied caste according to the “mystical family” (1) of the initiated. She symbolizes the corresponding śakti or creative energy of the supreme pentad and is often called by the same name. The union, however, is made in such a way as to avoid the ejection of the seed.

This ritual, in fact, is performed with the full awareness of its mystical meaning, as a liturgic drama renewing on a short consecrated plane the eternal process of creation and reabsorption in the cosmos. The mystic united with his śakti is the All. Their body contains sun, moon, stars and worlds. In him, through the alternate vicissitudes of his breath, is mirrored the infinite rush of time, the systole and diastole through which life flows and again is contracted in itself in order to expand again in a cycle that is limitless. The mystic, embracing his śakti in a pleasure full of possibilities and never consummated, is the synthesis of potency and act, before that breaking of contingency and phenomenon in the world, and which is represented by the flowing of the seed (2).

(1) See *Indo-Tibetica* III/1.42

(2) These theories, specially developed by the sect of siddhas and expressed in the literature of the *Dohākośa*, have continued not only in the śākta schools of Mediaeval India, but in a special manner in that of the sahajīya, which is its direct derivative in Bengal. But Śamvara, Guhyasamāja and also the Kālacakra-tantra already presuppose them.

All this, however, should not let us forget that, as in almost all the Buddhist deities, one has to distinguish also in the case of Śaṃvara so to say two planes: on one hand, the mystical and esoteric symbolism elaborated, with the proceeding of time, around this god and responding to the evolution that in the religious thought was forming itself in India; on the other hand, the original type of this very god deprived of all his later dogmatic constructions. Thus, Śaṃvara-Heruka, before assuming the form as represented by the tantric mystic, was nothing else than a local deity of some ethnic group not well definable. He is of terrific character as almost all the deities which confluenced in Hinduism in the type of Śiva. With the latter, he has many elements in common, not the least the fact of carrying in one of his arms the head of Brahmā; also Śiva, according to some traditions, had the fifth head of Brahmā cut.

§3. *Iconographic type of Śaṃvara and its symbolism.* The very Heruka or Śaṃvara—in fact Heruka is called Śaṃvara in the form of central deity (*gtso-bo*) of the whole of his maṇḍala—is represented as coupled with his śakti (1).

He is described as such (2): “In the centre of the lotus, over a solar seat, there is the Blessed Śri-Heruka with a blue body. He has four faces: the first (namely, the central one) is black, the one of the left green, the back one red and the right one yellow. Each face has three eyes. He has twelve hands. In front

(1) See iconographic information in Grünwedel, *Mythologie des Buddhismus in Tibet und Mongolei*, p. 105 f; Getty, *Gods of Northern Buddhism* (first edition) p. 127.

(2) See bibliographic list, I, p. 14b.

he wears a garland of vajra with five points. With his right leg set forward he presses down the head of Kālabhairava, who has four arms; two of them are in the act of adoration; in the second of the right he holds the magic drum (ḍamaru), and in the second of the left he holds the sword. His left leg is bent and presses the breast of Kālī (Dus-mtshan-ma), red and also with four arms, two of which are joined in adoration, and of the other two the one of the right holds a skull (kapāla) and the left one holds the khaṭvāṅga (1).

“(Heruka) with his two main arms embraces Vajravārāhi holding nevertheless in the right a vajra with five points and in the left the bell. The hands of the arms below are in the posture of menacing (tarjanī-mudrā); with them he holds spread at the height of his eyes a dress made with the white and bloody skin of an elephant, grasping with his right hand behind him the left paw, and with his left hand the left foot. In the other hands of the right he raises, respectively: the magical drum, the hatchet, the knife (*gri-gug*), the trident; in those of the left the khaṭvāṅga marked with the vajra (symbol of illumination), a skull (*thod-pa*, kapāla) full of blood (symbol of the supreme beatitude, mahāsukha), the adamantine noose (*vajrapāśa*) and

(1) Made of a white stick with the point towards the height; on the stick there is a black vajra with five points, then, in order, one under the other, a white skull, a red head on the way to dissolving (*rñin-pa*), a head recently cut, black. In the middle of the stick the viśvavajra, namely the double vajra under a white vase: thus explains Tson-kha-pa. See also Grünwedel, *Mythologie des Buddhismus* p. 100 and Ribbach, *Vier Bilder des Padmasambhava und seiner Gefolgschaft*, Hamburg 1917, p. 18.

the head of Brahmā with four faces. He wears the ascetic lock marked by a double vajra disposed across (*viśvavajra*). On every head a crown of vajra black, on which five skulls are arranged above and five below. He wears a half-moon slightly inclined over the left of his face. The faces are counterfeited (*vikṛta*) and they are terrific because of four teeth jutting out in the act of grinning. He has nine moods: three in the body, he is strong, heroic, ugly; three in speech: wild, terrible, fearful; three in spirit: compassionate, dignified, serene. He wears a girdle made of tiger's skin; on his neck there is a lace of fifty human heads recently cut and held together by human entrails. He is marked by six signets (*ṣaṅ-mudrā*) (1) and with the ashes of burnt corpses smeared all over the body. The coupling of the "mother" and the "father" means the fusion of the two coefficients of salvation, namely, on one side the "means" that is to say of compassion or of the active element (since this "means" or active element when it has reached a special efficacy penetrates the most vital parts of the body and on the other side of the "wisdom". During the union with the "mother", the "moon" namely the thought of illumination localized in the head, is fused and permeates the whole body. It follows the "great pleasure of the means" which symbolizes meditation on the meaning of the four

(1) Gloss by Tson-kha-pa: "the gem on the summit of the head, garland, ring, earring, sacrificial girdle, human ashes; the four central ornaments are made of human bones." According to the *Bcom-ldan-ḥdas dṡal ḥkhor-lo-sdom-paḥi mñon-par-rtogs-pa* by Lūi-pā, p. 2 the six mudrās symbolize the six mystical perfections (pāramitā). See below on p. 26.

foundations of liberation. These have as their object the insubstantiality of the All identified with mystic wisdom. This pleasure is in its turn, symbolized by the *khaṭvāṅga* and by the skull. "Means" are: this pleasure whose sense is symbolized by the *khaṭvāṅga* and by the skull and the five gnososes symbolized by these two instruments and by the bell and by the vajra, and the sense of mystic perfection (*pāramitā*) and the formulae (*mantra*), represented by the vocalic series (*āli*) and by the consonantic series (*kāli*). Out of them is produced the purification of the thirst for action etc., the liberation from mental obscuration, the evocation of all Buddhas, the cutting of false concepts about the extreme theses and the errors of the three "doors" (i.e. body, word and mind), the piercing of all moral infections and the ligaments of pure knowledge (1), the submission of the two extreme theses (2) namely that of eternity or of perennial existence of *saṃsāra* and that of annihilation, namely the non-existence (of the individual) in *Nirvāṇa*, in a word the submission (*abhibhava*) of the whole phenomonic world by means of the concept of insubstantiality.

"Therefore the head of *Brahmā* symbolises the full abandonment of the error concerning the effect that derives from these (realizations), (namely the not being moved toward asceticism by the hope of a reward); the skulls forming the lace of the god mean embodying the light born of the peace conquered in the suppression of all the extremes. The twelve hands indicate the

(1) Symbolised by the garland of skulls strung by human bowels.

(2) Represented by *Kālabhairava* and *Umā*.

purification of every stain regarding the interpretation of the twelvefold causal concatenation. The deformed face means the denial of all false theories; the grin showing the teeth indicates the overcoming of the four Māras (1), the ascetic lock of hair raised toward the height is the conception of the ascendental merit; the girdle of vajra the quiescence in the fivefold gnosis that appears when merit comes to its maximum development. The god has three eyes, because he discovers everything with that wisdom; the double crossed vajra (*viśvavajra*, *sna-tshogs-rdorje*) because with his fourfold activity he performs the good of all creatures; the six signets are equivalent to the perfection of the methods (lit. ways) conducive to the six mystical perfections. He is provided with all the magnificence of spiritual serenity which is the conglomeration of the Five Tathāgatas and of the four Śaktis.

“Facing the Blessed One is the blessed Vajravārāhī with a red body. She has one face, two hands and three eyes; she is nude with open hair and wears a girdle adorned with pieces of skulls. With the left hand she embraces the neck of the “father” and offers him the skull full of the blood of the four Māras. With the right hand in the attitude of menacing (*tarjanī-mudrā*) she holds the vajra and she scares demons (*gdug-pa*) of the ten points of space (2).

“For (being symbol of the) intuition of the nonsubstantiality of the universe she is similar to fire that destroys the worlds at the end of the aeons. She is resplendent with solar gleam because she expresses the possession of the purest wisdom. She

(1) Namely: *skandhamāra*, five constituents of human personality; *kleśamāra* passions and tendencies of evil; *maraṇamāra* death; *devaputramāra* the temptor.

(2) That is to say the four cardinal points, the four intermediary ones and the nadir and the zenith.

takes pleasure in blood, oozing blood, clenched with the two shin bones to the thigh of the "father", consubstantiated with the great compassion since she performs the good of creatures also remaining in that extreme beatitude consisting in the supreme vision. She is adorned with the five seals (namely the ones cited above) minus the ashes; she wears a girdle of fifty skulls and has on the forehead a diadem of five skulls".

§4. *The maṇḍala of Śaṃvara.* But in the Tantric schools the divinities are never isolated. They are imagined and reproduced as the centre of a divine series that evolves around them according to a previously fixed order which is scrupulously symbolic. Therefore, it is to be expected that Śaṃvara too is accompanied by his followers in the mystical diagram of the maṇḍala which takes its name from him. This is in fact largely demonstrated by the vast ritualistic literature connected with our cycle and which analyses its experiences or describes its maṇḍala. This maṇḍala is presented as one of the richest and more complex in the whole of Tantrism and surely also as one of the most interesting. In the numerous groups of the acolytes of Śaṃvara we find well-known divinities of the Hindu pantheon almost so as to testify once more the tendency appearing early in Buddhism of uniting itself with the popular religious traditions and of accepting them, except to transform them completely in its symbolism and in its mysticism.

The exegetical literature at my disposal on the cycle of Śaṃvara can be divided into two principal groups. This does not of course take into account the elaborations undergone by its philosophemes and by its liturgy in the haṭhayoga dogmatic of

the pañcakrama inspired by this Tantra. Of these two groups, on one hand there are the works of Indian masters included in the Bstan-ḥgyur and on the other the exegesis and the glossae of Tibetan doctors. In both the groups one has to distinguish the very doctrinal commentaries and the liturgical treatises (*sādhana*, Tib. *sgrub-thabs*), namely those manuals describing in all details the rituals preparing for or accompanying the initiation or ascension to the supreme contemplation of the mystical truths symbolised in the obscure precepts of the Tantra or in the variegated diagrams of its maṇḍalas. The texts contained in the Bkaḥ-ḥgyur or in the Bstan-ḥgyur will not be listed; it is enough to refer back to the indices of these collections (1). Instead, the most important works written by Tibetan doctors and published in Tibet and therefore less known or not yet studied have been recorded in the bibliographical index at the end of the present volume according to my collection of manuscripts and xylographs (2).

The small temple of Tsaparang presents to us something if not unusual at least not very frequent; namely, the maṇḍala is not painted but is built with wood and stucco. When it was intact, it would have constituted a splendid example of a stable maṇḍala. In fact, normally the maṇḍalas, if not frescoed, were drawn every time by means of colored powders or on the floor

(1) For the Bkaḥ-ḥgyur the catalogues of Beck and of the Otani University. For the Bstan-ḥgyur that of Cordier with the very useful supplement in the index by Marcelle Lalou. See also the above-quoted catalogue published by the Tohoku Imperial University.

(2) The roman number refers to the serial number of the works listed in the appendix.

or over a surface properly prepared. Now, however, every detail of the maṇḍala has fallen down and is destroyed. The arches that adorned the pavilions (*vimāna*) or were over the “doors” are lying here and there broken in confused heaps. We reached just in time to find among the ruins the statues or fragments of statues of the deities originally disposed around the maṇḍala in the place assigned to each of them. They are reproduced in the frontispiece and on plates III-XII.

Is it possible to identify them?

In order to single out and give a name to the plastic or pictorial images of the small temple of Tsaparang I shall use the liturgical manuals listed above and I shall take as a guide the method of mystical realization of Śaṃvara elaborated by the celebrated Siddha Lūi-pā and glossed by Tsoñ-kha-pa (1). This

(1) According to no. 7 in the bibliographic list the whole literature of Cakrasaṃvara and of the Śaṃvaratantra is divided in two basic groups: Tantra as such and works of comment. The Tantras, in turn were generally subdivided into three groups, namely: a) the original Tantras (*rtsa rgyud*) in three versions, the larger one in three hundred thousand verses, the middle one as the Khasamatantra, and the shorter ones; b) the explanatory Tantras namely Vajradāka, Śaṃvarodaya, Yoginī-saṅcāra, Abhidhānottara, Sampuṭa; c) the parallel Tantras (*phyogs mthun*) as Herukābhyudaya, Dākārṇava.

As far as their interpretations go, although no. 10 of the bibliographic list enumerates nine different methods, each of whom goes back to a famous master of the tantric schools; the Tibetan tradition has especially taken its inspiration from three methods of exegesis and liturgy: either from that of Lūi-pā, or from that of Ghaṅṭā-pā, or from that of Kṛṣṇācārya. Without entering into details, it is right to say that Rin-chen-bzañ-po, and in general the Bkaḥ-gdams-pa have followed the first system, namely the one of Lūi-pā (bibliographic list no. 10 p. 3). That is why for the interpretation of the paintings of Tsaparang, I have taken as guide especially the work of that famous master of the mysticism and of the esoterism of late Buddhism.

The other methods, i.e. those of Prabhūtacandra, of Kambala, Nāgārjuna, Indrabhūti, Maitripā, Trinetra, did not have a diffusion equal to that enjoyed by the first three of them.

text lists and describes the deities constituting the cycle of Śaṃvara and have therefore to be evocated in the various moments of the complex ceremonial. For this reason its lists are of the greatest iconographic interest because they contain accurate and complete descriptions of divinities mostly still unknown or not yet identified with surety.

In order to facilitate research it is necessary to sum up the lists of Lūi-pā/Tsoñ-kha-pa according to a scheme that allows us to recognise easily the single divine manifestations constituting the rich maṇḍala of Śaṃvara.

1. Heruka, blue, one head, when a single face it is of the colour of the body, if more only the central head is of body colour. When the faces are more than one the order is as follows: the central one, to the right and to the left, right hand: vajra, left hand: bell, āliḍha posture. His consort is Vajravārāhī, red, two hands: vajra and kapāla.

2. Rnam-snañ/Vairocana, white, one head, right hand: disc above, left hand: bell on side, āliḍha posture.

3. Rdo-rje-ñi-ma/Vajrasūrya, yellow, one head, right hand: gem, left hand: bell at the height of the breast, āliḍha posture.

4. Pad-ma-gar-gyi-dbañ-phyug/Padmanarteśvara, red, one head, right hand: red lotus, left hand: bell at the height of the breast, āliḍha posture.

5. Rdo-rje-rgyal-po/Vajrarāja, green, one head, right hand: viśvavajra, left hand: bell at the height of the breast, āliḍha posture.

6. Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, white one head, right hand: vajra near breast, left hand: bell on side, āliḍha posture.

7. Heruka, black, one head, right hand: vajra, left hand: bell on side, āliḍha posture.

8. Gti-mug-rdo-rje/Mohavajra, white, one head, right hand: disc, left hand: bell on side, āliḍha posture.

9. Zhe-sdañ-rdo-rje/Dveṣavajra, black, one head, right hand: vajra near breast, left hand: bell on side, āliḍha posture.

10. Ser-sna-rdo-rje/Mātsaryavajra, yellow, one head, right hand: gem, left hand: bell on breast, āliḍha posture.

11. Ḥdod-chags-rdo-rje/Rāgavajra, red, one head, right hand: red lotus, left hand: bell on breast, āliḍha posture.

12. Phrag-dog-rod-rje/Īrṣyāvajra, green, one head, right hand: viśvavajra, left hand: bell on breast, āliḍha posture.

13. Dbañ-phyug-rdo-rje/Īsvaravajra, white, one head, right hand: vajra on breast, left hand: bell on side, āliḍha posture.

14. Ltuñ-byed-ma, yellow, one head, 4 hands: right hands: knife, disc, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga, āliḍha posture.

15. Gsod-byed-ma, black, one head, 4 hands: right hands: knife, vajra, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga, āliḍha posture.

16. Hgugs-byed-ma, red, one head, 4 hands: right hands: knife, padma, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga, āliḍha posture.

17. Gar-gyi-dbañ-phyug-ma/Narteśvarī, green, one head, 4 hands: right hands: knife, sword, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga, āliḍha posture.

18. Padmaḥi-dra-ba-can/*Padmajāla, pearly, 3 heads: pearly, white, red, 6 hands: right hands: knife, head of Brahmā, hook, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga, noose.

TEN KHRO-MO/KRODHINĪ

19,20. Two Khva-gdoñ-ma/Kākāsyā, black, one head, two hands: right hand: club (rdo-rje-tho-ba), magical dagger (phur-bu).

21. Hug-gdoñ-ma/Ulūkāsyā, green, one head, two hands as in no. 19.

22,23. Two Khyi-gdoñ-ma/Śvānāsyā, red, one head, two hands as in no. 19.

24. Phag-gdoñ-ma/Sūkarāsyā, yellow, one head, two hands as in no. 19.

25. Gśin-rje-brtan-ma/Yamadāḍhī or °dṛḍhā, blue on right and yellow on left, one head, two hands as in no. 19.

26. Gśin-rje-pho-ña-mo/Yamadūti, yellow on right and red on left, one head, two hands as in no. 19.

27. Gśin-rje-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma/Yamadaṃṣṭrī, red on right and green on left, one head, two hands as in no. 19.

28. Gśin-rje-ḥjoms-ma/Yamamathanī, green on right and blue on left, one head, two hands as in no. 19.

5. MCHOD-PAḤI-LHA-MO/PŪJĀ-DEVĪ
(ADORING GODDESSES)

29. Me-tog-ma/Puṣpā, white, four hands: right hand: vajra, left hand: bell, and two hands with vessel and offering of flowers.

30. Bdug-pa-ma/Dhūpā, grey, four hands: right hand: vajra, left hand: bell, and two hands with vessel and offering of incense.

31. Mar-me-ma/Dīpā, red-yellow, four hands: right hand: vajra, left hand: bell, and two hands with vessel and offering of a lamp.

32. Byug-pa-ma/Gandhā, green, four hands: right hand: vajra, left hand: bell, and two hands with vessel and offering of fragrance.

33. Zhal-zas-ma/Naivedyā, multicoloured, four hands: right hand: vajra, left hand: bell, and two hands with vessel and offering of food.

SIXTEEN VIDYĀ (RIG-MA)

34. Pi-waṅ-ma/Vīṇā, blue, four hands: right hands: vīṇā, vajra, left hands: bell.

35. Gliṅ-bu-ma/Vaṁśā, yellow, four hands: right hands: vaṁśā, vajra, left hands: bell.

36. Rṅa-zlum-ma/Mṛdaṅgā, red, four hands: right hands: mṛdaṅga, vajra, left hands: bell.

37. Rdza-rṅa-ma/Murajā, green, four hands: right hands: muraja, vajra, left hands: bell.

38. Bzhad-ma/Hāsyā, red, four hands: two hands in the attitude of one who laughs, right hand: kapāla, left hand: khaṭvāṅga.

39. Sgeg-mo/Lāsyā, blue, four hands: right hands: vajra, kapāla, left hands: bell on side, khaṭvāṅga.

40. Glu-ma/Gītā, yellow, four hands: cymbals in two hands, right hand: kapāla, left hand: khaṭvāṅga.

41. Gar-ma/Nṛṭyā, green, four hands: two hands in the attitude of beating time, right hand: kapāla, left hand: khaṭvāṅga.

42. Me-tog-ma/Puṣpā, white, four hands: right hands: vase of flowers, ḍamaru, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga.

43. Bdug-spos-ma/Dhūpā, pearly, four hands: right hands: vase of incense, ḍamaru, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga.

44. Mar-me-ma/Dīpā, yellow, four hands: right hands: lamp, ḍamaru, left hand: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga.

45. Dri-chab-ma/Gandhā, red, four hands: right hands: vase of perfume, ḍamaru, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga.

46. Gzugs-ma/Rūpā, white, four hands: right hands: mirror, ḍamaru, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga.

47. Ro-ma/Rasā, red, four hands: right hands: vase of honey, ḍamaru, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga.

48. Reg-bya-ma/Sparśā, green-yellow, four hands: right hands: multicoloured dress, ḍamaru, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga.

49. Chos-dbyiṅs-rdo-rje-ma/Dharmadhātu-vajrā, red, four hands: right hands: triangle (chos-ḥbyun), ḍamaru, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga.

IIInd MAṄḌALA

Eight Dikpāla

50. Dbañ-po/Indra, yellow, four hands: two joined in adoration, right hand: vajra, left hand: kapāla, mount (vāhana): elephant Airāvata/Rab-brtan, white.

51. Nor-sbyin/Kubera, yellow, four hands: two joined in adoration, right hand: ichneumon, left hand: kapāla, mount: man.

52. Chu-lha/Varuṇa, white, four hands: two joined in adoration, right hand: noose of serpents, left hand: kapāla, mount: makara/chu-sriñ, with his crest.

53. Gśin-rje/Yama, blue, four hands: two joined in adoration, right hand: baton, left hand: kapāla, mount: buffalo.

54. Dbañ-phyug-chen-po/Īśāna, white, four hands: two joined in adoration, right hand: trident, left hand: kapāla, mount: ox.

55. Me-lha/Agni, red, four hands: two joined in adoration, right hand: rosary and kamaṅḍalu, left hand: kapāla, mount: ram.

56. Srin-pò/Nirṛti, blue, four hands: two joined in adoration, right hand: sword, left hand: kapāla, mount: ghost.

57. Rluñ-lha/Vāyu, pearly colour, four hands: two joined in adoration, right hand: standard, left hand: kapāla, mount: śa-ba-la (antelope).

[Sanskrit equivalents of 54, 56, 57 have been corrected — Lokesh Chandra]

Eight Kṣetrapāla

58. Elephant-headed, white, two hands: right hand: offering (gtor-ma), left hand: kapāla.
59. Human-headed, yellow, two hands: right hand: offering (gtor-ma), left hand: kapāla.
60. Makara-headed, white, two hands: right hand: offering (gtor-ma), left hand: kapāla.
61. Buffalo-headed, black, two hands: right hand: offering (gtor-ma), left hand: kapāla.
62. Ox-headed, white, two hands: right hand: offering (gtor-ma), left hand: kapāla.
63. Goat-headed, red, two hands: right hand: offering (gtor-ma), left hand: kapāla.
64. Ghost-headed, black, two hands: right hand: offering (gtor-ma), left hand: kapāla.
65. Gazelle-headed, green, two hands: right hand: offering (gtor-ma), left hand: kapāla.

Eight Nāga

(Upper part is human, lower part is serpentine)

66. Nor-rgyas/Vāsuki, white, both hands in adoration.
67. H̄jog-po/Takṣaka, red, both hands in adoration.
68. Karkoṭa, blue, both hands in adoration.
69. Padma, white, both hands in adoration.
70. Padma-chen/Mahāpadma, white, both hands in adoration.
71. Mthah-yas/Ananta, multicoloured, both hands in adoration.
72. Rigs-ldan/Kulika, white, both hands in adoration.
73. Duñ-skyoñ/Śaṅkhapāla, yellow, both hands in adoration.

74. Heruka, blue, four heads: blue, green, red, yellow, twelve hands: two embrace the śakti holding vajra and bell, right hands: ḍamaru, hatchet, knife, trident, left hands: khaṭvāṅga, kapāla, noose, head of Brahmā, the right leg in āliḍha, left in pratyāliḍha trampling on Kālabhairava and on Kālī, śakti: Rdo-rje-phag-mo/Vajravārāhī, two faces, two hands in tarjanī mudrā and with a kapāla.

75. Ḍākinī, black, one head, four hands: right hands: knife, ḍamaru, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga.

76. Lāmā, green, one head, four hands: right hands: knife, ḍamaru, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga.

77. Khaṇḍarohī, red, one head, four hands: right hands: knife, ḍamaru, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga.

78. Gzugs-can-ma/Rūpiṇī, yellow, one head, four hands: right hands: knife, ḍamaru, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga.

Twenty protectors of 24 places and regions of the
“corpus of diamond”/rdo-rje-lus/vajrakāya
all coupled with their śakti (yab-yum)

(A) SPHERE OF THE SPIRIT (*THUGS-KYI H̄KHOR-LO*)
OR OF ETHER (*NAM-MKHAḤ*)

79. At Pullira Malaya: (head) Khaṇḍakapāla (the spellings of Sanskrit names are given according to the readings of the Tibetan text), blue, one head, four hands: two hands embrace the śakti holding vajra and bell, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Rab-gtum-ma/Pracaṇḍā, with two hands embracing the god, the right hand in tarjanī-mudrā and knife, the left hand: kapāla, hair.

80. At Jalandhara: (top of the head) Mahākaṅkāla, blue, one head, four hands: two hands embrace the śakti holding vajra and bell, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Gtum-mig-ma/Pracaṇḍākṣī (the Sanskrit names are from the Niṣpanna-yogāvalī pp. 26,27).

81. At Oṭṭiyāna: (right ear) Kaṅkāla, blue, two hands embrace the śakti holding vajra and bell, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Ḥod-ldan-ma/Prabhāvatī.

82. At Arbuda: (nape of the neck) Mche-ba-rnam-par-gtsigs-pa/Vikaṭadamṣṭrin, blue, two hands embrace the śakti holding vajra and bell, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Sna-chen-ma/Mahānāsā.

83. At Godavari: (left ear) Surāvairin, blue, two hands embrace the śakti holding vajra and bell, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Dpaḥ-boḥi-blo-can-ma/Vīramatī.

84. At Rāmeśvara: (space between the eyebrows) Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitābha, blue, two hands embrace the śakti holding vajra and bell, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Kharvarī.

85. At Devikoṭa: (two eyes) Rdo-rjeḥi-ḥod/Vajraprabha, blue, two hands embrace the śakti holding vajra and bell, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Lan̄kāḥi-dbañ-phyug-ma/Lan̄keśvarī.

86. At Malavar (in text on p. 17b: mawabar, but on p. 21 correctly malabar): (two shoulders) Rdo-rjeḥi-sku/Vajradeha, blue, two hands embrace the śakti holding vajra and bell, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Śiṅ-grib-ma/Drumac-chāyā.

VERBAL SPHERE (GSUÑ) OR OF THE EARTH (SA)

87. At Kāmarūpa: (two armpits) Myu-gu-can/Aṅkuraka, blue, two hands embrace the śakti holding vajra and bell, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Sa-sruṅs-ma/Airāvati.

88. At Oṭe[viśa] (Uṭre): (breasts) Rdo-rje-ral-pa-can/Vaj-
rajaṭila, red, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti:
Hjigs-byed-chen-mo/Mahābhairavī.

89. At Tiśakune: (navel) Dpaḥ-bo-chen-po/Mahāvīra, red,
right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Rluñ-gi-śugs-
can-ma/Vāyuvegā.

90. At Kośala: (tip of the nose) Rdo-rje-hūm-mdzad/Vajra-
hūmkāra, red, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga,
śakti: Chañ-ḥthuñ-ma/Surābhakṣī.

91. At Kaliṅga: (mouth) Rab-tu-bzañ-po/Subhadra, red, right
hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Śno-bsañs-lha-mo/
Śyāmādevī.

92. At Lampaka: (neck) Rdo-rje-bzañ-po/Vajrabhadra, red,
right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Śin-tu-bzañ-
mo/Subhadrā.

93. At Kāñcī (alternately Campā): (heart) Hjigs-byed-chen-
po/Mahābhairava, red, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭ-
vāṅga, śakti: Rta-rna-ma/Hayakarṇī.

94. At Himalaya: (pupils of the eyes) Mig-mi-bzañ/Virūpākṣa,
red, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Bya-
gdoñ-ma/Khagānanā.

SPHERE OF THE BODY (SKU) OR
OF THE UNDERWORLD (SA-HOG)

95. At Pretapurī: (sexual organs) Stobs-po-chen/Mahābala,
red, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Hkhor-
loḥi-śugs-can-ma/Cakravegā.

96. At Gṛhadevatā: (anus) Rin-chen-rdo-rje/Ratnavajra, white, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Dumskyes-ma/Khaṇḍarohā.

97. At Saurāṣṭra: (thighs) Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, white, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Chañ-ḥtshoñ-ma/Śauṇḍinī.

98. At Suvarṇadvīpa: (calves of legs) Nam-mkhaḥi-sñiñ-po/Ākāśagarbha, white, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Ḥkhor-loḥi-go-cha-ma/Cakravartinī.

99. At Nāgara: (sixteen fingers and toes) Dpal-Heruka/Śri-Heruka, white, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Śin-tu-dpaḥ-mo/Suvīrā.

100. At Sindhu: (upper part of the foot) Pad-ma-gar-gyi-dbañ-phyug/Padma-narteśvara, white, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Stobs-can-ma/Mahābalā.

101. At Maṛu: (four thumbs and big toes) Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana, white, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Ḥkhor-lo-sgyur-ma/Cakravartinī.

102. At Kulūṭa: (knees) Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, white, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, śakti: Brtson-ḥgrus-chen-mo/Mahāvīryā.

§5. *The twentyfour vīras and the cosmic man.* Out of these deities, the last twentyfour should be particularly remembered. These are those presiding over twentyfour places of India and therefore they are, in the esoteric ritual, localized in as many centres of our body. Some Tibetan sources relate that in ancient times Rudra/Drag-po and Kālī/Dus-mtshan-ma came down to the country of Magadha and became masters of entire Jambudvīpa. Then they enthroned twentyfour deities in twentyfour places that may be in a certain way their viceroys. They are: four gods of heavenly space, four Gandharvas, four Yakṣas, four Rākṣasas, four Nāgas and four Asuras. However, in spite of their invitations, these gods did not come to take possession of the country given to them. That is why in their place have been installed the corresponding images of stone, still venerated in these sacred places (1).

These twentyfour “vīras” are not only enthroned, during the ritual, in the various parts of the body of the mystic, but they divide among themselves also the dominion of the earth. In fact, in the Tantric traditions they circumscribe the geographical vajrakāya that is to say the adamantine body which is the concrete projection of the supreme being in the world of matter. But, while in the school properly Indian, this “adamantine body” is identified with the twentyfour places mentioned above, corresponding, except for few exceptions, to countries easily identifiable in the Indian territory in a large sense, in a second time, and possibly when the fortune of Buddhism started declining, the zone of the geographical vajrakāya has been

(1) The legend was narrated for the first time in Tibet by Bu-ston and is repeated by Klon-rdol in his *Bstan-srun dam-can rgya-mtshoḥi min-gi graṅs* (p. 9 of pa of his complete works.)

limited to the Himalayan region. This transposition which has often done violence to the geographical traditions of India, is already an accomplished fact in the tantric schools of Tibet. For instance, Urgyan-pa and Stag-tshan ras-pa do their pilgrimages from Tibet to the valley of the Swat taking care to visit the twentyfour places of the vajrakāya already presided, according to the theories of the Śamvaratantra, by the twentyfour vīras. Now all these places are through Zanskar, Kashmir, Kulu, the districts of Hazara and Swat.

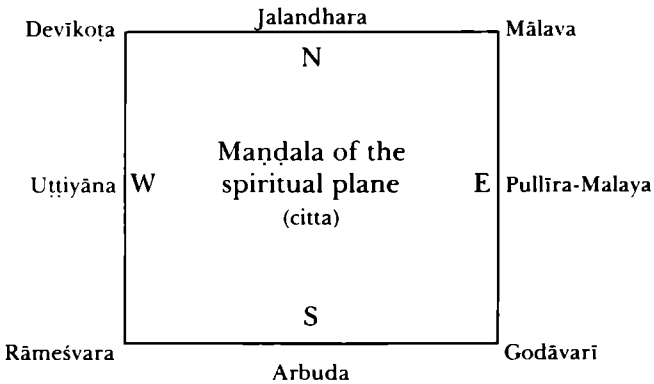
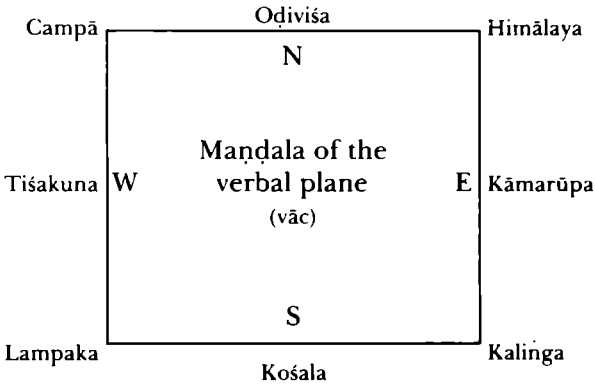
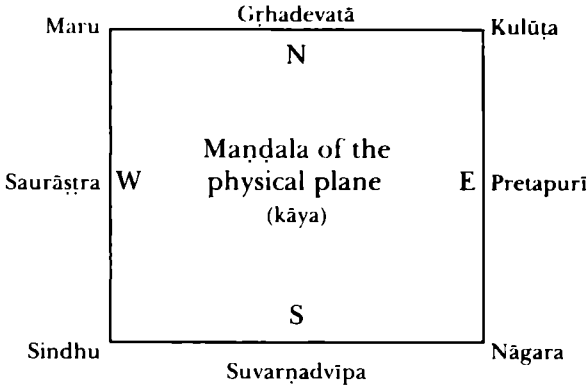
Then, this adamantine body is reconstructed, so to say, during the liturgical process, in the body of the person who meditates. He, in the microcosmos of his person, sees reproduced the double moment of the evolution and through which the primordial consciousness is actualized in the multiplicity of contingency and then returns to itself.

In other words, we find the twentyfour vīras in the physical world, in the maṇḍala symbolising that very world schematically in a conventional representation containing the symbols and represents their history and their mechanism, and finally in the very body of the mystic. This latter aspect of the liturgy will not astound us when we remember that in it the I is equated with the universe and on this presupposition are based both the theory and the praxis of Haṭhayoga. In tantric ritualism has also remained, even more than in the other religious systems of India, the old and primaeval intuition of the cosmic puruṣa, of the entire world derived from a primaeval man or imagined in the shape of a man. The world is born from the dismemberment of the cosmic man and is recomposed during the sacrificial process. Thus it was already in the Vedic ritual of agnicayana. The twentyfour gods enthroned in the twentyfour places of the earth, as also in twentyfour parts of

the human body, delimit the superficies of the cosmic puruṣa or of his reflection, but the one or the other always mystical maṇḍala in which, for him who knows it, is reproduced the alternate process of the becoming in its three moments of creation, duration and return. In order to perfect the equation between macrocosmos and microcosmos it is asserted that as every individual is constituted of three planes, i.e. the physical (*kāya*), the verbal (*vāc*) and the spiritual (*citta*), so also the twentyfour gods presiding over as many points of the cosmos—namely of the cosmic man—are divided into three corresponding planes (see the annexed scheme on page 45): namely, we have three maṇḍalas each of which is equivalent to a plane with eight series of deities, four for each fundamental cardinal direction, and four for the secondary cardinal directions. In this case too we find in the current Tantric forms of primitive thinking maintained, which however take a new meaning and are inserted in one of the most complicated systems of religious psychology that man has ever imagined (1).

§6. *Meaning of the maṇḍala of Śaṃvara.* This arid scheme that I have taken from the ritualistics of the Śaṃvara-tantra is nothing but a skeleton. It is useful in order to identify the various images covering with multicolour lines or series the walls

(1) This theory of the twentyfour vīras is not isolated. It is perhaps to be put together with the twentyfour forms of Kṛṣṇa (his emanations called *vai-bhava-vilāsa*) listed and described in the Kṛṣṇaite schools of South India and of Bengal (see for instance *Caitanyacaritāmṛta*, *Madhyalilā*, chapter 20). They too, except Nārāyaṇa who dwells in the heavenly Vaikuṅṭha, have their separate heavens in the eight cardinal directions around the supreme heaven (*Paramavyoma*) but they come down in the world to preside over certain special places. They are also seated in the various parts of the body.



of the small consecrated temple of Tsaparang, but it does not give the slightest idea of the interior experiences that this cycle symbolically expressed and the meaning it had for those who were initiated to its mysteries. It was not a case of kneeling down before this or that image or to perform the acts of formal and external cults, as is the case today in the lamaist temples and monasteries. Now the great initiatic tradition is over and the images of the deities, anonymous and not identified, have lost every value and every mystical significance. In these sacred places were not performed cold ceremonies of cult. There were rather rites and one ascended gradually to the enjoyment and to the participation of profound ecstasis in which, passing from vision to vision, the initiated believes himself to be transformed on those planes of supreme spiritual experiences, of which Tantras knew the schematic doctrine and the maṇḍalas the enigmatic representation. The masters who elaborated these methods of mystical realizations were undoubtedly very able knowers of the human psyche. Starting from interior experiences, they were able to discover those tenuous bonds uniting the physical world with the psychical one, the extreme of the body to the limits of the soul. They imagined systems of concentration and meditation capable of producing phenomena of auto-hypnosis and found the way to visualize their experiences and especially to master the mobile world of our psyche, by concentrating on it and identifying it in a single idea or in a single experience.

One has not even to believe that it is faced by a simple meditative process, intending this meditation to be a reflection on some truths. These truths, as it happened in every gnostic

school, had to be transformed into the vital lymph of our psyche, i.e. in the complete possession of our soul: and to this end the symbol of the image served.

Therefore the *sādhana*, as their complex is called, is *de facto* an organic unit which moves the entire psychic underground of the individual, it almost promotes, guides, and addresses the visions. It is able to impose a rule on the fluctuating images by which faith fills the spirit, by evoking the phantoms in vivid and luminous forms, till exteriorizing them before the eye of the initiated, who is subjugated and almost dominated by the tremendous presence of the god in himself. Thus the rite of the *utpatti-krama* or of evocation was concluded, and this rite took out from the spiritual background of the mystic the forms of the gods, and then it was absorbing them again unto him, thereby giving him the certitude that the gods too were not realities existing in themselves, but projections of our religious consciousness, sudden colorations of that untainted lucidity that is in the whole; in a word symbols and not beings. In the rite in fact the painted and visible *maṇḍala* had, in a second and higher moment, to be transported in the body of the meditating person. In his body, ideally identified with the cosmos, the mystic, as I have already said, saw reflected the incessant process of emanation and reabsorption of the worlds and therefore the vanity and vacuity of the flowing of ephemeral manifestations from that ground which always is, although remains, the cause of every becoming.

All this will be clear to the one who examines, for instance, the same *sādhana* of Śaṁvara, according to the system of Lui-pā, interpreted and commented by Tson-kha-pa, out of which I have taken the iconographic scheme that will serve us to identify the paintings of Tsaparang.

§7. *The maṇḍala of Śaṃvara as represented at Tsaparang.* We start then to study the maṇḍala which was in the middle of the temple and which is but a poor ruin. As I have said above, except the few remaining fragments, the liturgical texts that I have cited above allow us to reconstruct it ideally in its entirety. And the few statues that we have snatched from destruction, although mutilated and without symbols, nevertheless can be identified, especially with the help of their colours which, as every smallest detail in this Mahāyānic art, has a precise meaning. These little statues, all made by a mixture of paper (perhaps of sacred books become old or fragmented), cloth and earth, executed with wonderful finesse, represent both masculine deities coupled with their śaktis, and feminine deities. Accident has destined that, although fragmentary, there has been preserved the image of the central deity; and this is, as I have said, Heruka. He has twelve arms and three heads (see frontispiece) completely according to the iconographic scheme explained above. However the śakti is missing.

The plates III-IV represent two of the twentyfour protectors of the as many sacred places of the vajrakāya. A more precise identification is impossible because the symbols are equal for everyone while the colour is common to a whole group.

The plates V, VIa, b VIIa, b reproduce five of the ten khromo or ḍākinīs of wrathful aspect. In this case the identification is easy because of the colour which is quite distinct for each deity. In plate V one has to recognise Khva-gdoñ-ma. The figure VIa (red on the right and green in the left) and VIB (yellow on the right and red on the left), VIIa (blue to the right

and yellow to the left) and VIIb (green) represent respectively: Yamaḍākini/Gśin-rje-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma, Yamadūti/Gśin-rje-pho-ña-mo, Yamadāḍhī/Gśin-rje-brtan-ma, the last, having however a human face could be Narteśvarī/Gar-gyi-dbañ-phyug-ma rather than Ulūkāsyā/Hug-gdoñ. Nevertheless the number of arms does not correspond to the one indicated in the manual of Lui-pā/Tsoñ-kha-pa: instead of two they are four. This means that the artists and priests of the temple of Tsaparang have followed another liturgical system (1). Many other divinities, undoubtedly connected with the same cycle, are reproduced with great delicacy on the walls of the chapel. While in the maṇḍala of wood and stucco in the centre of the temple were represented the sixtytwo manifestations constituting its essential elements, on the walls the artists wanted to represent the many accompanying deities; those who obstruct and keep away the bad or contrary influences, or those who perform the ideal and eternally renewed offering, and the feared guardians and custodians. Therefore, the initiate, by seeing the mural paintings, which starting from the baseboard, run around the maṇḍala, re-lived the mystical process of the evocation of the god and of his acolytes. He therefore assisted in the liturgical drama accompanying it and of which he himself would be the actor when the master would have considered him worthy and mature for it.

(1) It is certainly not that of Kṛṣṇācārya because the sādhanā composed by this master does not depart, with respect to the divinity mentioned, from the maṇḍala of Lui-pā and is differentiated from it only in details of secondary importance: 1) *Dpal ḥkhor-lo-sdom-paḥi sgrub-thabs*, 2) *Bcom-ldan-ḥdas dpal ḥkhor-lo-sdom-paḥi dkyil-ḥkor-gyi cho-ga*.

§8. *The frescoes. The eight cemeteries.* It is necessary not only to identify this complex pictorial panel, but also to establish which determined moment of the mystic liturgy it represents pictorially. Over a long strip at a little distance from the floor, are reproduced with powerful research of effects, gruesome scenes (plates VIII-XI lower portion); dismembered bodies, spread human members, corpses devoured by birds of prey, bones and skulls everywhere; demoniac beings, gigantic serpents twisting around humped trees and figures of ascetics and saints in meditation. At first sight these scenes could be taken for representations of Buddhist hells, if the literature of the Śamvartantra would not suggest to us their exact interpretation. These paintings represent the eight cemeteries well known to the ascetic schools of India; fearful places where the Siddhas went to retire themselves in order to gain their wonderful powers, to dedicate themselves to meditation and to train themselves in the complex methods of Haṭhayoga.

These cemeteries have always played an essential part in the training of the ascetics, as these places were where appeared in its sickening crudity the corruptibility of our physical being and there was experienced the fatal dissolution of the flesh and the inanity of the passions. The very Buddha himself, according to hagiographic traditions, passed whole years there before acquiring supreme illumination. The Majjhima-nikāya has pages of highest poetry when it describes these places of death and silence, in whose fearful solitudes the Saint of the Śākyas strengthened slowly that sense of detachment from earthly things, the will to separate himself from all that is frail and perishable, the longing for seeking the incorruptible and the eternal. But in the tantric schools the cemetery is no longer the

place where one goes to meditate on the sad destiny of our flesh; and it is not even only the gruesome symbol of the death of passions.

Those incomparable analysts of the human psyche coming out from the tantric milieux looked for violent impressions, wanted to give free reign to their imagination, to evoke in the silence of these fearful recesses visions and hallucinations of demons and fantoms, to destroy them later on with the fire of ascesis and of meditation; in this way they could acquire the indestructible awareness that demons and gods are not objective and transcendent realities, but ephemeral projections of our mind not yet mastered and therefore they could realize the ineffable truth of the insubstantiality of whatever appears. It is the analysis and disintegration of the psychical complex in order to descend into that irreducible element of our ego, by discovering which they thought to find the ground of being itself.

Among all the gruesome places of meditation eight, listed and discussed in the appendix, have become specially famous; legends have populated them with divine beings or narrated how famous siddhas have acquired in those places their thaumaturgical powers.

Why they are just eight is easy to imagine. It is true that the esoteric schools considered them as symbols of the conscient elements of the human personality. They put us in contact with the external world and give us the sensations of it and raise in us the desire of it. And they are in fact eight: five for the five senses with the addition of the *mano-vijñāna* or mental sensation, the *mano-kliṣṭa-vijñāna* or mental sensation obscured by karmic dispositions and the *ālaya* i.e. the conscient centre of the individual, in which is summed up the experience of his past lives and from which his future existence evolves. Nevertheless,

it is clear that this symbolism represents a secondary element, which has been developed on an already constituted scheme of the eight cemeteries. They had to be eight in relation to the eight cardinal directions, the four principal and the four intermediary ones.

According to the liturgy connected with Śaṁvara, these cemeteries (*dur-khrod*) are considered indispensable concomitants of the maṇḍala. There is no surprise, therefore, to see them represented in the small temple of Tsaparang and just according to iconographic suggestions contained in the liturgical texts. They in fact have to be represented "covered with corpses without heads, stiff and hung on trees, lying with the back to the earth, impaled, transfixed by a spear, cut in the middle; covered with skulls, thigh-bones, grinning heads and with other scattered bones or with full skeletons" (text of Tsoṅ-kha-pa quoted above on p. 13).

And Lūi-pā adds that these cemeteries must be imagined "full of howls of dogs and jackals, of lions, tigers, bucks, boars, cats, sheep, wolves and of inauspicious birds such as crows, owls, etc., of corpses ripped up by poles; of skeletons, skulls cut in the middle, bones, burnt pyres or half-burnt pyres, Piśācas as eaters of corpses, divine ascetics in the act of giving offerings, Yoginīs in great numbers, knives, skulls and khaṭvāṅgas, dry twigs and vases full of food, and white caitya."

Even the trees here and there that fill the background of the paintings have their meaning; they represent the eight species of trees each characteristic of the corresponding cemetery (1).

(1) *Śirīsa* (*Acacia sirissa*), *cūta* or *āmra* (*Mangifera indica*), *aśvatthā* (*Ficus religiosa*), *harikela*, *vaṭa* (*Ficus bengalensis*), *karaṅja* (*Pongamia glabra*), *latāpar-kaṭī*, *pārthiva* or *arjuna* (*Terminalia arjuna*).

Alternating with the described scenes one can see some mountains near which some stūpas are depicted (1). But one has not to believe that these figures have a uniquely decorative scope, a kind of background to the terrific landscape of the front. Also mountains and stūpas are a symbolic element necessary to the representation of the sacred maṇḍala of Śaṃvara. The mountains too have to be eight for reasons of cosmographic symmetry, and near each of them a stūpa has to be drawn. These eight mountains starting from east and turning to the left, not to the right, are: the mountain made of gems (*rin-po-cheḥi-rañ-bzhin-gyi-lhun-po*) i.e. the Sumeru, the Mandāra green, the Kailāsa white, the Malaya yellow; to the north-east turning to the right, the Mahendra (*dbañ-chen*) black, the Gandhamādana (*spos-dañ-ldan*) yellow, the Himālaya (*gañs-can*) white, the Śrīparvata blue.

The figure in adoring attitude on plate XI represents, instead, one of the eight nāgas of which the liturgical manual of Tsoñkha-pa has given us a summary description. Above the figure of every nāga is depicted a cloud, symbol of that connection between the nāga and the waters having very old origins from India to China. But in this case too the clouds are not anonymous, almost a simple expression of this original meaning of the nāgas; they are eight and each of them has a name as it is mentioned in appendix I. In the same way the coupled figure seen on plate VIII represents one of the eight kṣetrapāla indissolubly connected with the eight cemeteries.

(1) On them see the first volume of *Indo-Tibetica*.

The representation of these cemeteries and of their details is then neither left to the will or discrimination of the artist, nor is it a mere ornament. It answers in fact to symbolic schemes that are well determined and whose origin has to be looked for in the tantric traditions of India which largely take from ancient popular beliefs, although altered and transformed.

§9. *The minor deities.* Above the panel that I have described, runs another on which one can admire a procession of small feminine figures painted with the greatest grace and delicacy. All of them have four arms, they are of various colours, are standing on a lotus flower with a leg wide apart sometimes on the right and sometimes on the left, in attitudes of dance or in other positions. They remind us of those in stucco of the maṇḍala studied above. Their identification does not offer special difficulties because they are always accompanied by short inscriptions giving their names. They are the sixteen "wisdoms" (vidyā) and the eight adoring goddesses (*mchod-paḥi lha-mo*) reproduced according to the iconographic scheme that can be inferred from the treatise of Lūi-pā. This is very well seen on plate IX which reproduces respectively:

Me-tog-ma/Puṣpā

Mar-me-ma/Dīpā

Bdug-(spos)-ma/Dhūpā

Dri-chab-ma/Gandhā

These deities correspond to numbers 42, 43, 44, 45 of the scheme summarised above. Although these goddesses occur also in the series of the adoring goddesses (*mchod-paḥi lha-mo*), the symbols that they carry (ḍamaru, kapāla and khaṭvāṅga) let

them be identified as different aspects of the sixteen vidyās or mystical wisdoms.

On plate VIII are instead represented, beginning from the right: Mar-me-ma/Dīpā, Dri-chab-ma/Gandhā; Zhal-zas-ma/Naivedyā, Ro-rdo-rje-ma/Rasavajrī apparently corresponding to the numbers 31, 45, 33 and 47 of the series of the sixteen vidyās. I said 'apparently corresponding' because the very fact that here we find Mar-me-ma/Dīpā excludes that we are faced by the same series of the sixteen vidyās which would be an inexplicable duplication; moreover, the symbols characteristic of these vidyās are missing, namely, as we have seen, the magic drum, the skull and the khaṭvāṅga. On the other hand, Nai-vedyā/Zhal-zas-ma is multicolored as in fact should be the homonymous goddess in the series of the adoring goddesses in which we find also Dīpā/Mar-me-ma. Therefore, one is drawn to think that the painters of Tsaparang were following also in this case other iconographic schemes and possibly eightfold lists of the adoring goddesses. It is therefore not useless to recall that the more common lists of these Pūjā-devī/Mchod-paḥi-lhamo count just eight and not five goddesses.

Plate X represents instead Puṣpā/Me-tog-ma (visible only partially) and Pādya/Zhabs-bsil-ma and Arghyā/Mchod-yon-ma, two deities who do not appear in the liturgical treatise that I took as a guide, but are symbols of two determined moments of ritualistics, consisting in giving to the deity the offering (*arghya*, *mchod-yon*) and the *pādya* (*zhabs-bsil*) namely the water for the washing of the feet.

There are, then, some coupled deities (*yab-yum*); they are reproduced, partially, on plate XI. According to the inscriptions

accompanying the figures, they would be Caṇḍikā, Santrāsini/Skrag-byed-ma, Sañcālinī/Skyod-byed-ma and then Mohinī/Rmoñs-byed-ma, only partially visible, and Yāminī/Gśin-rje-ma. These deities represent the cycle of the mothers (*mātrkā*, *ma-mo*) who are invoked and on whom one meditates during a special moment of the initiatic ritual called in Tibetan : *go-cha* (Skr. *kavaca*) i.e. “cuirass” and intended to protect the maṇḍala or the rite from contrary influences.

No rite can in fact reach its goal if in the commencement have not been totally eliminated the contrary influences which can in various ways oppose that aura of sanctity which necessarily has to accompany and derive from any liturgical act. These forces are of a double character: external and internal, although usually they are reduced always to psychical obstacles and repulsions, tumultuous in the physical cosmos or inside us. As *kavaca* or *raḥṣā* namely as protection, the rites tend to keep afar or to circumscribe the influence of contrary forces that can enter from outside into the consecrated or to be consecrated zone. As *āveśa* or obsession, warlike aspect of compassionate deities raised in the psyche of the mystic, they send away from the latter’s subconscious those elements that darken the brightness of his consciousness and prevent him to be put in syntony with the highest spiritual spheres.

The central divinity of this liturgical moment is Vajrasattva (1.22a). “The ascetic must meditate on the syllables *om ha* white, (as manifested) in his heart. These syllables are then transformed (till they become) Vajrasattva, (who appears) seated on

a lunar seat. He is white and has three faces: the central one is white, that on the right is red, the one of the left is black. He has six hands; in the three to the right he holds the vajra, the *ḍamaru*, a head, in the three to the left the bell, the skull, and the *khaṭvāṅga*. He is surrounded by a lunar halo and is united with *Vajravārahī*. From the syllables *ma hi* yellow in colour meditated on his head there emanates: *Vairocana/Rnam-snañ* yellow, who holds the disc in the first right hand. From the syllables *svāhā hu*, red in colour, on the summit of the head there emanates *Padmanarteśvara/Pad-ma-gar-gyi-dbañ-phyug*, red; in the first right hand he has a lotus.

On the shoulders, from the syllables *baum khaṭa he*, of black colour, there emanates *Heruka*, black; in the first left hand he holds the vajra.

On the eyes, from the syllables *hūm hūm ho*, of yellow-red colour, emanates *Vajrasūrya/Rdo-rje-ñi-ma*, red-yellow; in the first right hand he carries a gem.

On the forehead, from the syllables *phaṭ ham*, green in colour, emanates *Paramāśva/Rta-mchog*, green; in the first right hand he holds a sword.

All these deities have in the other right hand, the lower one, the *ḍamaru*, and in those of the left, above the bell, below the *khaṭvāṅga* with skull. They are seated on solar seats, surrounded by solar light, and each is united with his own śakti: *Gśin-rje-ma* etc.

These six heroes (*dpah-bo, vīra*) are all adorned with the six kinds of seals and wear a diadem made of skulls, a necklace of heads and a girdle made of tiger's skin. They have three eyes; they are standing with the right leg extended (*ālīḍha*)

From the navel of the mudrā (1), at the centre of the maṇḍala, from the syllable *om bam* of red colour, it is imagined that emanates Vajravārāhi, of red colour, with three heads: the central one red, the one on the right blue, and that on the left green. She has six arms: the right hands hold the knife (*gri-gug*), the head of Brahmā and the hook; those on the left the skull, the khaṭvāṅga and the noose.

From the syllables *ham yam* blue in colour, on the heart (of the mudrā): Gśin-rje-ma, blue.

From the syllables *hrīm mom* white, on the neck (of the mudrā) Rmoṅs-byed-ma, white.

From the syllables *hrem hrīm* of yellow colour, on the head (of the mudrā) Skyod-byed-ma, yellow.

From the syllables *hūm hūm* of green colour, on the summit of the head (of the mudrā) Skrag-byed-ma, green.

From the syllables *phaṭ phaṭ* of pearly colour, on the forehead (of the mudrā) Caṇḍikā, pearly.

Except for Rmoṅs-byed-ma, who is on a lunar seat and is surrounded by lunar light, the other five are on a solar seat and surrounded by solar light. They have one face and four arms: in those on the right they hold the magical drum and the knife (*gri-gug*); in those on the left the khaṭvāṅga united to the kapāla and the bell. They have three eyes, are naked, have the hair loose, are adorned by five kinds of seals, wear a diadem of skulls, and a necklace of heads. They are all with the right leg extended and embrace their masculine principle (*yab*), namely respectively Vajrasattva etc.

This is in fact the cycle of deities partially represented on plate XI. The paintings which we have examined are, therefore,

(1) Namely the young woman present at the rite.

indissolubly connected with the initiatic ritual of Śamvara, but different from the maṇḍala as such which received the god at the centre of the temple with a retinue of his fundamental emanations, these others symbolise ritual moments which are not exclusive to this cycle. Innumerable other maṇḍalas and the liturgies accompanying them also prescribe the evocation of the cemeteries and their inhabitants. These are a psychological and mystic preparation necessary for every ritual.

§10. *The five Tathāgatas.* But what do the other images of bigger proportions represent above the panels that we have interpreted? Are they deities connected with Śamvara or rather refer to other cycles? The panel of divinities painted on the girdle on which they lean is, as we have said, common to more cycles and therefore it is not impossible that this panel be ideally connected also with some other maṇḍala, receiving in an organic unity the figures we have to identify at present.

On the central wall there are painted five deities surrounded by the usual halo and by the nimbus; in the free spaces there are floral motifs and small images of divine beings, arising from clouds roaming in the sky, their hands joined in the act of adoration. The cycle is easily determinable; the identification of the single figures suggested by the short inscriptions accompanying them. The central divinity is Rdo-rje-zhe-sdañ, a peculiar form of Akṣobhya; the two at his right are Rin-ḥbyuñ namely Rin-(chen)-ḥbyuñ-(ldan)/Ratnasambhava and Rnam-snañ: namely Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad/Vairocana. The others on the

left are Ḥod-pa-med/ i.e. Ḥod-dpag-med/Amitābha and Don-grub/Amoghasiddhi (plates XII-XV).

It is clear, therefore, that the five figures represent the supreme pentad, the five Buddhas about whom I have extensively spoken in the previous volume (*Indo-Tibetica* III/1.151); but the iconographic type is completely different. We are facing a well-determined representation of the five, we stand before a pictorial translation of a special symbolism and of very complex mystical experiences all pertaining to a particular Tantric revelation, namely to that emanating from the Guhyasamāja.

This fivefold series has as its centre Akṣobhya and the whole is considered as the emanation from the germinal light (*ḥod gsal*) symbolically expressed in the figure of Mahāvajradhara, the supreme possessor of Vajra, namely of the unflinching essence that beyond the flowing of appearances represents the eternal source of cosmic life. As such the pentad of the Guhyasamāja represents the fivefold centre of the maṇḍala of the thirtytwo deities. Graphically it expresses the complex theory of this school, according to the scheme described with richness of detail in the liturgical literature teaching the manner how to re-live in their wholeness the mystic experiences symbolized by that very maṇḍala.

The presence of the five central deities of the maṇḍala of the Guhyasamāja necessarily recalls the panel of the other twenty-seven divinities accompanying them. I have, therefore, thought useful to describe separately in appendix II this cycle according

to the scheme contained in a metrical work, the Śrī-guhyasamāja-maṇḍala-devakāya-stotra by Asthiravajra, translated by Śraddhākaravarman and Rin-chen-bzañ-po. It is followed, except for almost insignificant variants, by various treatises of Tibetan liturgy connected with this Tantra, doubtlessly one of the more important ones in the whole of Vajrayāna.

But should one think that in the small temple of Tsaparang the painters have superimposed or overlapped the two cycles, on one side that of the Guhyasamāja, which would have inspired these five figures, and on the other side the one of Śāṃvara, to whom the chapel is essentially dedicated? Evidently not. A contamination of the two Tantras is not impossible *a priori*, because, although the liturgies they explain are different, both nevertheless move in the same mystical psychology, start from the same presuppositions and aim at the same realizations: only the names change and in a certain sense also the systems that sustain and transport our psychophysic forces towards them. There is also a point in common, which is represented by Akṣobhya, symbol of the germinal essence of the whole. The coming back to the indiscriminate being is symbolized in the schools of the Guhyasamāja by the consubstantiation with Akṣobhya, or with his essential form Mahāvajradhara; while in those of the Śāṃvara this supreme background of things is expressed in the form of Heruka. Otherwise, the difference of the symbols is not enough to suppress or to obliterate the identity of the mystical experience symbolized. In fact, in the liturgical treatises we find that Akṣobhya and Heruka are perfectly assimilated (1),

(1) Bibliographic list no. 7, p.11a, (*Heruka ni skabs ḥdir mi-bskyod-paḥi no-bo yin*).

because both are reflections of the same absolute which does appear in different forms according to the spiritual category of the devotee. This absolute is the ineffable reality which one reaches at the end of the long mystical process and which some schools did realize as intellect and luminosity, that is to say as Vairocana, and others experienced as an indefectible plane, incorruptible principle of the Whole, that is as “diamond”, not subject to any decay. Unbreakable (*abheda*) is the diamond, as also transcending any vicissitudes of time, place and conditions is this spiritual plane; it is therefore, also Akṣobhya, the unwavering, that is that being which in its adamant purity is beyond any cosmic emanation, although conditioning it. That is why the vajra is its symbol. It is Akṣobhya because it is the quintessential status of the being before that “trembling” (*kṣobha*) that the Śivaite schools of Kashmir, which have so many analogies with the Mahāyānic ones, consider as the first moment of the cosmic emanation, the potential idea of being contained in the supreme spirit. Akṣobhya is, furthermore, the great indeterminate, the first immobile motor in its synthesis of intelligence, essence and beatitude, not yet differentiated and not yet projected towards the infinite possibilities of creation. Therefore, through these equivalences of Akṣobhya, Heruka, Śaṁvara, the two Tantric cycles of the Śaṁvara and of the Guhyasamāja join in the same experiences and the cycle of the five Buddhas, as characteristic of the latter, would insert itself as an accessory element in the maṇḍala of Śaṁvara. As in the Guhyasamāja the series of the Buddhas is of six, the five traditional Buddhas running around their source Mahāvajradhara;

in the same manner according to these schools of Śaṃvara, Heruka is the centre of the five Buddhas and their essence (1) and also their point of origin, that is the matrix of all the Buddhas ensuing therefrom (2). In fact, it is a new symbol of the same essence and therefore, according to some texts, Heruka, Hevajra, Kālacakra and Guhyasamāja, are always special manifestations whereby the supreme being, conveniently called Vajradhara, appears in the individual creatures according to their ability and their karmic preparation (3).

The presence of the cycle of the five Tathāgatas, moreover, is easily explained by remembering that in every tantric liturgy, it does not matter which cycle is followed, the invocation and the meditation on the five Buddhas is necessary and a preliminary element of every rite. In the meditating process, the mystic cannot realize full identity with the highest principle of things if he has not already imagined those five Buddhas as corresponding to the five elements forming his personality (*skandha*). This equivalence of the five Buddhas and of the five skandhas produces in the one meditating upon it the purification or elimination of the concept of individual person (4). The mystic identifies himself with Vajradhara who as soon as he begins to project himself in the world of contingency becomes embodied, so to say, in the five Tathāgatas who, as it is said in the Guhyasamāja and in other authoritative sources, represent his first 'becoming true'.

(1) *De-bzhin-gsëgs-pa thams-cad-kyi de-kho-na-ñid ni dpal heruka ste* (Abhidhānottaratantra, p. 11, chapter 40).

(2) Bstan-ḥgyur, rgyud Ta, p. 105 Vajradāka-vivṛti.

(3) See Vajramaṇḍal-ālaṅkāra-pañjikā, Bstan-ḥgyur LXIV.4, quoted from bibliographic list no. 10, p. 16.

(4) See *Indo-Tibetica* III/1.158f.

§11. The “circle of protection”. To the right and to the left of the door, on three superposed planes, there are twelve deities painted in the attitude of *yab yum* (plates XVI-XIX). Their colours, symbols and features leave no doubt about their being a panel of terrific deities. One could consider them as being a partial representation of the fifteen irate beings who, under the name of Kṣetrapāla are invoked at the end of the Guhyasamāja ritual with the aim of keeping guard over the consecrated plane of the maṇḍala. Meditation on them and their evocation constitutes a well defined moment of the liturgy connected with that Tantra. All together these gods form the “circle of defence” (*raṅṅā-cakra, sruṅ-baḥi-ḥkhor-lo*) and, as I have already said, serve to protect the rite, the beatitude and the power deriving from them, from the assaults of contrary forces, not only the external ones but especially the internal ones; that is to say, those passions, those desires and those inclinations, which, coming out from the psychic background frustrate or pollute the aura of purity or of sanctity promoted by the ceremony. Nevertheless, it is enough to compare the description of this cycle as given by the liturgical treatises with the paintings of the small temple of Tsaparang to realise that there is nothing common between the two schemes. Even the names themselves of the deities are different, with the sole exception of *Do-rje-ḥdus*. This discrepancy is easily noted, because the paintings of Tsaparang are accompanied by short labels giving the names of the deities they want to represent. They are: Rdo-ses, usual abbreviation for Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva; Vajrayakṣa/Rdo-rje-gnod-ḥbyin, Vajra-mahābala/Rdo-rje-stobs-che, Vajra-kāla/Rdo-rje-ḥdus, Vajrabhairava/Rdo-rje-ḥjigs-byed, Vajra-pātāla/Rdo-rje-sa-ḥog, Vajroṅṅiṣa/Rdo-rje-gtsug-tor, Hūmkāra/Hūm-mdzad, Vajrasūrya/Rdo-rje-ṅi-ma, Vajranitya/Rdo-rje-rtag-pa; the names of the last two cannot be read from the

photograph. But, as I have said above, once we have known the names of the painted deities, we do not learn much if these divinities are not incorporated in a given cycle and if we do not succeed in identifying the liturgy or the particular moment of the mystic ritual which alone can give them a content and a meaning. In the *Rgyud-sde-nas gsuñs-paḥi tshogs du-maḥi sgrub-thabs-kyi rim-pa phyogs gcig-tu bkod-pa pham bdeḥi ḥdod dug-ster-ba yonś-ḥduḥi ḥkḥri-śiñ* of Blo-bzañ-skal-bzañ-rgya-mtsho, the Seventh Dalai Lama (p. 22) a chapter dedicated to the Bcom-ldan-ḥdas ḥkḥor-lo-sdom-paḥi bsruñ-ḥkḥor, that is to the rite of protection in the liturgy of the Blessed Cakrasaṃvara has the description of a cycle which is totally identical with the one represented on the walls of this temple of Śaṃvara/Bde-mchog. This cycle is but the “circle of protection” concluding the liturgical ceremonies not of the Guhyasaṃāja, but of the Cakrasaṃvara, that is of the god who as the emanation of Heruka was represented in the central maṇḍala of the temple. This cycle is composed of two central divinities, i.e. Vajrasattva and Vajrahūmkāra, two aspects, the peaceful and the terrific, of a deity substantially identical, who is followed by the ten irate beings.

How these irate divinities have to be understood is something that I have spoken of several times and therefore it is useless that I repeat this now. I shall be content by relegating it to appendix III, where, on the ground of the treatise of the Seventh Dalai Lama, one may find a scheme of this cycle and of its iconography.

§12. *The ten ḍākinīs.* There remain, therefore, only the central figures on the wall to the right and to the left: a terrifying

panel of coupled divinities who seem to be engaged in a gruesome dance. They are adorned with necklaces made of skulls and cut heads, brandish weapons, hold cups made of skulls and trample on creatures of more modest proportions, who seem to contort under their mortal pressure. In this case too we have to do with a determined cycle. Each deity is easily known, because they are accompanied by a short formula of invocation, revealing their names. They are ten *Mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma* or *ḍākinīs*, and precisely;

on the left wall:

Samaya-ḍāka/Dam-tshig-gi mkhaḥ-ḥgro (pl. XX);

Kāya-ḍāka/Sku-yi mkhaḥ-ḥgro (pl. XXI);

Citta-ḍāka/Thugs-kyi mkhaḥ-ḥgro (which could not be photographed);

Vāg-ḍāka/Gsuñ-gi mkhaḥ-ḥgro (pl. XXII);

Mahāsukha-ḍāka/Bde-chen mkhaḥ-ḥgro (pl. XXIII);

on the right wall:

Ratna-ḍāka/Rin-chen-mkhaḥ-ḥgro (pl. XXIV);

Buddha-ḍāka/Saṅs-rgyas-mkhaḥ-ḥgro (pl. XXV);

Vajra-ḍāka/Rdo-rje-mkhaḥ-ḥgro (pl. XXVI);

Padma-ḍāka/Pad-ma-mkhaḥ-ḥgro (pl. XXVII);

Viśva-ḍāka/Sna-tshogs-mkhaḥ-ḥgro (not photographed).

But in this case too the mere name is not sufficient for us. The identification of a divinity is not limited to the knowledge of his/her name.

I do not find in any text the precise description of maṇḍalas reminding of the one reproduced in Tsaparang. But I cannot claim to know all the immense Indian and Tibetan literature on the topic, much more so as these liturgical texts are very

difficult to obtain, because people believe that obscure forces are coming out of them and therefore do not like to part with them.

Furthermore, it cannot be forgotten that the liturgy of Śaṃvara/Bde-mchog, which has ceased to prevail in Tibet, represents rather a special trend, namely, one among the many elaborated by the Tantric schools of India and Tibet.

One has to keep in mind in fact that the great portion of the liturgical literature today mostly in fashion in Tibet was systematized by Tsoṅ-kha-pa or by his school. They have given an indisputable uniformity to ritualistics, and have often let fall in disuse currents and cycles which were important in more ancient times, beginning with lotsavas and masters, little by little retreating to a secondary position.

We cannot even say which was the school to which belonged the kings of Guge, who were the builders of these temples. It is true that Rin-chen-bzañ-po, who was the great apostle and animator of the Buddhist renaissance, was included in the schools of the Bkaḥ-gdams-pa and therefore one could suppose that the kings too would have followed this direction. But the school of the Bkaḥ-gdams-pa did include disparate systems, almost as a reflection, in Tibet, of that multiplicity of sects in which Mahāyāna was divided in India. This one represented a new penetration of thought and religiosity contraposing itself to the more ancient (Rñiñ-ma-pa), for greater exactitude of doctrine and more rigid discipline. In the empire of Guge therefore we cannot properly speak of a partition into schools, as it would happen later on in Great Tibet: but only of directions (*lugs srol*) fraternally coexisting besides each other, each of them deriving from an Indian doctor or a Tibetan master, who was its apostle in the Land of Snows.

This is so true that Byañ-chub-ḥod, famous in the history of Buddhism through the Bkaḥ-gdams-pa tradition of which he is the hero, is not unknown even to the Rñiñ-ma-pa schools. They speak of him as the introducer of special cults, probably Bon-po (1). Even he, following the example of Padmasambhava, rather than totally eliminating the primitive and aboriginal cults, perhaps tried to absorb them and to welcome them into Buddhism strongly protected by him.

If, however, it is not possible for me to determine by now the mystic system symbolized by the panel of the ten ḍākinī they wanted to represent on the walls of our temple, I can, however, say that the ḍākinīs/mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma are recorded in various liturgical texts of the cycle of Śamvara. The ḍākinī have a long history in India. I have briefly spoken of them elsewhere (2), but it would be useful to return one day to the same topic with fresher and richer material. In this case too we are facing a crowd of fairies or witches flying in the air, often imagined in forms between the human and the animal. They are the inheritance of ancient tribal cults and survivals of the more ancient ethnical and religious background of India and especially of its frontier provinces. Buddhism received them in its Olympus and transfigured them, making of them symbols of those spiritual planes to which the mystic was elevating himself during the process of his meditation, or symbols of those cosmic energies

(1) Thus, for instance, in the *Rin-chen gter-mdzod* vol. 7 is preserved a *Lha-btsun Byañ-chub-ḥod-kyi Mon-bu pu-tra min srin-gi sgrub-thabs kha-bkol-maḥi gzhun lde-ba*.

(2) See *Animadversiones Indicae*, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 26 (1930) n.1.

through which the divine will is displayed and realized in the world of contingency; a symbol of those interior manifestations of the same energies working in the spirit of the meditating person and acting on his psychic centres, so that once understood in their mystical meaning they can become instruments of salvation. That is to say that they can become the vehicle towards that germinal conscience from which everything emerges and to which everything has to return. Practically, therefore, they are the equivalents in the mystic of Mantrayāna, of what śakti and groups of śaktis are in the Śivaite Tantric schools, especially in the Śākta.

The group of the ten ḍākinī reproduced at Tsaparang can very well be split in subgroups leading us to well-known schemes of the mystic of Vajrayāna, namely of esoteric Buddhism.

First of all we find a fundamental quinary series reminding of those of the five “families” and about which I have already spoken in the first part of this book, namely:

Saṅs-rgyas-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma	= Buddhaḍākinī
Rdo-rje-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma	= Vajraḍākinī
Rin-chen-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma	= Ratnaḍākinī
Padma-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma	= Padmaḍākinī
Sna-tshogs-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma	= Las-kyi-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma
	= Karmaḍākinī.

These ḍākinī are a fundamental element of meditation. The mystic of the new schools is centred around these symbols. They had to give the direct psychological experience, and no longer an abstract notion, of the moral and metaphysical principles of Buddhism, and therefore produce that immediate

revulsion from the plane of contingency to the potential world of unconditioned being.

First of all they correspond respectively to: *ma-rig/avidyā* ignorance, *zhe-sdañ/dveṣa* hatred, *ña-rgyal/māna* pride, *ḥdod-chags/rāga* passion, *phrag-dog/īrṣyā* envy. They then represent the meditative process and the ascetic practices liberating from these moral infections which, as long as they are present in the meditating person keep him far away from the supreme good. In symbolic language it is enough to see them, namely to embody oneself with the spiritual status that they represent, in order to have the corresponding passions eliminated. Or they point at the transfer of these passions, from the human and earthly plane to the mystic plane, so that converging towards that they could be changed into redeeming forces. Thus in fact is stated in a Ḥbrug-pa text, a liturgy of the cycle of Śamvara, *Dpal ḥkhor-lo-bde-mchog mñon-dkyil*, in which is described the way to consubstantiate with the maṇḍala of Śamvara composed of 13 deities. Around the maṇḍala spoken about in this text are represented four ḍākinīs, namely: *gti-mug/moha* (= *avidyā*), *phrag-dog*, *ḥdod-chags*, *ña-rgyal*. In it the fifth *zhe-sdañ* is missing because she is the central ḍākinī, the one closely bound in mystic embrace to the fundamental god of the maṇḍala, so that *dveṣa* (*zhe-sdañ*) is the quintessential form of Akṣobhya in the school of the Guhyasamāja and in similar ones.

According to other liturgical texts the series of these equivalences is even more complex. Thus, for instance, in work of the Rñiñ-ma-pa, such as the *Chos-ñid mkhaḥi kloñ-mdzod-las mkhaḥ-ḥgro ḥdus-paḥi skor-las dur gcod dños-grub bañ-mdzod*, five offerings are dedicated to the five ḍākinī, namely, the five consti-

tents of a human being according to the traditional classification of Buddhism; matter (rūpa), conscience (vijñāna), sensation (vedanā), idea (saṃjñā), karmic predispositions and forces (saṃskāra).

The offering spoken about is a mystic sacrifice, that is the dedication of one's own personality to a spiritual plane that transcends this composite and transitory human individuality.

They are further equivalents to the five species of gnosis, about which I have already spoken in the preceding volume, and whose realization is an indisputable condition in Vajrayānic mystics. It is therefore clear that to each of them should also correspond one of the five supreme Buddhas, and therefore also a color and even one of the five psychic circles in which our own body is imagined to be divided. This body, in fact, symbolises the macrocosmos and reproduces in itself the process of evolution and, for the perfect mystic, of involution of the universe.

One can therefore, establish the following table of equivalences:

Ḍākinī	Elements of human personality sacrificed to them	Corresponding gnostic wisdoms	Stains eliminated by them	Psychic centres in the micro-cosm	Buddha	Color
Buddhaḍākinī	rūpa	dharmadhātu	avidyā	summit of head	Vairocana	white
Vajraḍākinī	vijñāna	ādarśa	dveṣa	heart	Akṣobhya	blue
Ratnaḍākinī	vedanā	samatā	māna	navel	Ratnasambhava	yellow
Padmaḍākinī	saṃjñā	pratyavekṣā	rāga	neck	Amitābha	red
Karmaḍākinī	samskāra	kriyānuṣṭhāna	īrṣyā	genitals	Amoghasiddhi	green

Three other *ḍākinīs* also form a well-defined group, namely:

Thugs-kyi mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma/Cittaḍākinī

Sku-yi mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma/Kāyaḍākinī

Gsuñ-gi mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma/Vāgḍākinī

that is the *ḍākinīs* of the body, of the word and of the spirit, in their quintessential being or as our schools express themselves “adamantine”, namely in their potential indiscriminate status beyond any manifestation in the particular and in the individual. They, therefore, want to signify the ascension of the mystic from the plane of individuation to that of the indiscriminate, symbolized in the triple circle of the *maṇḍala*.

Dam-tshig-mkhaḥ-ḥgro/Samayaḍākinī means the force of the symbol (*samaya*) which is a key to the vault of the whole Tantric liturgy and without comprehending it the rite would be a useless repetition of acts and formulas unable to produce any result. Higher than them all should be Bde-chen-mkhaḥ-ḥgro that is Mahāsukhaḍākinī, the culmination of the entire mystic and meditative process, the plenitude of ecstasis, the beatitude existing in the consubstantiation with the being, the source of every becoming.

All the figures are of the type usually called *yab-yum* “father and mother”, that is to say united in mystic coupling. The *ḍākinīs* are the figures that embrace the dancing god: who this god may be is clear to imagine. He can be no other than Heruka himself who, in some cases namely in plates XX, XXI, XXII, XXIII, can be easily recognized because the symbols of his arms are the usual ones of his hypostasis: Śaṁvara/Bde-mchog;

four faces, twelve arms and in the last hand on the left the head of Brahmā held by the hair. Heruka is manifested on these five different planes, usually designated by the name of wheels (*hkkhor-lo*). They signify the spheres of the progressive emanation of things from their principle and the triple quintessential status of the individual as body, word and spirit (*kāya, vāk, citta*) and also the force of the gnostic symbol (*dam-tshig*) and the beatitude of the future conquests (*bde-chen*). They are spiritual planes to be reached, or rather with which one is con-substantiated not with simple meditation, but with an adequate action, an awareness of the creative process which serves for eliminating and nullifying it; it is a putting into motion those very forces which Being has given us while creating us to life and which we have to use in order to overcome the same and to return to the indiscriminate brightness (*ḥod-gsal*) which is the inexhaustible source of all. Therefore, to each symbol of these planes imagined as Heruka corresponds his *dākinī*. They are moments and aspects peculiar to the supreme energy which in symbolic representation assumes the form of Vajravārāhī.

What I have briefly hinted at is contained in some Tantras which are part of our cycle and especially in the Abhidhānot-taratantra introduced into Tibet by the same Rin-chen-bzan-po.

We have already noted the five forms of Heruka in the preceding volume (page 137) while studying the cycle of Nāraka.

On the side of the door it dominates with the terror of his grimace and his sword held threateningly, the figure of Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa (plate XXVIII).

§13. A *terracotta triptych*. The ancient furnishings of the chapels have been totally destroyed. The unique object saved from such ruin is a terracotta triptych of Indian origin or at least modelled with a stamp imported from India (plate XXX). Three figures standing on a lotus flower: the central one represents the Buddha in monk's robes. His left hand holds the hem of the tunic painted in red, keeping it at the height of the shoulders; his right hand is in the attitude of the symbol of the gift (*varadamudrā*). On both sides two figures equally standing: on the right Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi: his right hand has the posture of the symbol of the gift, his left raised at the height of the waist holds the long stem of a lotus flower. On the left Vajrapāṇi: his right hand up to the centre of the waist holds a vajra in vertical position; the left one leans on the hip.

Below, in Gupta characters, the quintessential formula of Mahāyāna: *ye dharmā* etc.

The triptych can be considered as a magnificent example of Indian art of the post-Gupta period.

CHAPTER II

THE SMALL TEMPLE OF VAJRABHAIRAVA/RDO-RJE-HJIGS-BYED.

§14. *General aspect of the temple.* Down the castle, there is another small temple, also desecrated and in danger to fall. In a corner, thrown one above the other, there are certain statues of stucco and wood, broken and mutilated. The door has been taken out; the sacred place is at the mercy of everybody. On the central wall there is an image in stucco of Mahā-Vajrabhairava/Rdo-rje-hjigs-byed-chen-po; many of the symbols held by his hands have disappeared. All around the walls have started delapidating; the water entering from the unpacked roof has erased the frescoes covering the entire surface of the walls. The loss is bad not only for the history of the art of western Tibet, since this sacred place was one of the most richly decorated, but also for Mahāyānic iconography. The rice panels of deities, in fact, that unknown artists of Guge have represented, are regularly accompanied by short invocations which contain their names and therefore are of great help in identifying types seldom represented and therefore difficult to be identified.

The temple is known as the “Grub-thob lha-khan” namely “the temple of the ascetic”. It owes its name perhaps to some very famous ascetic who used to pass his time in meditation

here. In truth, however, it should be called the shrine of Vajrabhairava, because from the stucco statue on the central wall and from the cycle reproduced in the frescoes, it is evident that it should have been dedicated to this divinity. There is no place howsoever small that the painters have not covered with figures, almost all of them terrific and fierce. Little by little when the eyes begin to be accustomed to the darkness of the shrine monstrous figures emerge from the half-darkness. It is a world of nightmare and fear which is represented here and it seems to threaten the few Tibetan visitors coming to look with curiosity through the ruins or the merchants of Garhwal going to Gartok and sometimes stopping here.

§15. *The maṇḍala of Vajrabhairava.* But this multicolored panel of deities crowding the walls and climbing almost to the roof, is not a grotesque decoration due to the caprice of an artist. It is not a question of having iconographic types grouped without order just to fill up the space; but it is an organic assembling of symbolic figurations representing the complex maṇḍala of Vajrabhairava with all his acolytes, his secondary manifestations, and his guardians. Vajrabhairava, who is Gśin-rje-hjigs-byed-chen-po/Yamāntaka Mahāvajrabhairava, is one of the more venerated deities in Lamaism, and especially in the schools of the Sa-skyapa and Dge-lugs-pa. His figure brings a sacred terror to the crowds; he is the *chos-rgyal* (pronounced *chogyal*). Chos-rgyal means “king of the law”, that is to say that it translates the Sanskrit *dharmarāja* and, as the word itself, has a double meaning. It can be the title given to a prince governing

according to the Buddhist Law; every king patronizing the doctrine and the community can, in a Buddhist country, be designated by this appellation. Aśoka was a typical example of a Dharmarāja, and so were also all the historical or legendary princes about whom hagiography and the Buddhist tradition speak, and who even at the cost of sacrifices and hard trials never betrayed the sacred precepts of Śākyamuni. But Dharmarāja/Chos-rgyal is also the god of the dead, the one who, as Yama, judges in hells the faults of the inhabitants of the otherworld. This character of judge of the dead which is attributed to Vajrabhairava/Rdo-rje-hjigs-byed constitutes the principal reason of the timorous reverence that the devotees hold him in. His connection with the realm of the sinful netherworld and with the mystery of death tints with fear the figure of Vajrabhairava/Rdo-rje-hjigs-byed even in a Buddhist country where the law of karma substitutes the despairing inexorability of a judgement weighing eternally, the slow and uninterrupted transmigration from life to life, and therefore do not attribute to the hells that tragic fatality imagined by other religions.

This fear is very well translated in the iconographic type which seems to express the terrors of the crowds in the symbolism of form. A nightmare embodied in one of the most tremendous creations which religious fantasy agitated by terror could ever have inspired, projecting in visible forms the uncomposed flashes of its visions. No other image expresses with as much efficacy that sense of *tremendum* that dominates and affirms itself in many aspects of late Buddhism and reigns over a great portion of the religious conceptions of India.

But, whatever could have been the origin of this religious type, it is certain that the Buddhist doctors have completely transfigured it and, by accepting it in their mystics, have given him a symbolic interpretation which is framed in the organic development of the entire Mahāyānic experience and renders Vajrabhairava/Rdo-rje-hjigs-byed the vehicle of the greatest spiritual realizations.

As in the case of Śāmvara, so also for Vajrabhairava/Rdo-rje-hjigs-byed the mystico-theological and liturgical literature can be divided in two groups: the canonical part represented by the Tantras and the exegetical part both Indian and Tibetan. About the latter I have sketched, in the appendix, a list very far from being complete, based on the collections and recollections at my disposal.

§16. *Vajrabhairava*. Vajrabhairava is in fact the terrific emanation of Mañjuśrī. He is the wrathful (krodha) aspect of this god and therefore is the essential part of the maṇḍala graphically describing the experiences symbolized by that divinity. But around him is unrolled a vast literature going back to three different groups of Tantras, different although strictly related, which treat liturgy or teach about the complex mystical process leading the initiated to the full delight of the spiritual planes signified by the god. On one side is the group dedicated to Vajrabhairava, the Śrīvajra-mahābhairava-tantra (Beck p. 90 n.9) and the Śrīvajrabhairava-kalpa-tantrarāja (ibid. p. 10); on the other is the series of tantras about Yamāri: Black Yamāri, Kṛṣṇayamāri-sarva-tathāgata-kāya-vāk-citta-kṛṣṇayamāri-nāma-tantra (ibid. 7), Kṛṣṇayamāri-karma-sarva-siddhi-karaṇa-nāma-

tantra (ibid. n. 8) and the Dpal gśin-rje-gśed-nag-poḥi rgyud rtog-pa gsum-pa (ibid. n. 11); and lastly the group dedicated to Red Yamāri, Śrīraktayamāri-tantrarāja (ibid. 13). All these revelations—in fact according to Mahāyāna the tantras are the more esoteric revelations of the Buddha—are strictly connected. The person who gave for the first time great diffusion to this tantra was, according to the commonly accepted tradition repeated by Tibetan commentators, Lalitavajra. He reported the tantra of Mahāvajrabhairava (1) from Uḍḍiyāna (O-rgyan).

This notice has its importance; first of all it helps us to determine, at least approximately, the date of this tantric cycle, because according to the Tibetan tradition (2) Lalitavajra lived around the tenth century.

Moreover, it points to Uḍḍiyāna, namely the valley of the Swat, as the point of diffusion of another mystic and esoteric school. When our research progresses further one could reconstruct the great importance that this region had in the development of Buddhist mysticism and esoterism. It is possible that at that time we shall be able to study with better knowledge of sure facts a problem which is already apparent: namely, the relations between Tantric ritualistics or liturgy and the beliefs of the regions bordering India. The Swat valley was more or less on the great roads that linked India to Central Asia. Diverse cultures must have left traces of their encounters and

(1) Thus it is narrated in texts 15 and 16 of the bibliographic list.

(2) Together with Nāropā, he was a pupil of Tilopā. See Tāranātha, *Edelsteinmine*, p. 73, compare p. 104.

of their contacts. By unanimous consensus all the sources agree that this country was one of the most active in the redaction of Tantric literature, where emerge many magical beliefs and very old indigenous cults obviously transformed and adapted to Mahāyānic symbolism and spirituality.

We should not, therefore, be surprised if Indian masters have gone to the Swat valley in order to discover new methods of mystic realizations and if Padmasambhava has brought into Tibet a large collection of Tantric texts which was absolutely new even for a man of the culture and of the mystic preparation as was Atiśa, when he saw them in the monastery of Bsam-yas.

Around these fundamental texts containing the revelation of Vajrabhairava and of his secondary aspects, developed a vast literature of sādhanas which elaborated the mystical process of evocation and taught diverse ways leading the mystic to ascend the spiritual planes and to the supreme ecstasy symbolized by the god (1).

This manifold literature enters Tibet through different ways and through various masters. But, as I have said elsewhere while speaking about the Lotsava, these translators did not

(1) About this literature of sādhanas a brief summary is given by Mkhas-grub-rje in the work mentioned in the bibliography no. 16. It also lists some treatises which I cannot find in the catalogues of the Bstan-ḥgyur. For instance, *Lha zhe-dgu-maḥi sgrub-thabs* and the *Ro-laṅs brgyad sgrub-thabs* by Lalitavajra, the *Dpaḥ-boḥi-gcig-paḥi sgrub-thabs* by Śrīdhara/Dpal-ḥdzin, the sādhana of *Gśin-rje pho-brgyad mo-brgyad* (known in Tibet as the sādhana of the seventeen gods) by Amoghavajra the Elder; the sādhana of *Dpaḥ-bo gcig-pa* by Śrībhadrā and that by Jñānākara, the sādhana of Ḥjam-dpal-ye-śes, the sādhana of Two-armed Bhairava by Ḥjam-dpal-dbyaṅs, the ritual (vidhi) of Zhi-baḥi-ye-śes, moreover the sādhanas of Bhairava with one face and two hands, one face and four hands, three faces and six hands of Bhā-ro the Nepalese translated by the Lotsava of Rvā.

introduce only the letter of a text, but they were its depositaries and interpreters who, after receiving a particular initiation in India, continued it in Tibet, transplanting in the Country of Snows the spiritual continuity of the Indian mystic traditions. These systems of mystic realizations, connected with Vajrabhairava or with his hypostases, are divided in Tibet into three principal groups, each of which has as its proponent a renowned lotsava. The first school goes back to the lotsava of Rva, Rdo-rje-ḥgrags, the second to the lotsava of Skyo Ḥod-ḥbyuñ, and the third to the lotsava of Zhañ (1). As we shall have the occasion to note later, noticeable differences are not lacking among the three lineages. These differences often concern the entire complicated evocative or liturgical processes which should lead to the complete experience of tantric revelation.

On the other side, the manuals of Tsoñ-kha-pa and of his immediate disciples can be considered, as always, the most authoritative expression of those syncretistic and conciliatory tendencies characterizing to a great extent the work of the great reformer. After his systematization it can be said that every disagreement has almost completely disappeared.

It is clear from this literature that the figure of Vajrabhairava/Rdo-rje-ḥjigs-byed, though terrific in appearance, is not considered as a demonic power. In this case too it is necessary to remind what I already had occasion to say hinting at the Dharma-pāla, namely, those fearful figures never missing at the entrances of Tibetan temples. Vajrabhairava is the fusion of two aspects: the blessed aspect and the irate aspect (*zhi-khro*, bibliographic list 15, p. 12). Both are emanations of the double

(1) Another lineage is headed by the Lotsava of Gñas Yon-tan-ḥgrags.

nature of Mañjuśrī. But this appearance of his in so fierce forms has a specific aim, namely to put down, to destroy and to suppress all the forces contrary to law and its practices. It is not, therefore, a malefic and autonomous power, but the supreme mercy assuming an aggressive aspect in order to keep away from the faithful all that is precluding them to the way of salvation. This fundamental character of his is symbolically expressed by the name Yamāntaka that is Yama-antaka “he who puts an end to Yama”. *Yama* stands to signify all evil that derives from malefic forces (*bdud*) and *antaka* expresses the terrific manifestation of Mañjuśrī (*khro drag-po*, bibliographic list no. 15 p.16). This intrinsic merciful nature of his is principally manifested in the realm of the beyond. Here, although being the supreme judge and lord of demons, the cruel and inexorable warden of the law, he cooperates in the salvation of the damned (*ibid.* p. 14). In fact, to those beings who are not aware of their own misadventures, and of the causes that provoked them, and to those beings who ignore the iron law of karma according to which one reaps what one has sown, he presents himself under different aspects. In this way he is able to convert them by making them aware of their status and by reminding them that their suffering is the inevitable consequence of past karmas. In this way, the damned will cease nurturing sentiments of hatred against the ministers of hell who torture them because of the inevitable maturation of their own misdeeds. In this way they will avoid the accumulation of new karmas and will repent, accelerating by this the time of their rescue. Vajrabhairava, therefore, is considered as a god of redemption; another defender of faith like Vajrapāṇi. And he has also other elements in common with Vajrapāṇi; not only

the fight against malefic forces and the triumph over them, but the supreme enemy which he fights and defeats is the same. I already had occasion to remember how the antagonism between Mahāyānic Buddhism and Śivaism has left traces in tantric literature and iconography. The god that rules and guides the world of demons and opposes the law and its progress is Maheśvara, the lord of the gods. In the fight between Vajrapāṇi or Yamāntaka on one side, and Maheśvara on the other, is shadowed the rivalry between Buddhism and Hinduism. With the crowd of his gods he is embodied in the figure of his supreme god. And Buddhism wants to affirm its superiority in the fight by imagining Maheśvara along with his consort Umā put under the feet of the defenders of the faith.

Thus in legend and in iconography was projected a hope, nourished perhaps when the battle was most intense at the eve of the victory of the rival system, and with this a gap was formed which became irreparable, and which more and more profoundly separated Hindu communities from the last remnants of Tantric Buddhism. The tradition (*gtam-rgyud*, *vr̥ttānta*) summed up by Bhāro the Nepalese, to whom insertion in the Bkaḥ-ḥgyur gave great authority, narrates (text no. 15 p. 14 and p. 4b): "Once upon a time there was a fight between Skanda-Kumāra (*gdon-drug*, Ṣaṅmukha, Ṣaḍānana) the son of Mahādeva and Umā, and the Asura Rudra. And this he lost. Then Mahādeva, the lord of the sphere of concupiscence (*kāmaloka*), assembled the thirtythree species of armies, the army of the eight species of sickness, and of the eight species of calamities and won over Rudra. He requested Mañjuśrī for help. In order to face the thirtysix armies he emanated from his body thirtyfour arms. Against the crowd of horsemen of the subterra-

nean Asuras he emanated the head of a buffalo, against the eight species of sicknesses and the eight species of calamities staying on earth, he emanated sixteen feet; and against Mahādeva he erected the member and revealed the Tantra of Vajrabhairava/Rdo-rje-hjigs-byed in ten thousand verses”.

This is evidently an aetiological myth, trying to explain the iconographic type of the divinity, but it betrays a clear antagonism against the Śivaite schools.

Later the mystic meaning gets the upper hand more and more: Vajrabhairava becomes the symbol of the way of redemption through yoga and mantra. He is Yama-antaka, a binome corresponding to a duplex series representing the quintessence of the tantric ascesis: father and mother, means and mystic gnosis, sun and moon (in the sense of haṭhayoga): vein *iḍā* and vein *piṅgalā*, right and left, series of consonants (*kāli*) and series of vowels (*āli*). Yamāntaka is the culminating point of this long process, is the ineffable unity of the supreme experience which is realized when the two veins and the breath contained in them merge in the central vein (*umā*) and there comes out that light (*hod-gsal*) which is the sign of the conquered beatitude (bibliographic list no. 15 p. 17), illumination in its plenitude, indissoluble synthesis of insubstantiality and compassion (1): namely he becomes the symbol of the supreme being as Akṣobhya and Heruka (2).

But let us go on to describe and interpret the iconographic cycle represented in our little temple.

(1) *Ston-pa-ñid dan snin-rje dbyer-med-paḥi byan-chub-sems* (no. 16 p. 106b).

(2) See no. 10.

§17. *The maṇḍala represented at Tsaparang.* The central statue (1) of stucco, corresponds to the regular type of Vajrabhairava as it is described in the liturgical manuals containing its formulae of meditation. Many of the symbols have disappeared; some arms have been broken, but from what remains is still noticeable the perfect correspondence between the statue and the traditional iconographic type.

“Mahāvajrabhairava must have the body dark blue, nine faces, thirtyfour arms, sixteen feet: the left legs are stretched, the right ones are folded. He is able to swallow the triple world. He guffaws loudly, has the tongue rolled, gnaws his teeth and his eye-brows frown. The eyes and the eyelashes flame like the cosmic fire at the time of destruction of the universe. His hair are yellow and erect. He threatens the gods of the material and immaterial spheres and also terrorises the terrific deities. He cries *phain* with a voice similar to the rumble of thunder. He devours human blood, flesh, bone-marrow and fat. He is crowned with five terrific skulls, and he is adorned with a garland made of fifteen heads freshly cut. His sacrificial cord is formed by a black serpent; his ornaments of the ears etc. are made of human bones. Big is his belly, naked his body, and the member in erection. Eyelashes and eyelids, beard and body-hair all are aflame like the cosmic fire at the end of the aeons. The central face is that of a buffalo, it expresses profound rage and is horned. Above it, between the two horns, emerges a yellow face.

(1) See Tucci-Gherzi 1933: fig. 250.

“The ascetic tuft, standing upwards, means that he is consubstantial with the five mystic gnoses. He has a terrific aspect because he drives away the contrary forces (Māra). The sixteen feet are the symbol of the sixteen species of insubstantiality (1). His nudity intends to express that all things are devoid of birth. The erect member means that he is consubstantial with supreme beatitude. The thirtyfour arms are the symbol of the thirtyfour coefficients of illumination: the knife because he destroys ignorance; the bhindipāla (2) because he analyses false imaginings related to the subject and the object; the pestle to signify the concentration of awareness; the razor because he cuts sin; the goad (the text has *rdo-rje-rtse-gcig/ekaśūla vajra*) to indicate the submission of the body and of the word; the axe because he cuts errors of the mind; the spear because he annihilates false theories; the arrow because he pierces false imaginings; the hook because he draws (to salvation); the club because he puts down the veil deriving from karma; the khaṭvāṅga because his nature is consubstantial with the thought of illumination; the disc because he sets in motion the wheel of law (dharmacakra); the vajra because he is consubstantial with the fifth gnosis; the hammer because he breaks avarice; the sword because he gives various magical powers as those of the sword etc.; the small drum because with the supreme beatitude that it symbolizes

(1) About the various kinds of insubstantialities see *Indo-Tibetica* III/1.56, 57, and the study by Obermiller, A study of the twenty aspects of Śūnyatā, in *Indian Historical Quarterly* 9(1933).

(2) The text has *bhiṭipāla*. This weapon is “a kind of short spear which has some peacock feathers on the point”: *Bhi-ṭi-pa-la ni mdun thun-gi rnam-pa-can rtse-mo-la chags-paḥi rma-byaḥi sgro-mdons-can-no*, bibliographic list no. 15 p. 101.

he admonishes all Tathāgatas; the skull full of blood because he stimulates the observance of vows; the head of Brahmā because by his compassion he does the good of creatures; the shield because he triumphs over all (the deeds) of Māra; the foot because he gives to the one who meditates the same place as the Buddhas; the noose because he takes possession (lit. bounds) of supreme wisdom; the bow because he triumphs over the triple world; the intestines because he lets understand the insubstantiality of things; the bell to indicate the consubstantiality with the supreme gnosis; the hand because it can operate everything; the rag taken from cemeteries because it destroys the veil of ignorance, which does not let us recognise that all things are devoid of essence proper; the man transfixed on the pole, because he penetrates the concept that all things are devoid of substance; the stove (triangular in shape) symbolizes the germinal light (*hod-gsal*); the head freshly cut because it is full of that ambrosia that is compassion; the hand in the sign of threatening because it terrorizes the demons; the spear with three points symbolizes the concept that spirit, word and body have only one essence; a piece of cloth fluttering in the wind because all things are as *māyā*; the beings that he treads under his feet symbolize the mystic powers deriving from them”.

This aspect of Vajrabhairava is the centre, so to say, of the whole iconographic series revolving around the walls of the temple. Since he is deprived of his śakti, who however appears regularly in his other manifestations, he is called the *solitary hero* (*ekavīra*, *dpah-bo gcig-pa*), a name that we find also in various Tantras of Śivaite inspiration. He symbolizes a special status

of being, its indiscriminate condition beyond the flowing of the infinite series (*kula*) of śaktis who in acting realize the world contained in him as potency (1). Vajrabhairava put under his feet the figure of Śiva, although Śivaism especially in its tantric realization, was not very dissimilar from the philosophemes of declining Buddhism.

It is not difficult to say who are the coupled deities covering with their monstrous train of minor gods, the major portion of the walls. The identification is easy because every figure is accompanied by a short formula of invocation including his name. This pictorial series, therefore, constitutes a well-determined cycle. It is one of those maṇḍalas in which tantric liturgy, both in India and in Tibet, graphically expressed in symbols, certain mystic experiences adumbrated under the name of Vajrabhairava. This cycle of the thirteen gods provided much to do to the Tibetan doctors, because some schools did not believe that it was the exact representation of the meditative process that had to consubstantiate the mystic with the spiritual planes represented by Vajrabhairava. Other doctors, then, have negated that the central divinity would have been represented according to the coupled type (*yab-yum*) and claimed that he had instead to be represented according to the scheme of *ekavīra*, namely, of the “solitary hero”.

(1) Namely the *ekavīra* of these schools corresponds to the *akulavīra* of the Śivaite sects, that is Śiva conceived as the ineffable absolute before the play of his śaktis is released by him. They are being in itself for itself, archetypes of māyā or phenomonic contingency, although transcending this māyā, see *Kaula-jñāna-nirṇaya* edited by P. Ch. Bagchi in the Calcutta Sanskrit Series.

Both schools had their adherents, but their point of view did not have fortune, especially after the elaboration of the liturgy by Tson-kha-pa and his disciples. One of them, Mkhas-grub-rje, wrote a systematic work about Vajrabhairava of an evidently polemic character (bibliographic list no. 2) where he maintains the perfect orthodoxy of the cycle of Vajrabhairava “yab yum”, with his thirteen emanations.

In any case this cycle of thirteen deities is very clear and organic in its composition. It is constituted by the central deity, followed by the eight *antaka* already included as subsidiary elements in the ritualistics of the Guhyasamāja and finally by the four goddesses Carcikā etc., according to the scheme summarized hereafter. The centre of the whole pictorial series is represented by Vajrabhairava coupled with his śakti (plate XXXIV); he is easily identifiable through the inscription accompanying the figure: *Rdo-rje-hjigs-byed yab-yum-la na-mo* namely “Homage to Vajrabhairava coupled”. The iconographic type is the same as that of the central statue. The only difference is the presence of the śakti Vajravetālī/Rdo-rje-ro-laṅs-ma who, according to traditional canons, must have two arms and only one head, has to be of blue colour and with her aspect slightly angry. Her symbols are: in her right a knife countersigned with the vajra, and in her left a skull full of blood. On her head she wears a diadem made of five skulls and a garland of fifteen skulls. She tightly embraces the “father” in the act of mystic embrace.

On the east (plate XXXI) Gti-mug-gśin-rje-gśed/Moha-Yamāntaka, in the attitude yab yum; white, three faces: the central is white, blue on the right, red on the left. Usual macabre

ornaments; six arms: the first two have a knife and a skull, while embracing the śakti. The other two on the right have the disc and the sword; those on the left firmly hold the gem and the lotus. The śakti embracing the god is equal to him in every respect.

To the south Ser-sna-gśin-rje-gśed/Mātsarya-Yamāntaka (plate XXXII), in yab yum attitude, yellow. Three faces: the central one yellow, the right one blue, and the left one white. Six arms: in the first two hands knife and cranial box, in the others on the right gem and sword; in the others on the left disc and lotus. The embraced śakti is similar to him in every respect.

To the west Ḥdod-chags-gśin-rje-gśed/Rāga-Yamāntaka, in yab yum attitude, red. Three faces: the central red, the other two blue and white. Symbols: the first two hands as in the preceding image; in the others on the right lotus and sword; in those on the left gem and disc (plate XXXIII). The śakti is similar.

To the north Phra-dog-rdo-rje-gśin-rje-gśed/Īrṣyāvajra-Yamāntaka in yab yum attitude, green. Three faces: the central green, the other two blue and white; six arms. Symbols: similar to the preceding in the first two hands; in the remaining ones, to the right: disc, to the left: gem and lotus (plate XXIX).

Then, Tho-ba-gśin-rje-gśed/Mudgara-Yamāntaka in yab yum attitude, blue. Three faces: the central blue, the right white, the left red. Symbols: the first two arms as in the preceding image; in the others, to the right blue mace and sword, to the left gem and lotus.

Dbyug-pa-gśin-rje-gśed/Daṇḍa-Yamāntaka, white, in yab yum attitude. Three faces: the central white, the other two blue and red. Six arms: the first two as in the preceding images; in the others on the right club and sword, on the left lotus and disc (plate XXXV).

On the back door (west) of the maṇḍala Pad-ma-gśin-rje-gśed/Padma-Yamāntaka, red, in yab yum attitude; three faces: the central red, the other two blue and white. Six arms: the first two as in the preceding images; in the others to the right lotus and sword, to the left disc and gem.

Ral-gri-gśin-rje-gśed/Khaḍga-Yamāntaka, green, in yab yum attitude. Three faces: the central green, the other two blue and white. Six arms: the first two as in the preceding images; in the others to the right sword and disc, to the left gem and lotus (plate XXXVI).

In all the images the śakti is represented with the same colours and with the same symbols as the male deity.

To the south-east Tsa-rtsi-ka/Carcikā, white, extremely thin and angry. Three faces: the central white, the other two blue and red. Six arms: in the first two she has the knife and the skull and she embraces the god who is similar to her in every respect; in the others, to the right disc and sword, to the left gem and lotus.

The painting is so damaged that it could not be photographed.

To the south-west Phag-mo/Vārāhī with a boar-head, blue; three heads: the central face blue, the other two white and red; six arms: symbols of the first two as in the preceding image; in the others to the right the vajra and the sword, to the left the disc and the lotus (plate XXXVII).

To north-west Dbyaṅs-can-ma dmar-mo/Rakta Sarasvatī, red, of peaceful aspect; three faces: the central red, the other two blue and white; six arms: the first two as in the preceding images, the others to the right lotus and sword, to the left gem and disc (plate XXXVIII).

To south-east Gaurī, green; three faces; the central green, the other two blue and white. Six arms: the first two as in the preceding images; in the others, to the right the sword and the disc, to the left the gem and the lotus.

In the image of Tsaparang, however as it can be seen from the inscription, the deity is called Sgrol-ma ljañ-khu namely Green Tārā, Śyāmā Tārā.

These feminine deities embrace the corresponding god, who is similar to them in every respect, except in the case of Phagmo/Vārāhī, because he does not have a boar face like the goddess.

Thus, in all there are thirteen deities who constitute one of the many maṇḍalas of Mahāvajrabhairava, known by the generic name of the Maṇḍala of the thirteen deities.

§18. *The minor deities.* The minor spaces above and below the great figures, on the sides of the door, on the two sides and on the central wall of the little cella, are all covered by a multifarious colourful crowd of terrific deities, smaller in proportion than the others, one near the other, without any apparent connection among them, surrounded by halos of flames, mounted on animals, stepping on corpses, armed by strange implements. A frightening panel where the spiritual substratum of the Tibetan mystics has projected itself in terrific symbols. The visions appearing in the evocatory ceremonies are translated in pictorial schemes, which knowing how to interpret them, would

open to the initiated the doors of the unexplored abysses of our subconscious and give a name and a form to the uncomposed forces that are agitated at its bottom.

Before seeing whether it is possible to put a bit of order in this crowd of deities covering every space of the little shrine and before trying to establish if they pertain to some given cycle or have some relation to the maṇḍala of Vajrabhairava, it would be opportune to give here a list of names accompanying the various figures, which serves to identify them.

(Plate LX) Bya-rog-doñ (for gdoñ)-can/Kākāśya “the god with the head of crow”; (plate LXI) Ye-śes-kyi-mgon brgyan-can; (plate LXII) Myur-mdzad; Mgon-po phyin-kha; (plate LXIII) Rematī; (plate LXIV) Dpal Mgon phyag-bzhi; Rta-mgrin; Phyag-na-rdo-rje; (plates LVIII-LIX) śar-du Gśin-rje dkar-po; byañ-gi Gśin-rje sñon-po; nub-kyi Gśin-rje dmar-po; lhor Gśin-rje ser-po; (plate LXV) Khro-rgyal smre-rtsegs.

The names of the deities flying among the flames are readable often with difficulty (plates LII-LV): Sreg-ma; Ḥbebs-ma; Dam-sri-ma nag-mo; Śakarali; Phyag-saṅs; Rol-pa-tshar-dgu-ma; Pho-ñā-mo nag-mo; Bsod-ma; Dus-mtshan-ma; Dus-zhags-ma.

(Plate LVI) Spyan-ras-gzigs; Dmag-zor-rgyal-ma; (plate LVII) Ye-śes-kyi-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma; Mgon-po gzag-ldan; Gśin-rje-gśed.

(Plate XXXIX) Gśin-rje; Me-lha; Rgya-byin; Tshaṅs-pa.

(Plate XL) Srin-po; Gśin-rje; Me-lha.

(Plate XLI) Dbañ-ldan; Gnod-sbyin; Rluñ-lha; Chu-lha.

(Plate XLII) Rgya-byin; Ñe-dbañ; Gśin-rje; Chu-lha.

(Plate XLIII) Srin-po; Rluñ-lha; Me-lha.

(Plate XLIV) Lus-ñan; Tshogs-bdag; Dbañ-ldan.

(Plate XLV) Acala/Mi-g.yo-ba; Black Jambhala/Dzam-bha-la nag-po; Yellow Jambhala/Dzam-bha-la ser-po.

(Plate XLVI) Vaiśravaṇa/Rnam-sras; Virūpākṣa/Mig-mi-bzañ; Virūdhaka/Hphags-skyes-po; Dhṛtarāṣṭra/Yul-ḥkhor-sruñ; (plate XLVII) Mahācakra/Hkhor-lo-chen-po; (plate XLVIII) Red Yamāntaka/Gśed dmar; (plate XLIX) Black Yamāntaka/Dgra nag; (plate L) Guhyasādhana Hayagrīva/Rta-mgrin gsañ-grub; (plate LI) Kālacakra/Dus-kyi-ḥkhor-lo.

Comparing this list to what we may desume from the liturgical literature connected with Vajrabhairava, we shall see that the painters of our shrine did not take inspiration from any of the ritual texts dedicated to the mystical realizations of this deity, or of Yamāri, accessible to me at least today. It always remains a hypothesis that a system of maṇḍala similar to the one represented on the walls of this shrine was known to one of the many schools now fallen into oblivion. But it is also possible that, beyond a certain number of deities surely pertaining to the cycle of Vajrabhairava, the unknown artists have covered all the empty spaces with figures of other gods or demons of a similar nature, that is represented in their terrific manifestation and with exorcistic functions against evil forces.

This seems to appear also from how the images follow one another, not symmetrically ordained but rather side by side or overlapped on one another, without looking at a disposition in series both circular and straight or as a cross which is usually respected when they want to represent a cycle.

But at least some are connected with the cycle of Vajrabhairava. They pertain to that peculiar group of demons rather than gods, who are known in Tibet by the name of Bstan-sruñ-ma and who according to some liturgies were not dissociated from Vajrabhairava.

As the first group is easily identifiable at least partially, we find that they are the *Phyogs-skyon/Dikpāla* or protectors of the principal and intermediary directions. These, as we have already seen while speaking about the eight cemeteries, may be eight, or according to different lists (for example those of *Kloṅ-rdol op. cit.* p. 10b), ten or fifteen. In some liturgical texts their number is multiplied because every one of them is accompanied by two acolytes, one on the right and one on the left, namely $3 \times 8 = 24$ (1).

But in the temple of Tsaparang the list seems to be duplicated. As it can be desumed from the list reported above, many names appear twice although the iconography is different for every case (plates XXXIX-XLIV). This fact can be explained by noticing that in ritualistics we find lists, often duplicated, of similar categories of deities, namely, as in the small manual by *Kloṅ-rdol* already quoted: the eight protectors of the directions (*phyogs-skyon/dikpāla*), the eight mahādevas (*lha-chen brgyad*), the eight worldly mahādevas (*hjig-rten-paḥi lha-chen brgyad*).

To the same protective cycle of the *Bstan-sruṅ-ma* belong the four *Yamas* (*gśin-rje*) (plates LVIII-LIX) each corresponding to one of the directions. They too are recorded in the treatise of *Kloṅ-rdol*, although their iconography is not described in detail. They not only preside over the four regions of space, but are at the same time considered as tutelary deities of the four principal magic actions about which it is so often spoken of in Tantric liturgy: namely about those ceremonies aiming at producing in the performers, internal beatitude, material prosperity, domination over others or mastership of black magic

(1) As for instance in a Tantric text in the *Bstan-hgyur*, vol. pi no. 92 *Śrīvajrabhairava-maṇḍala-vidhi-prakāśa-nāma*, p. 329.

(*zhi, rgyas, dbaṅ, drag*) (treatise by Kloṅ-rdol p. 2).

We see in the mural paintings another deity never lacking in the cycle of the Bstan-sruṅ-ma, namely (plate LXIV) Mgon-po/Mahākāla of four arms. His iconography is similar to the one described in the text of Kloṅ-rdol (p. 3): in the hands, right the knife, left a skull full of blood; in the other two hands the sword and the trident. Nor is lacking “the god with crow’s face” Bya-roḡ-gdoṅ-can/Kākāśya (plate LX) with the knife in the right and a skull in the left. Thus two *ḍākinīs* are present and they have a dominant role in the same cycle, I want to say Rematī and Dmag-zor-ma.

§19. *Rematī in India and in Tibet.* Rematī (plate LXIII) riding a mule is the secret aspect (*gsaṅ-ba*), that is to say accessible in her real essence only in the highest degrees of the meditative process, of a psychic plane symbolically expressed in exoteric ritualistics by the type of Yoginī/Rnal-ḥbyor-ma, changed then to Caṅḍālī in esoteric contemplation.

According to the description of certain texts, she must be of dark blue colour, has four arms and is armed with four symbols that is sword, magic dagger (*phur-ba*), mirror and serpentine noose (1), or according to others, she must have the *khaṭ-vāṅga* and the magic dagger in her two right hands and the mirror and the serpentine noose in her two left hands (2).

(1) Thus in certain liturgical works of the Rñiṅ-ma-pa, for example *Bkaḥ-sruṅ-ma chen-pa sgrub-paḥi phrin-las*, p. 2 in *Rin-chen-gter-mdzod* vol. ñi.

(2) *Dpal-ldan raṅ-hbyuṅ rgyal-moḥi skor-las ma-mo srog-sgrub-gi gzuṅs*, p. 3 *ibid.*

Rematī is, of course, an erroneous transcription of Revatī (1), who is an ogress that, according to Indian demonology, endangered specially the life of children. More, according to one of the most famous books of Indian pediatrics as the Kumāra-tantra is (2), she manifests her malefic power on the seventh day, in the seventh month or in the seventh year, provoking a violent fever in the child. Although the Kumāra-tantra calls her “ŚuṣkaRevatī” and the Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya (Uttarasthāna 3.3 and 27-29) distinguishes two types of the same demon, that is Revatī and ŚuṣkaRevatī (3), it is clear that the two forms are analogous. ŚuṣkaRevatī does not so much mean “Revatī the dried up”, but rather the one “who produces dryness in the body”. In fact, as soon as the child is possessed by her, “complete emaciation of the body, fall of hair, revulsion for food, weakening of the voice” are manifested. But because of that easy confusion between cause and effect, so common in the demonology of all people, Revatī too assumes an emaciated and skeletal form.

(1) Grünwedel makes a brief hint to this goddess whom he calls Rimatī (*Mythologie des Buddhismus*, p.66) and believes that the name Rimatī is the translation of the Sanskrit Pārvatī, the goddess of the mountain. This is erroneous, first because the name of the goddess is Rematī and not Rimatī; then because by no means could be explained the unusual formation with the suffix - ti.

(2) The Kumāra-tantra has been recently studied by Filliozat in *Journal Asiatique* 1935:1.1. But in this article I do not see a very important notice recorded to establish the antiquity of the text. That is to say that the Kumāra-tantra, attributed to Rāvaṇa and therefore often called Rāvaṇa-Kumāra-tantra, is one of the very few medical works translated into Chinese and included in the Buddhist Canon: Bunjiu Nanjio no. 882 “Sutra spoken by Rāvaṇa on the cure of children’s diseases”. 囉嚩拏說救療小兒疾病經。

(3) But the Suśruta-saṃhitā knows only Revatī. In the Kumāra-tantra ŚuṣkaRevatī is called in Chinese, 哩嚩帝 namely simply Revatī. She occupies the third post instead of the seventh as it is in the Sanskrit text.

So she is, in fact, in our painting of Tsaparang, where the deity is represented as an old woman dried up and haggard: that is to say an iconographic type reminding that of Kṣamā, one of the secondary forms of Cāmuṇḍā. Perhaps this parallel is not out of place, because examples of assimilation of Revatī with Cāmuṇḍā or other forms of the Great Mother are not lacking. In her symbol have merged in fact the infinite feminine deities of chthonian character. As such they are, time and again, goddesses of fecundity and of destruction, of life and of death, the two opposite and yet inseparable poles through which there evolves the flow of cosmic becoming (1). But this assimilation, which almost all the oldest feminine deities of India have passed through, did not let miss the peculiar character of this ogress, goddess of sickness and of consumption especially in children. As a graha, namely, as demon procreating sicknesses, she is already known in the Mahābhārata which narrates her emanation together with the other new “mothers” from Skanda (Vanaparvan 230).

Revatī is also one of the lunar mansions (nakṣatra) of Indian astronomy. But it does not seem to me that there is any evident connection with the ogress Revatī; because, if the birth in Revatī, according to astrology, may provoke the death of father and mother or being inauspicious for them, the persons born under that sign are thought to be fortunate and endowed with physical and moral virtues (2).

(1) This assimilation between Revatī and Cāmuṇḍā is already found in the Kathāsaritsāgara 53.

(2) See *Jātaka-pārijāta* 9.57, 63, 65, 90, *Bṛhaj-jātaka* 16.14.

As to Dmag-zor-ma, she should be the first of the twelve kinds of Tārā, according to the ritualistics of the Bkaḥ-gdams-pa. Thus, at least, is taught by Kloñ-rdol bla-ma. Although in our frescoes they are not very near, in fact the two goddesses Rematī and Dmag-zor-ma are assimilated in the latest tradition. Blo-bzañ-chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan (1) who has dedicated a large liturgical treatise to Dmag-zor-ma, also considers them as equivalent goddesses. In the course of the whole of his manual he identifies Dmag-zor-ma and Rematī, after calling the goddess with a single name: Dpal-ldan Dmag-zor-gyi rgyal-mo Rematī; just as if Rematī be the queen of a class of feminine deities called Dmag-zor-ma. The assimilation was provoked by the fact that both the goddesses, distinct in our frescoes in iconographic type, have however been considered as particular aspects of Kālī, by a process analogous to the one I have hinted at above. The Great Mother, symbol of the incessant rhythm of life and death, absorbed the innumerable local feminine deities. Thus Dmag-zor-ma and Rematī too, who perpetuated deities anterior to the introduction of Buddhism, are fused in a single type, Dmag-zor-Rematī, guide and ruler of the indeterminate category of the Bstan-sruñ-ma (2). Dmag-zor is assimilated to Dpal-ldan Lha-mo that is to say Śrīdevī or Kālī, called also

(1) In his treatise *Ḥdod-khams-dban-phyug-ma dmag-zor-rgyal-moḥi sgrub-thabs gtor cho-ga*.

(2) According to *Ḥdod-khams-dban-phyug-ma dmag-zor-rgyal-moḥi sgrub-thabs gtor cho-ga tshogs-mchod-pa dan gsol bcas*, p. 4a, the name of Dmag-zor derives from the fact that this goddess or rather class of goddesses was given charge to look after the armies (*dmag*), that is of the forces moved for protecting the law and the faithful, and of weapons, especially the weapons used in the exorcistic ceremonies called in fact *zor* (*dmag dan zor-gyi las-la dgyes*).

Dpal-ldan Dmag-zor-ma (1). This multiplicity of aspects of the same religious intuition is very well expressed by Blo-bzañ-chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan in a series of equivalences which do not limit themselves only to the Tibetan area, but extend also to other countries of Asia and to other mythologies. These equivalences have then to be understood not as entities, but as the manifestation of the same religious concept under different skies and with different names. Rematī is thus assimilated to Umā (p. 5), to the queen of the Nāgas Gtsug-naḥi bu-mo Nor-ḥdzin-ma, of the yakṣas Gañ-bzañ-bu-mo Gzi-legs-ma, of the demons (*bdud*) Ḥgog-yag-sras-mo Dri-ldan-ma, of the Rākṣasa and so on. In India she appears as Ma-mo (Mātṛkā) Vaśaṁ-kuruma (sic); among the Turkish populations of Central Asia (Hor) as “the Turkish”, the principal of the nine sisters Gñan (*Hor-mo gñan-gyi spun dguḥi gtsō*); among the Chinese as “the Chinese”; the blue, with the auspicious neck (Sñon-mo Mgrin-bzañ-ma); among the Mon as Spyi-rin-lan-bran-ma; among the Tibetans as Dpal-ldan A-phyi-ma namely the “grand-ma” (2). With respect to Tibet, her connection with the pre-Buddhist cults is shown by her often being called in these liturgical texts Gñan: Gñan, as is known, is the name of specifically Bonpo deities, maleficent deities producing pestilences and epidemics. Later these deities have been assimilated to chthonic divinities so as to become a sub-species of the sa-bdag (3). Blo-bzañ-chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan has included in his liturgical manual a hymn

(1) See Ribbach *op. cit.* p. 36. Compare Grünwedel *op. cit.* pp. 66, 173, 175.

(2) The same series in the *Ḥdod-khams-dhañ-phyug-ma dmag-zor-rgyal-moḥi sgrub-thabs gtor cho-ga tshogs-mchod-pa dañ gsol bcas* by Bskal-bzañ-rgya-mtsho.

(3) About the Gñan see Laufer, *Sühngedichte der Bonpo* s.v., and *Klu-ḥbum bsdus-paḥi sñin-po* s.v.

to the goddess which, besides its evident and few Buddhist influences, probably preserves for us an ancient religious song of popular origin. It is not inopportune to reproduce here its text and translation.

BHYOH/Dpal-ldan Rematī of the Gñan,
 Dmag-zor sentinel of the teaching,
 facing Rdo-rje-ḥchan,
 you promised to defend the teaching.
 Anciently, at the beginning of the cosmic era,
 you prepared your sure place
 in the north-east direction from this country;
 after having passed over many valleys,
 where there are no herbs, no water, no trees,
 there are the reddish desert plains
 of the wearisome north (*byan-than*),
 the slow and red roads of the north,

- (3) ལྷོ་ལོ་ལྷོ་ལོ་ འཕེལ་ལྷན་གཉན་གྱི་རེ་མ་དེ།
 དམག་རྩོད་བསྟན་པའི་བྱ་ར་མ།
 རོ་རྩི་འཆང་གི་སྤྲན་སྤྲ་ཅུ།
 བསྟན་པ་བསྐྱང་བར་ཞལ་བཞེས་མ།
 སྤྲན་གྱི་བསྐྱལ་པའི་དང་པོ་ལ།
 ཁྱིད་གྱིས་བདན་པའི་གནས་བཅས་པ།
 འདི་ནས་བྱང་ཤར་མཚོ་མས་ཤེད་ན།
 ཙ་ཙ་ཤེད་སོགས་མེད་པ་ཡི།
 ལྷང་མང་བརྒྱལ་བའི་པ་རོལ་ན།
 བྱང་ཐང་དམར་པོ་སྤྱོད་ལྷན་པ།
 བྱང་ལམ་དམར་པོ་བྱ་མ་གྱ།

the red mountain of the north, high and awesome,
 where tortously run wild beasts
 and the cries of many demons and birds resound
 and there burst storms of hails
 and turmoil storms of white snow.

(There), in the middle of the lake Mu-le-diñ (1)
 there is the square, gloomy castle of Bse;
 the four sides are made of dark onyx
 the beams are made of blue turquoise,
 the grounds are made of black iron;
 around are spread corpses of men and horses
 blood of men and horses is thick
 as a lake;

བྱང་རི་དམར་པོ་རྒྱུ་ལྷོ་འཛིན་གསལ།

གཙན་གཟན་མང་པོ་འདྲར་རྒྱག་བྱེད།

འདྲེ་བྱ་སྒྲ་ཚོགས་སྐད་སྒྲིག་ཅིང་།

གནས་ལྷགས་སེར་ཚེན་ཤར་ར་ར།

དང་གི་བྱ་ཡུག་བྱིལ་ལེ་ལེ།

སྒྲ་ལེ་དེང་གི་མཚོ་ནང་ན།

བསེ་མཁར་སྒྲིག་པོ་གྲུབ་བཞི་བ།

རྒྱར་བཞི་སྒྲིག་པོ་འཛིན་ལས་བྱས།

ཁ་བད་རྒྱན་པོ་འཛིན་གསལ་བྱས།

སྐད་གཞི་ནག་པོ་འཛིན་གསལ་ལས་བྱས།

མི་རོ་དེ་རོ་གཙལ་དུ་བྱས།

(1) This is evidently a proper name. It should be recorded however that *mu-le* means "girl" (see *Asia Major* 2.270, *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents concerning Chinese Turkestan*, by F.W. Thomas, p. 102 n. 11).

it is surrounded by scores of Mothers and hundreds
of thousands and by thousands of eaters of flesh
and by millions of spirits drinking blood;
inside of this palace you stay, lady of
all the Mothers.

To conclude, here is the iconographic description of Dmagzor, as contained in the text cited:

“Dark blue colour; one face and two hands: in the right she has a club marked by the vajra, high on the heads of those who have forsaken their vow; in the left she keeps tight, at the height of the breast a skull full of blood; the mouth is open, terrific because of four sharp teeth coming out. She eats corpses of men, laughing with the rumble of thunder. Three eyes frowning, red, round and flaming like lightning; the tuft yellow-brown standing high, eyelashes and beard flaming like the cosmic fire at the end of the aeons; on the right ear a lion and on the left a serpent; on the head a diadem made of five human skulls, scarf of fifteen heads still fresh, leaking blood”. Her vehicle is as for Remati.

མི་ཁྲག་ཏྟ་ཁྲག་མཚོ་རུ་མེར །

ས་ཚོ་འབྲུམ་དང་ག་ཟ་ཕྱོང །

ཁྲག་འགྲང་བྱེ་བའི་ཚོགས་འཁོར་རྒྱས །

གཞལ་ཡས་དེ་ཡི་ནང་ཤེད་ན །

ས་ཚོ་ཀན་གྱི་བདག་ཚོ་བཞུགས་

§20. *Other divinities of the cycle of Bstan-sruñ-ma.* It is more difficult to identify the goddesses flying and revolving among the flames riding fantastic animals. They are painted on the right side of the central cella (plates LII-LV): they are ten in all and four of them appear in the list of the eight Lha-mo described in some Tantric texts (for instance, Bstan-ḡgyur, pi no. 61 p. 169 and no. 63 p. 174): (*gśin-rjeḡi*) *pho-ñā-mo* (messengers of Yama), *Dus-mtshan* (Kālarātrī), *Zhags-pa-mo/Pāsā*, and (*gśin-rjeḡi*) *ḡbebs*. *Dam-sri* is a kind of deity believed to cause death of the herd and of the domestic animals (1). *Ye-śes-mkhaḡ-ḡgro-ma/Jñānaḡākinī* (plate LVII) is too common in the Tantric cycles as I should insist upon her iconographic type. *Vaiśravaṇa/Rnam-thos-sras* and *Jambhala* in their four aspects, yellow, white, red and black, are included in the cycle of the Bstan-sruñ-ma, as it is clearly said by *Kloñ-rdol 7b-8a* (plate XLVI) in his already quoted little book on the cycle of the Bstan-sruñ-ma.

As for the divinity reproduced on plate LXV and invoked as *Khro-rgyal Smre-rtsegs*, I confess that I do not know her, nor do I remember to have met her in my Tibetan readings. I am however certain that *Smre-rtsegs* is a corrupted form of *Khro-bo sme-brtsegs* about whom I know a liturgy preserved in the *Rñiñ-ma-pa* collection already cited more than once (2). The mystical formula with which the divinity is invoked and with

(1) On this cycle I know the following small treatise: *Dam-sri gson ḡdre sogs lun-bstan-ciñ ḡdul-baḡi thabs śin-tu-zab-pa* contained in the vol. tsi of the *Rin-chen-gter-mdzod*.

(2) *Rin-chen-gter-mdzod*, tsi: *Khro-bo sme-ba-brtsegs-paḡi sgrub-thabs dan khrus cho-ga-rnams nag-po ḡgro śes-su bkod-pa mig gtsan dag-byed*.

which the rite begins, leaves no doubt about his Sanskrit name: *Sme-ba-rtsegs* (or *brtsegs*) corresponds to a peculiar form of a Tantric god known by the name of Ucchuṣma (1) who, according to the liturgical literature, is considered as a peculiar form of Jambhala, the god of riches.

Since however the text which mentions it describes him with one head and two arms, double vajra on the right and threatening mudrā on the left, as it is in fact in the known collection of Sādhanas, the iconographic type of Tsaparang, representing him with six arms and with other symbols, would constitute a particularity not yet documented by literary Sanskrit sources (2). But in the quoted collection, an inexhaustible mine of knowledge for Tantric liturgy, in a small treatise which closely follows the one just mentioned and which is dedicated to a complex maṇḍala containing the five Supreme Buddhas, I find a description of Ucchuṣma which tallies with the image reproduced in the temple of Tsaparang: three faces: the central green namely of the colour of the body, the one on the right red, and the one on the left dark blue. In the three hands on the right: vajra, sword, serpentine noose; in the three hands on the left: axe, bell and pot. Or(4) three faces: blue, white and red; double vajra, trident, hook in the right hands and stick, noose and mudrā of threatening in the left ones.

(1) In fact, in the *Sme-ba-brtsegs-paḥi sgrub-thabs ṅams grib kun sel rgyal-chen-po*, *Sme-ba-rtsegs* is called by his more common name *ḥtshol*.

(2) From him is derived, for dissimilation, the *dākinī*: *Rme-brtsegs-ma* to whom is dedicated in the same collection a *Ñan-lugs khro-mo rme-brtsegs-maḥi sgrub-thabs dbaṅ bskur khrus cho-ga dan-bcas-pa*. The orthographic indecision between *sme* and *rme* should be noted.

(3) *Ḥzah tshon ma-niṅ zhi-baḥi las-tshogs mkhaḥ-ḥgro grib sel bklags chog-tu bkod-pa śel-dkar bum-paḥi chu-rgyun*.

(4) *Khro-boḥi sme-ba-brtsegs-paḥi sgrub*.

This god is almost always invoked in rites of lustration (*khrus*), done with blessed water. The ceremonies, according to the liturgies known to me, have a prevalent exorcistic character, because he who performs them wishes by this way to obtain a complete purification from sicknesses, from moral infections and from injuries provoked by demons (*gnod*). Even more, as soon as the rite is performed, with an actual lustration, sicknesses and bad forces are offered to the god so that he with his power could annihilate and destroy them (*nad gnod thams-cad kho-bo stobs-po-che khyod-la hbul-lo*). He is invoked not only to facilitate moral purity in the devotee, but especially to free him from the dangers of a thousand occult forces which threaten his physical integrity and his spiritual purity from everywhere. He has to dispel the evil spirits of both sexes (*gnod pho mo*), the *vināyaka*, the *nāga*, the mournings caused by epidemics (*dme yug*): to sum up, he is a lustral god whom a tradition perhaps of Indian origin considers as the incarnation of Vajrapāṇi Guhyapati, born from Maheśvara and Umā (1). We note here another case of contamination and alliance between Buddhism and Śivaism, which also occurred in that period of syncretism which saw the flourishing of the schools of Siddhas in India, and which we have repeatedly mentioned during these researches.

As for Red Yamāntaka/Gśed dmar, I think that he is to be compared with Yam-śud dmar, also included in the cycle of the Bstan-sruñ-ma and often evoked in many a rite of exorcism practised in popular religion. He is called *Btsan-gyi rgyal-po* “king of the Btsan”—demons of the primitive religion that

(1) *Sme-brtsegs nams grib kun-sel-gyi dbaṅ cho-ga zla śel bdud-rtsiḥi chu-rgyun.*

Buddhism could never win—or also *Dgra-lha*. The iconography represents him red in colour with two arms, the right one holding a spear and the left a serpentine noose (1) in the act of assaulting and dispersing the enemies. He, as I have already said, is not always distinguished from *Dgra-lha*, also represented in our temple, and who is, in any case, an emanation of him. Both these gods take us back to the shamanistic beliefs preexisting Lamaism and both reveal connections with the cycle of *Kesar* (2).

In some Tantric texts *Myur-mdzad* is included in the maṇḍala of the “protectors of the law”, where his symbols are the knife (*gri-gug*) and the skull (3). In this case too we are faced with a contamination of Indian cults—since *Myur-mdzad* is identified with *Mahākāla*—and aboriginal religious traditions. This is also recognized by *Dge-legs-dpal-bzañ* who has dedicated a short liturgical treatise (4) to this god. He mentions that he is known not only by the *Rñiñ-ma-pa*, but also by the *Bonpo* (op. cit. p. 1). Nevertheless, his cult has been recognized also by the *Dge-lugs-pa* who have inserted him in the long and never concluded category of the *Mgon-po*, by attributing to him several of the characters of *Mahākāla*.

(1) On him see for instance *Bstan-sruñ-chen-po btsan rgod yam-śud dmar-po tso-ħkhor-gyi bskañ cho-ga dños-grub bdud-rtsi ħkhyil-baħi rin-chen bum-bzan* by *Blo-bzañ-tshul-khrims-byams-pa-rgya-mtsho*.

(2) About *Dgra-lha* see for example *Srog-bdag yam-śud dmar-poħi thugs sprul bstan-sruñ ħkhu dgra-lhaħi sgrub-thabs gtor-chog-gi rim-pa cha-lag thañ-ma*.

(3) *Chos-skyoñ dgoñs ħdus sñiñ-po*, p. 12b in *Rin-chen-gter-mdzod*, vol. ni.

(4) *Myur-mdzad ye-śes-kyi-mgon-po phyag-drug-paħi gtor cho-ga bskañ-gso cha-lag dañ-bcas*.

The iconographic type of Tsaparang (plate LXII) is similar to that described by Dge-legs-dpal-bzan, according to whom Myur-mdzad has six arms, which on the right hold the knife, a rosary made of human skulls and a small magical drum made of the summits of two skulls and on the left a summit skull full of blood, a trident and a noose having a vajra at its extremity.

The only iconographic difference is that, according to Dge-legs-dpal the god has a single face instead of three as in our frescoes. His connection with the two figures of Rematī and Dmag-zor-ma is somehow indicated by the fact that in the liturgical text quoted Rematī is mentioned riding by his side.

Vaiśravaṇa/Rnam-sras, Virūpākṣa/Mig-mi-bzan, Virūdhaka/Hphags-skyes-po, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra/Yul-ḥkhor-sruñ are too well known to persevere on them. They constitute the cycle of the four kings of the principal directions, the four Mahārāja or Lokapāla. Each represents a special category of beings: namely, the Yakṣas, the Nāgas, the Kūṣmāṇḍa or Kumbhāṇḍa, and lastly the Gandharvas. Although they appear almost always as secondary elements in the various maṇḍalas sometimes they constitute a cycle by themselves around a central deity. This is the case in the Durgati-pariśodhana, which in fact knows a maṇḍala of the four Lokapāla with Vajrapāni at the centre (1).

Dgra nag/Black Yamāntaka is a peculiar form of Gśin-rje-gśed (with the śakti, six arms, knife, vajra, sword, wheel and

(1) See Vajravarman in his *Sundarālaṅkāra*, Bstan-ḥgyur, rgyud khu Cor-dier LXII folio 122.

lotus), about whom see *Dpal gsin-rje-dgra-nga-gi sgrub-paḥi-thabs rin-po-che ḥbar-ba* by Tsoṅ-kha-pa (complete works, vol. tha).

It can be concluded from this summary description, that the “small temple of the ascetic” is, in its painted histories and legends, one of the more important of those in the western provinces of Tibet. A crowd of frescoed gods evoke again in our imagination an aspect of that complex Mahāyānic Olympus that the historical events were transplanting from India to Tibet. It reveals to us not only the inexhaustible imagination of the Buddhist ascetics and their unsurpassed skill in translating into symbols the inner visions of their spirit, but it documents as well the assimilative tendency accentuating more and more in declining Buddhism. A noticeable number of these deities whom we see accepted in the cycles of Buddhist Tantrism refer us to the religious background of Iṅḍia and often not only of India, and they document once more that assimilative force which has constituted one of the vital causes of the expansion of Mahāyāna. To symbolise the various experiences foreign to those propagated by the Buddha represents a form of religion surpassed by it, the Hindu gods always stand outside the maṅḍala. Often they signify forces which are contrary to the true doctrine. Nevertheless, they are not negated as experiences. It is true that they are inferior experiences, but they too are manifestations of that unsuppressable anxiety in man which spurs us to look for the eternal. The fact that they have been true and have been in the consciousness of the people, already gave them a content of reality which the Buddhist masters could not but recognize. And thus the maṅḍalas of the Tantric schools receive them almost all as conventional deities (*laukika*), as

protectors of the directions, as guardians of the Buddhist law; and they dispose them at the periphery, at the limit, namely, among the last glimmers of consciousness both of religious life and of the obscure world of matter. Only with Śiva, Buddhism saw itself less conciliatory. Although included in the list of the Kṣetrapāla, we see him put under the feet of the defenders of faith. This happened when Buddhistic Tantrism and Śivaite Tantrism, having many elements in common, started fighting for the domination of consciousness.

§21. *The series of the "masters".* Above the images of the acutal Tantric cycle, runs a band on which is represented, in traditional attitudes, a long series of Lamas (plate LXVII). They embody the continuity of the initiatic teaching beginning with Vajrabhairava. Its first revelation is usually attributed to a ḍākinī, Ye-śes-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma/Jñāna-ḍākinī who revealed its mysteries and its liturgies to Lalitavajra. This series of masters who have faithfully transmitted to each other the secret doctrines and have nourished, with their direct experience, its mystical efficacy by giving to the disciples the sacred baptism, called in Tibetan *bla-maḥi rgyud* (corresponding to the Sanskrit *sampradāya*). The pictorial representation of these masters is almost never missing in the maṇḍalas, so as their invocation is an essential part of ritualistics, symbol of the earthly manifestation of these spiritual visions, which do not live any more in the cold word of the texts, but are animated and acquire operative value only as experiences. These Lamas, in fact, acutally are not explanators and commentators, but the depository of the spiritual realizations revealed by the Tantras. By re-living the

hidden meaning, they identify themselves with the very essence of the truth as a series of lamps, to follow the oriental imagery, by which the light of truth passes through with unaltered purity.

According to the tradition accepted by the followers of Tson-kha-pa, and this one actually seems to perpetuate the system of the interpretation of Vajrabhairava introduced in Tibet by the lotsava of Rva, these masters are: Vajrabhairava, Ye-śes-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma, Lalitavajra, the medium of revelation on earth, Amoghavajra, Jñānākara-gupta, Padmavajra, Dīpaṃkararākṣita, Rdo-rje-grags-pa, the lotsava of Rva, Chos-rab of Rva, Ye-śes-señ-ge of Rva, Ḥbum-señ-ge of Rva, Roñ-pa Śes-rab-señ-ge, Bla-ma-ye-śes-dpal, Chos-rje-don-grub-rin-chen, Tson-kha-pa, Mkhasgrub. For other schools alien to the dominant orthodoxy it is clear that the transmission of the esoteric doctrine revealed by Vajrabhairava is attributed also to other masters, at least for what concerns its diffusion in Tibet proper.

The cycle of the thirteen deities is gigantic with its grand figures on a background which makes a worthy frame to the terrific couples composing it. They are the same cemeteries which we have already encountered in the preceding small temple, reproduced in this chapel even with greater richness of details. We witness here the same macabre scenes, with a lugubrious panel of deities and monsters roaming around sombre places. Even in this case the artists have strictly followed the iconographic rules prescribed by the liturgical treatises.

CHAPTER III

THE WHITE TEMPLE

§22. *General characteristics.* The Lha-khan dkar-po "white temple" as it is called now by the colour of its walls, from the artistic point of view is one of the most beautiful temples I ever visited in Western Tibet. It certainly has no rivals for the vastness of its proportions, for the gigantic images of gilded bronze which still keep vigil over the desecrated recesses and for the wonderful delicacy of its frescoes. It is the real royal temple where the pious dynasty had profusely bestowed its riches and shown its munificence. Now it is desolate and tottering. Rapacity of wars or avidity of governors has taken away one by one the bronze statues and those of more precious metal which once adorned the altars in plenty. The carelessness and indifference of the prefects sent from Lhasa, when Guge lost its political independence, has allowed entire walls to be deprived of their wonderful paintings for ever. Here too the water has penetrated from the disconnected roof and has erased frescoes and eroded statues. In my visit to this temple, made in 1935, I could no longer take photos of many frescoes that I had admired in 1933 which water had already obliterated. The whole temple is condemned to an inevitable ruin. Thus will disappear

one of the most noteworthy monuments of the art of Guge and of that school of painting that did not fail to evoke the admiration of the Portugese missionaries and still fills with wonder the scanty visitors getting a chance to enter these chapels.

§23. *The iconographic types represented in the temple.* Let us begin our study of the temple in the usual direction of circumambulation from the left.

Immediately on the left of the door a terrific image of stucco (plate LXVIII) looks out with its three wide open eyes. It is easily recognizable because of the horse head standing above his ascetic tuft. It represents Rta-mgrin that is Hayagrīva.

But, as I had occasion to notice many times, a Mahāyānic deity is always a complex type which may manifest itself under various aspects. Even in the present case, to identify the statue simply as Hayagrīva would be a rather imprecise determination. Which of the many forms of this deity did they want to represent here? His aspects are indeed multiple: their principal forms, both in the Indian Tantric schools and in their Lamaistic, Chinese and Japanese derivations, have been recently studied with utmost care by Van Gulik (1). He has shown that in this deity confluence both a particular form of Viṣṇu with the head of a horse (Hayaśiras) and the demon with the head of a horse (Hayagrīva), either of them documented by Indian tradition and then fused in this complex type, elaborated in the schools

(1) R. H. van Gulik, *Hayagrīva, The Mantrayānic Aspect of Horse Cult in China and Japan*, Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie, 1935.

of latest Buddhism. In them, once more we notice the emergence of popular and very ancient elements, having an age-old history in India and traversing slowly from a primitive conception to a symbolism which takes the upper hand.

According to the tradition preserved by that great teacher and polygrapher of the Bkaḥ-rgyud-pa sect that Padma-dkar-po was, the many types of Hayagrīva are reduced to three fundamental ones which are also the most diffused, namely:

1. Hayagrīva with three heads and eight arms, red body and red central face: the one on the right blue and the one on the left white. Symbols of the eight arms are; to the right: vajra, stick, hand in the attitude of gift, arrow; to the left: hand in the attitude of threatening, hand on the chest, lotus and bow.

2. Hayagrīva, red, horse head emerging from the hair; two arms; in that to the right: stick marked with the vajra, in the left: hand in the attitude of threatening.

3. Hayagrīva, red, three faces as in no. 1, eight arms with the following symbols; to the right: hook, bow, bucket, vajra. To the left: noose, arrow, khaṭvāṅga, bell.

It is clear that the figure in the temple of Tsaparang reproduces the iconographic type no. 2 (1).

On the wall, a series of deities stand in the background and are manifestations or acolytes of this tutelary god who, in his

(1) *Sgrub-paḥi-thabs rgya-mtshoḥi cho-ga rjes-gnan dan-bcas-pa ḥdod-dguḥi dpal gter.*

function of Chos-skyoñ/dharmapāla and as guardian of the door (dvārapāla) is portrayed at the entrance of the temple to keep away evil influences and to protect the sanctity of the place.

To the left, out of the following two statues only that of Avalokiteśvara remains with four arms, namely in the attitude of Śaḍakṣara-Avalokiteśvara (plate LXIX); on the wall can be seen pictorial representations of his manifestations, both peaceful and terrific. Above, two figures side by side of Phyag-stoñ-spyan-stoñ, namely Avalokiteśvara with a thousand arms and a thousand eyes.

On the left wall there follow, all seated in vajraparyāṅka, six images of stucco within the usual frame symbolising the celestial palace (*vimāna*, *gzhal-yas-khan*). All around, the walls are literally covered with frescoes of such refined and accurate workmanship as to appear like real miniatures. Its design is indeed so delicate and the harmony of colours so alive and to this the brilliance of the patina adds even more vivacity. There is no surface that is not covered with small figures symmetrically superimposed and following one another. Floral and ornamental motifs of various drawings act as frames to them almost like a curtain, finely embroidered, spread along the walls of the temple. It is clear that these images have not been chosen at random; these panels obey some symbolic connections which is very difficult to reconstruct today, but which ideally connect them. Each of the stucco statues is probably the centre of a given maṇḍala which is represented by the frescoed walls, according to schemes prescribed in Tantric cycles now no longer easily identifiable.

Though usually the maṇḍala is all painted, in our case the central deity to whom the maṇḍala pertains is represented in a plastic form and therefore it detaches itself from the series of its emanations and its acolytes. In this way, not only the walls of the temple are almost enlivened by the symmetric procession of the meditating figures which seem to fill with people, with their hieratical figures, the silences of the sanctuary, but the very statues of natural height reveal at the very first sight the centre of that mystic diagram which they symbolise. In the background, smaller in proportion and farther away, are the derivative deities, so that in this way they are located on a second plane, in the same way as they are so also in the imagined system of cosmic emanations. There is thus an organic plane of construction, a mind which has conceived these chapels and which by drawing them not only conceived them as a visible projection of the religious experiences of a mystic school, but which moulded this very disposition, somehow fixed by literary and liturgical schemes, to certain norms and aesthetic motifs, pre-visions of lights and shadows, juxtaposition of planes and gradations of proportions. Obscure is the great hall with the many statues slightly emerging from twilight as a slow passing through from the darkness of life to the light of truth, but bright is the cella where the gigantic golden statue of the meditating Buddha, with a serene smile, twinkles under a rain of light falling on his face from the small window open on the roof. Everything is different from the modern chapels built almost always without a sense of an organic criterion. Here in modern buildings the walls are indifferent surfaces ready to receive at random this or that painting, series of lamas, tutelary spirits, the "wheel" of life or rough bookshelves.

§24. *Cycles of Vairocana.* The images reproduced on plates LXX-LXXII represent various aspects of Vairocana, all however in the attitude of preaching (*dharmacakra-mudrā*) and with three faces.

The divinity of plate LXXIII seems to be a particular manifestation of Vairocana, which I have not yet been able to bring back to a specific Tantric cycle. One has to say immediately that on the wall to the right too are seen three other images of Vairocana, out of which two are more or less of the same type (plate LXXIV) as those represented on the left wall, while one is represented in a different *mudrā* (plate LXXV), namely in that of meditation (*samādhi-mudrā*). We have here therefore in all, excluding the image with eight arms which, although certainly connected with the cycle of Vairocana, represents a different iconographic type, six figures of Vairocana, more or less similar to each other.

How can this multiplicity of representations of the same deity be explained? Evidently it cannot be a simple reproduction of the same type because, although iconographically many images are identical, their intrinsic difference is clearly pointed out by both the different colour of the statues and by the diversity of the pictorial representations surrounding them and symbolizing, in any case, a particular mystic system. We are, therefore, faced by different cycles of Vairocana and therefore by different maṇḍalas. We will find the same thing again in the entrance hall of the gser-khañ of Toling where many maṇḍalas of Vairocana are reproduced, but this time in painting, almost always accompanied by inscriptions indicating their source, the Tantra, and the mystic system by which they have been inspired.

It is in any case evident that the statues reproduced on plates LXX, LXXI and LXXIV are surrounded by pictorial panels including the other four Buddhas of the supreme pentad, each of proportions bigger than the other figures and in his characteristic attitude, seated in vajraparyaṅka inside a heavenly pavilion. The other deities are arranged all around in a perfectly symmetric order, surrounded by a luminous halo. Although the number of these acolytes exceeds by one that of the 37 deities pertaining to the cycle of Sarvavid/Kun-rig, it is clear from plates LXXVIII and LXXIX reproducing details of plate LXXIII, that at least in this case we are faced with representations of the cycle of Sarvavid-Vairocana specially studied by me in the previous volume. Since each of the other four Tathāgatas of the maṇḍala, easily recognizable by his characteristic mudrā, is surrounded by groups of six secondary deities, six above and six below, the cycle should have been constituted of 55 deities, including Vairocana himself (1 + 4 + 12 × 4). As I have said in the volume cited, we should not be surprised by this multiplicity of representations, when we remember that the methods of realizing the supreme truth symbolised by Vairocana were very dissimilar in the Tantric schools: from that of the Durgatipariśodhana to that of the Tattvasaṅgraha.

The deity represented on plate LXXVI represents instead rather Amoghasiddhi, at least to judge by the attitude of his hands.

The maṇḍala frescoed on the wall has been, however, almost totally erased by the water falling down from the roof. In 1935 I found the statue also on the way to ruin.

The figure with eight arms (plate LXXIII) is surrounded by its numerous retinue formed for the great part by deities with many arms and many heads and by the representation of the *Laukika-mahādevas* about whom I spoke before (plates LXXX-LXXXI).

These frescoes are worked out with such an accuracy, so minute is their drawing and so vivid are the colours that they rather seem to be miniatures.

There is something more than a mere analogy with the miniatures. It is enough to compare our frescoes with the illuminations of some manuscripts coming from the library of Toling that I ventured to discover in the grottos or in the tunnels dug in the precipices surrounding the monastery, to realize or to perceive that the techniques and the drawings are absolutely identical. Many among these unknown artists who have covered the ancient temples of Tibet with frescoes, were first of all illuminators of sacred texts. This art of illumination has been slowly transformed into frescoes especially through the *maṇḍalas*, both as painted on cloth and as provisionally traced or drawn on the floor of the temples. But the *maṇḍalas*, even when they were of big proportions, were in minute decorations, in the emblems and symbols by which they were adorned and in the figures of the deities filling them, derived directly from the miniatures and they followed the criteria of this art. Out of this origin the painters of Guge drew their eagerness for the finishing touches of details, an eagerness which never left them, not even in its latest creations. And this constitutes one of the more conspicuous characters.

The series of divinities represented in the frescoed *maṇḍala* surrounding the great figure reproduced on plate LXXIII, is

easily identifiable because the images are almost always accompanied by short inscriptions revealing them. Also in this case we are faced with the same cycle of Mahādevas and of dikpāla/Phyogs-skyoñ we have already specifically studied while speaking of the previous temples. But the iconographic type is totally different and although both designs and colours point out that the paintings have been done by Tibetan painters, the influence of the Indian manner is very powerful. The very same gods, although included among the acolytes of the Buddhist cycles, are absolutely Hindu:

Īśāna/Dbañ-lđan, together with his retinue, Dbañ-lđan-khor (for ħkhor)-byas (for bcas) plates LXXXII-LXXXIII;

Viṣṇu with his retinue, Khyab-ħjug-khor-byas (sic), plate LXXXIV;

Brahmā with his śakti, Tsañs-pa chuñ-ma dañ-cas(bcas), plates LXXXV-VI;

Īśvara with his train, Dbañ-phyug khor(ħkhor)-byas(dañ bcas), plates LXXXVII-LXXXVIII;

Gaṇapati with his train, Tshogs-bdag khor-byas, plates LXXXIX, XC;

Brahmāñi/Tshañs-ma, plate XCI;

Yakṣa with train, Gnod-sbyin khor(sic)-bcas, plate XCII;

Agni/Me-lha with his train, plate XCIII, to the right of the central figure plate XCIV, to the left of the same plate XCV.

This figure of Fire is different from the traditional one, namely from the type of Agni included in the eightfold series of the protectors of the directions and of whom we have already seen some examples in the small temples of Śaṁvara/Bde-mchog and of Vajrabhairava. The God of Fire represented here is: Karmāgni, in Tibetan Las-kyi me-lha, that is Agni in the sacrificial act, symbol of the ritual act consecrated by the Vedic tradition. As such, it is part of the cycle of Khams-gsum rnam-par rgyal, namely of Trilokavijaya, usually associated with Vairocana and his mañḍala. The description of his iconographic type contained in the Sundarālañkāra (1) corresponds

perfectly to the one reproduced on the walls of the temple of Tsaparang. "He is of red-yellow colour and rides a goat; in his two right hands holds the rosary and the ladle used in libations; in the two on the left the vase of consecrated water and the sacrificial spoon. His aspect is similar to that of an ascetic".

The following statue is surrounded by a series of very minute little figures of two different types, one at the right and the other at the left side of the god. They are repeated in both cases a thousand times as in the cycle of the Buddhas of the cosmic era (bhadrakalpa) in which Śākyamuni obtained his illumination and in which we ourselves are living. The deity on the right side of the god is Vajrapāṇi with the bell in the left hand leaning on the thigh and the vajra in the right hand raised at the height of the head (plate XCVI). On the left, instead, there is Vajrasattva with the bell in the left hand leaning on his thigh and the vajra in the right hand raised to the height of the heart.

The series of these small figures is interrupted by the thirty-six deities of the cycle of Sarvavid/Kun-rig, with a perfect correspondence in the two groups on the right and the left. The other four Buddhas of the supreme pentad are: to the right, above, in the centre of the maṇḍala Amitābha; to the left Amoghasiddhi; Ratnasambhava to the right of the god, below the gazelle surmounting the two small pillars of the throne; on the opposite side: Akṣobhya.

The magnificence of the frescoes should not let us pass unobserved the statues majestically lined on their thrones along the walls of the temple. They are of stucco mixed with straw,

(1) Bstan-ḥgyur, rgyud khu 1. 70-71.

pieces of cloth and fragments of books, but shaped with such a graciousness that still betrays the direct influence of Indian schools. Their body has a slenderness of line that will disappear little by little from Tibetan statuary, tending to enlarge and to flatten the figures. It is enough in fact to compare, in this very temple, the series of statues representing Vairocana with that of Tsoñ-kha-pa surely later, in order to perceive the profound difference in modelling. Indian tradition seems also present and alive in the arches and in the decorations of the thrones. They are garuḍa, nāga, in human form in the superior part of the body, sea monsters (makara), lions, rampant horses, floral motifs in volutes running after one another and intertwining each other, and the symbolic eight stūpas/mchod-rten. All this decoration is carried out with great care upto the minutest detail, which little by little will give way to the mere circular halos or, more rarely, of almond shape. In short, as in the paintings so also in the statues of the temple we are studying, the influence of the Indian traditions is still felt, and I would like to say, of the best traditions as such.

§25. *Amitābha or Śākyamuni*. The last statue on the left wall (plate XCVII) seems to represent Śākyamuni meditating under the tree of illumination. He is seated with his hands in the attitude of concentration. On the two sides there are the standing figures of Bodhisattvas, which probably are Maitreya and Mañjuśrī.

If this identification is correct, one should conclude that the artists of Tsaparang differentiated two moments in the usual type of the Buddha meditating under the tree of illumination. On one side the one here represented, intended perhaps to

symbolize the fullness of his illumination; on the other the one commonly designated by the name of Vajrāsana, when the Buddha comes out of the state of ecstasis and invokes the earth as witness to the conquered wisdom, in the pose called *bhūmi-parśa-mudrā*. But one has, however, to note that the proposed iconographic identification cannot be considered final because of the possibility of contaminations with similar types. That is to say that even in this case, besides Śākyamuni, it may very well be that the artists wanted to represent one of the five supreme Buddhas, not as Sambhogakāya, namely as mystical body appearing to the meditating person in the process of evocation as wearing regal paludaments and ornaments; but as *nirmāṇakāya* as a, so to say, human or earthly projection.

In this case also the five Buddhas can be represented in monk's habits. Then, the confusion between the type of Śākyamuni in Vajrāsana and that of Akṣobhya is possible, obviously in sculpture only, because in paintings the colour is a sure element of distinction. If inscriptions or other secondary elements do not come to help, it is impossible to establish with precision which of the two deities they wanted to represent. Banerjee has very well understood this, and so also Paul Mus, who even thinks that the figure of Akṣobhya can be a splitting of the Buddha meditating at Bodhgaya (1). Sometimes, well aware of this possible confusion, the artists have resorted to certain devices in order to distinguish one god from the other. It is known that the symbol of the Vajrāsana is the vajra. This vajra

(1) P. Mus, Barabudur, part VI in *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient* 34(1934):178.

in the case of Śākyamuni is sculpted horizontally under the throne of the Buddha or on the very throne in the free space between his two crossed legs in the meditation posture (vajraparyāṅka): while when Akṣobhya whose symbol is also the vajra has to be represented this symbol is reproduced on the base of the throne in a vertical position, that is in that very position which it has to have on the palm of the left hand of the god, when he is accompanied by his symbols. This particular mark, for instance, distinguishes the great statue of Akṣobhya on the stairs of Svayambhūnāth in Nepal.

In our case the identification is still more difficult: the attitude of hands in the posture of meditation (dhyānamudrā) with or without the vessel of alms is characteristic also of Amitābha-Amitāyus. And actually the monk accompanying me in my visits to Tsaparang defined straight away the statue as the figure of Amitābha. In this case the tree is no longer the tree of illumination but the kalpadruma, the tree granting every desire in the Sukhāvātī paradise where Amitābha reigns. The two Bodhisattvas siding him would then be Padmapāṇi and Mahāsthāmaprāpta. The parallel of this same type which we have found in Tabo, makes this second identification very possible.

§26. *The cella.* On the northern wall, and precisely on the left wing of the entrance leading to the cella, there are two images: the one seated in European style represents Maitreya between two figures of Bodhisattvas; another statue follows, also very

damaged, of Tsoñ-khá-pa (*gtso-ḥkhor gsum*) accompanied by his two famous disciples (plate XCVIII).

In the cella (plates XCIX-CII) dominates a gilded bronze figure of Śākyamuni in the act of invoking the earth as witness to the illumination attained (*bhūmisparśa-mudrā*), surrounded on both sides by Maitreya and Mañjuśrī, standing. All the statues are surrounded by haloes of very fine work, where among volutes and spirals appear again the traditional motifs of Indian art: *nāgas*, *garuḍas*, and *kinnaras*. Both the roof, painted in squares, in *maṇḍalas* and with ornamental motifs and the capitals sculpted with special minutia make a superb canopy to the image of the meditating Buddha, illuminated by slender light raining through the small window (*rab-gsal*).

The statue is made with copper slabs fastened together by big nails. According to tradition, still living in Tsaparang, it would contain books and relics of great value. The news may have a foundation. In the ceremony of *prāṇa-pratiṣṭhā*, that is when the images were consecrated, it was a custom to deposit in their inner portion full libraries, almost to animate them and to give them the spirit and the essence of the divine word.

All around it, on the walls, unfolds a series of small figures of stucco, leaning on small shelves and painted in red and gold, and images of Buddha in different poses. The free space is covered up by small painted figures of Buddhas which seem to multiply themselves to the infinite. They are the Thousand Buddhas of the *bhadrakalpa*, symbols of the continuous revelation and manifestation of the Divine. Still below, on two sides in parallels bands, there run long scenes already disfigured by water and in many places totally wiped out. In the first one, is

illustrated the entire legend of the Buddha, from his conception till his supreme passing away; and in the second, in a series of scenes full of movement, there is the pictorial remembrance of the festivities which had accompanied the foundation of the temple and the efforts that it cost. Since in the red temple there are analogous paintings and far better preserved, and in which run the same motifs, I shall come back to these frescoes that have a remarkable importance, both historical and ethnographical (plates CIII-CV).

The figure following on the right wing (plate CVI) is also framed in the usual cornice and seems to represent a Buddha wearing monastic robes; on both his sides two monks stand in act of adoration. The attitude of the hands, however, does not resemble any of those mudrās distinguishing the sacred pentads. Although the symbols have disappeared, by analogy with similar types, there is no doubt that the right hand was clenching or holding the vajra and the left one the bell. This is a frequent manner to represent the Buddhist doctors who have obtained a state of perfect identity with the adamant spheres, namely with the indiscriminate ground of being. These Lamas are then called *bla-ma rdo-rje-ḥchan* “the master who holds the vajra”, which is the symbolic expression of perfection attained. Since many are the ascetics who may be so represented, their identification is almost impossible when an inscription or any other element allowing to establish, with a certain precision, which religious personality we are dealing with, is missing. Anyhow, this figure is in complete symmetry with that of Tsoñ-kha-pa on the left wall of the cella and therefore it is not improbable that it should represent Rin-chen-bzañ-po.

§27. *The kings of Guge.* On the edge of the wall, in two parallel lines one under the other, are represented the kings of Guge (plates CVII, CVIII) almost all accompanied by a short inscription in gold on a black ground. In 1933 we gave the best of us to photograph the short inscriptions or even to copy them, but all our attempts were in vain, because the figures are too high and in the desolation of Tsaparang we could not find a ladder or even two poles allowing us to construct one.

In 1935 I was sadly shocked to see that many figures of this genealogical tree of the princes of Guge had been wiped out by the water trickling down the roof. By letting the Lama, who accompanied me, climb on the shoulders of two caravaneers, I made him copy all the inscriptions that he could read. Beginning from above, we have the following names:

Mañ srañ mañ btsañ; Bkra śis bskyid lde ñi ma; Dpal ḥkhor btsañ, Brag rdzi legs; Mgu ca legs; Tshe snol pha lde; Tshe snol lam lde; Kha thog nam rdig btsañ; Khri sgra dmun btsañ; Khra ba na; Thor lañ btsañ; Spran btsañ lde; Ma ne btsañ; Mes ḥag tshom; Guñ srañ gañ btsañ.

It is evident that these names are not in a chronological order and do not give us the lists of only kings of Guge. Actually, it is enough to cast a glance at the genealogical lists in the Rgyal-rabs to find out that many names are identical; and the thing is not surprising when we are reminded that the kings of Guge, as generally the various princely families of Ladakh and of Western Tibet, were priding themselves to descend from the same stem from which derived the lords of Lhasa. Tshe snol pha lde and Tshe snol lam lde and Spran btsañ lde all pertain to the mythic group of the eight or ten

lde (1). Mañ-sroñ-mañ-btsan and Gun-sroñ-guñ-btsan are the descendants of Sroñ-btsan-sgam-po; Mes-ḥag-tshom is Khri lde btsug brtan mes ḥag tshoms fourth descendant of the same great emperor. Dpal-ḥkhor-btsan is the son of ḥod-sruñ and Bkra śis bskyid lde ñi ma mgon is the head of the ruling families in Western Tibet (2).

On the left of these kings, there is a statue of Vairocana in monastic robes (plate CIX). It is, however, not improbable that in this case too they wanted to represent a particular lama. In fact, the statue identified as that of Ratnasambhava immediately following on the right wall has in the form of acolytes instead of two monks, as here, two Bodhisattvas.

Besides the statues of Vairocana, about which I have spoken previously, the only one still left in good condition on the right wall is the image of Tārā (plate CX); and accurately, at least to judge from the way she is seated she is the White Tārā. Lastly, to the side of the door a statue of Vajrapāṇi follows, placed in symmetry with the other figure of Hayagrīva.

The roof of the temple (plate CXI) may also be considered as the richest and the most finely worked out in the whole of Western Tibet. Roofs decorated with figures of deities or with floral and geometric motifs, were very common in ancient temples of certain importance. I found traces of them upto Ladakh (Lamayuru) and examples very worth of notice are still to be admired in Tabo and in Toling. But surely no one is so

(1) The spellings of the names in literary works is rather different : *Cronache del Tibet Occidentale* (ed. Francke, 1926, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, p. 80) Se snol po lde, Se snol lam lde, Sprin btsan lde; and thus also *Dpag-bsam ljon-bzañ*, p. 150.

(2) *Indo-Tibetica* II. 17.

well preserved and has so vivid and fresh colours as this one at Tsaparang. It is made of large wooden planks, brought with great labour from the Himalayan valleys towards India, well smoothed and then painted. Their decoration consists in a series of maṇḍalas, all on the same axis, and of stylised floral and geometric motifs, never repeating themselves; wonderful canopy which still gives an idea of the splendour of this shrine in its better times.

CHAPTER IV

THE RED TEMPLE

§28. *General description.* The other temple at the foot of the hill on which the ruins of the city are piling up, is desecrated and deserted. The memory of its true name is lost : our informers call it, from the colour of its walls, "the red temple". The statues of deities have been taken away; there remain at the centre of the cella only three gigantic images of gilded bronze.

The door in deodar wood (plate CXII) still resists. Its pillars are sculpted with floral motifs and covered up with small figures worked out with great delicacy, but by now in great part scraped off by the centuries and the inclemencies of weather. Above, in a first square frame, the Buddha seated in the posture of meditation; on his sides two small figures of gods who hovering in the air play the trumpet by way of homage; then two altars full of offerings, and, on the right and the left, two small figures of offerers in an attitude of prayer (plate CXIII). Then follows the image of Vajrapāṇi; and then again the Buddha in the attitude of preaching (*dharmacakra-mudrā*) seated on the throne below the tree of illumination, between two kneeling monks. In the third panel the Buddha is seen again in the inner side of a temple in the act of invoking the

earth as witness to the illumination attained; on the right and the left, two small figures one seated and another standing (plate CXIV). On the sides (plate CXV) in many small square panels one below the other, there are meditating ascetics, siddhas in their characteristic attitudes and perhaps also a prince of Guge : because so appears to be, by analogy with the frescoes of the "White Temple" the figure reproduced on plate CXVI. On the wings in Lantsha characters, the sacred mantra *oṃ maṇi padme hūm*.

As soon as one enters the semi-darkness in which the temple is enveloped, one's eyes run to the great gilded bronze image of the meditating Buddha, seated in the attitude called vajrāsana. The statue on the back of the cella dominates all the others with its gigantic proportions (plates CXVII, CXVIII, CXIX). A richly worked frame, with the usual motifs of Garuḍa, serpents, and gods, frames the immense figure on whose sides the standing Maitreya and Mañjuśrī are vigilant, each with his characteristic symbols. The work is overcharged and baroque. Both the statue and the decorations are made with much less care than in the "White Temple".

On the walls small statues of Buddhas alternate with the images of monks, and multiply themselves : these and those that lean on shelves protruding from the wall : the Buddhas represent the thirtyfive "Buddhas of the confession of sins (*ltuñ-bśags*)" (1).

On the walls flanking the cella, inside rich stucco frames runs the series of the eight gods of medicine, above which stand yet

(1) Schlagintweit, *Buddhism in Tibet*, p. 123ff. Waddell, *Lamaism*, p. 353.

smaller figures, always pertaining to the same cycle (plate CXX). Since colours are lacking, while the mudrās of more than one of the gods of medicine are equal, it is difficult to determine with surety the deities represented by this panel. The figure on the right with his hands in the preaching mudrā may be either Gser-bzañ-dri-med/Suvarṇabhadra-vimala or Chos-sgrags-rgya-mtsho/Dharmakīrti-sāgara and the other either Sgra-dbyaṅs-rgyal-po/Svaraghoṣarāja or Mñon-mkhyen-rgyal-po/Abhijñārāja.

On the walls large frescoes follow one another reproducing the “gods of medicine” together with other deities. On the left Maitreya, between two standing bodhisattvas, of whom the one on the right is Mañjuśrī with his role characteristically leaving the right shoulder uncovered; the other Buddhas, instead, wear the religious robes (*chos-sgos*) covering both shoulders (plate CXXI).

Then, four gods of medicine follow. Akṣobhya (plate CXXII) and, at the end Śākyamuni both being a regular part of the series of the eight “gods of medicine”. On the right wall, beginning from above near the cella, there is another god of medicine, Amitābha, he too usually included in the same cycle. Then follow Maitreya, Akṣobhya and two other gods of medicine reproduced on plate CXXIII, who possibly represent Gser-bzañ-dri-med/Suvarṇabhadra-vimala and Chos-sgrags-rgya-mtsho/Dharmakīrtisāgara. The central figures are drawn according to traditional schemes, although, however, they appear to be deprived of that graciousness and of that harmony of colours that we have admired in the other shrines. Possibly these frescoes are the latest among those which have remained at Tsaparang and Toling. It is not improbable that they have been worked out shortly before the reign of Guge

lost, with its political independence, its artistic traditions as well. And, actually, on the panels reproducing the life of the Buddha, are seen, near every scene, many blank spaces destined to receive inscriptions meant to specify the episode represented. No wording however has been written : probably the fall of the kingdom at the hands of the princes of Ladakh interrupted the work started by the dynasty of Guge.

The same ornamental motifs framing the great images and the small figures that, disposed all around, represent secondary deities and the masters of the cycle symbolized by the central divinity, are certainly inferior to the work that emerged from the school of Guge, when it was flourishing fully; but in any case they continue the traditional designs and schemes. On both sides of the door different images of dharmapāla/Chos-skyon follow one another; to the left, Mahākāla/Mgon-po, Vijayā, White Tārā, Arapacana. Most beautiful than all others is perhaps the image of Vijayā (plate CXXIV), although she too cannot rival the effigy of the same goddess painted at the temple of Toling. To the right : Vajrapāṇi, Pratisarā, Green Tārā, Avalokiteśvara.

§29. *The legend of the Buddha depicted.* The artistic and iconographic interest of this temple is rather limited and certainly not comparable to that of the other chapels of Tsaparang or even of Toling. But a careful examination of this place reveals something notable. Along the wall, below the big images, there run bands of frescoes, to hint upon which will be convenient. They represent the twelve moments of Buddha's life (*mdzad-ṭa bcu-gñis*), a favourite motif of Tibetan painters, reproduced in almost all temples.

Actually the life of the Buddha was neither concluded in twelve events; nor have the painters and illuminators condensed the sacred legend in twelve frames. Their figured narration runs through many succeeding scenes largely surpassing that traditional number. But this name *mdzad-pa bcu-gñis*, the “twelve deeds”, has become a generic name for every representation of the life of Śākyamuni, irrespective of the number of scenes in which it is divided. This classification is, in fact, based on a dogmatic principle and on the authority of one of the most renowned texts in Mahāyānic schools, namely, the Anuttara-tantra of Maitreya (1).

“He descended from Tuṣita paradise 1), entered the womb of the mother 2) and was born (as Śākyamuni) 3), he proved himself dextrous in many skillful exercises 4). He conducted a serene life among noble dames 5), ran away from home 6), practised asceticism 7) and appeared under the feet of the Tree of Illumination 8). He won against the assaults of Māra 9). Obtained supreme illumination 10). Put in motion the wheel of law 11) and passed into Nirvāṇa 12)”.

This legend has been seen by us depicted at Toling, at Tabo, at Rabgyeling and at Davazong, but nowhere has it been represented with so many details, with such a richness of scenes and with such a movement as here at Tsaparang. These frescoes have to be signalled out as works of art.

In drawing the sacred legend the painter was no longer strictly bound by traditional iconographic schemes, obliging

(1) II.54, S. Obermiller, *The sublime science of the great vehicle to salvation*, p. 254.

him to follow norms that cannot be violated, but he could enliven the scenes at his pleasure. Although the single episodes of Buddha's life should be represented in such a way as to be immediately and easily recognizable and therefore they too, at least as much as they were concerned with the subject, enclosed in certain schemes fixed by tradition, the originality of the artist had its ways to affirm itself both in the background, and in the landscape and in the grouping of figures. Here there was no limit and he could satisfy his whims in animating his paintings. The unknown author who has depicted these pictures at Tsaparang has brought to them a personal note both in composition and in colours. They totally break away from other exemplars that we have studied in western Tibet. On a uniform background, predominantly yellow, green and red alternate with great harmony. The tints never too bright are enlivened by the brilliance of the patina covering them. The landscape is pointed out by a few touches, symbols or impressions rather than refined and complete images : rocks just sketched, small stylized trees, monks placed in accurate symmetric groups give to these paintings a certain dreamy evanescence and the fascination of a primitive art in which the narration of the legend acquires the lightness of a vision. The influences of Chinese art, often found in Tibetan thankas are not felt here. Here we are faced by indigenous painters following local traditions to which, if there were, reaches a dimmed and distant echo of Indian prototypes.

The panels on the left wall already begin to disappear. In many places the plaster has fallen down and painted fragments are piling up on the floor. Many scenes are lost for ever.

If we do not rush to repair them, water and snow will end up by corroding the walls built up with the usual lumps of earth dried in the sun and in a not far away time the walls will collapse dragging in their ruin these last remnants of the glory of a province sacred to the tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

The frescoes on the right wall, instead, are intact and well preserved. We have photographed almost all of them and now we shall briefly elucidate them in succession.

Plate CXXV evokes again the first proofs of the Bodhisattva on his long way of asceticism toward the conquest of liberating wisdom. In the middle of the painting a river winds up its way and on it swim a couple of swans. It is the Nairāñjanā, whose greenish and wooded banks offered peace to the Meditating One. Below, to the right, the figure of the Buddha; nearby an ascetic, naked and emaciated, represented according to the type of yogin which became traditional in Indian art. It is possibly the meeting of Śākyamuni with Udraka or Rudraka of Rāma (Lalitavistara 243). Still above, the Bodhisattva seated under a tree in an attitude of meditation among five ascetics, in a hilly landscape. This group of five yogins represents the *pañca-bhadravargīya* who were his faithful companions during the six years of maceration and fasting, an experience which the Saint of the Śākyas wanted to go through. Therefore, it is precisely the long period of asceticism that the picture reproduces. However, the excessive mortifications of the flesh were, after such a hard exercise, repudiated by the Buddha as a useless torture which, by weakening the body, darkened the mind as well, and upset the serenity of concentration. Thus, we see on the other bank of the river, Śākyamuni alone. As soon as he

repudiated the extravagances of asceticism, his five companions lost faith in him and let him go his way. But he was more than ever determined to reach illumination. The Bodhisattva is seated above between two figures of boys, their hips covered by a cloth (*dhotī*) of small proportions. The scene reminds of the one reproduced on some Tibetan thānkas illustrated by Hackin (1) and interpreted as pictorial representation of an episode narrated in the Lalitavistara. It recounts that during his meditation the Buddha was so absorbed that shepherd and peasant boys took him for an earthen and powdered image of some demon (*pāmśu-piśāca*) and they teased him and covered him with dust (Lalitavistara p. 257).

It can be objected against this identification that the two small figures flanking the Buddha seem to wear on their heads a diadem and to wear a costume not much different from that with which usually the gods are represented. However it is a fact that in all the mural paintings and in those on cloth deriving from the school of Guge, it is almost impossible to distinguish mortals from immortals. This kind of diadem is generally worn by all figures, even by Sujātā and by the maid-servant in the scene immediately following and which does not offer any doubts about its meaning. Anyway, on the painting are very well visible two baskets that the boys carry on their shoulders and that render them to be recognized as those little shepherds about whom the legend narrates. Moreover, a large thānka of the school of Guge in my collection reproduces the life of the Buddha by following the same iconographic scheme and taking

(1) *Les scènes figurées de la vie du Buddha d'après les peintures tibétaines*, 1916.

inspiration evidently from the same models reproduced on the mural pictures, contains the very same scene accompanied by an inscription this time. Although this inscription does not single out this episode specifically, yet it leaves no doubt that it refers to the hard penance of Buddha and symbolizes it entirely. The inscription says : *Chu-bo na-rā-ñā-dza-rar* (sic) *dkaḥ-thub* namely “the ascesis on the banks of the river Nairāñjanā”.

Below, in the foreground, a woman intent on milking a cow, then two more women around a cauldron and then the same ones standing, with a bowl in the right hand. Still above two women facing the image of the Buddha seated in European fashion. The identification of the scenes is not difficult. It is the story of Sujātā (or even Nandabalā) preparing the food to offer to the Buddha, milking milk from a thousand cows and preparing the cream in new containers, together with the maid-servant Uttarā. The two standing women represent Sujātā and the maid-servant in the act of offering to the Buddha the food prepared by them. More difficult to identify are the two figures kneeling in front of the two women in the attitude of prayer : possibly the gods who pray and advise Sujātā to offer to the Buddha the replenishing food, who has just come out of his long fastings. The Buddha, seated European style, reminds of another episode narrated by Lalitavistara. He stopped on a sandy bank desiring to find a place where to sit, and then a nāgiṇī living in the river Nairāñjanā comes out of the river and offers to Śākyamuni a seat called bhadrāsana namely in fact a seat made European style. Seated in this position he ate the food offered by Sujātā, who is again represented near him,

together with her maid-servant. In the following panel (plate CXXVI), the scene seems to run again from above. The Buddha is seated on the throne of illumination (*bodhi-maṇḍa*) in the act of touching the earth with the right hand (*bhūmisparśa-mudrā*). How this agrees with the following representation describing as it were the moments immediately preceding illumination, I cannot say; perhaps it is to symbolize the total restoration of the forces allowing him again the most strenuous absorption in the abyss of meditation. When the Buddha tasted the food offered to him by Sujātā, according to tradition, he threw in the river the golden bowl in which it was presented to him. This is in fact the central scene of the picture in which the Buddha is seen standing, directed towards a pond with the alms-bowl in his left hand. He stops on the edge of the small lake and then his figure is again reproduced, this time without the bowl, near two Nāgas emerging from the waters. These Nāgas may represent either Sāgara (*Lalitavistara* p. 271) collecting the alms-bowl thrown by the Buddha, or Kālīka who, hit by the light emanating from the body of the Buddha, foretells the near conquest of illumination, as it had happened for the Buddhas of past cosmic ages, and to him he pays honour (*Lalitavistara* p. 282). This second identification is the surest because the prophecy of Kālīka, with whom his wife is coupled in the lauds (*Lalitavistara* p. 284), occupies a primary position in Buddhist legend. The last scene, below on the right, represents the peasant Svastika, to whom the Buddha gave a little grass to make a seat for himself during the definitive meditation, and the respectful gift that Svastika makes to the Buddha. Above, Śākyamuni makes his way toward the bodhimāṇḍa and the supreme triumph as

represented in the following panel (plate CXXVII). Śākyamuni is seated under the Tree of Illumination on a high seat. Around him the fury of Māra breaks out, with his hideous train of demons, monsters and wild beasts. On the right three figures in the act of adoration, perhaps three gods; on the left the daughters of Māra rushing in to tempt the Blessed One. But the victory over Māra and his bands is quickly obtained and the demons are made to flee. Śākyamuni calls the earth to witness the wisdom achieved (plate CXXVIII). He has become the Buddha. The contrast between the torment of the fight and the serenity of the illumination is efficiently expressed by the two flanking scenes : one a multicolored tangle of figures, and the other a placid space where Buddha stands out in the middle of small stylized trees in a tepid and serene light. The second scene is not a repetition, but is there to indicate the moment immediately following the triumph over Māra, that is the illumination proper or, as the legend of the script on the thanka that I have previously mentioned says : *mtho-reñs mñon-par-rdzogs-pas sañs-rgyas* “at dawn, having attained the perfect illumination, he became the Buddha”.

The following panel is divided into three levels : in the lower one is recorded a well-known episode : the deities protecting the four directions offer a bowl to the Buddha to collect alms. Each of them presents his own and the Buddha inserts them one into the other and miraculously makes of them one only. On the front level are seen the four deities, each of a different colour, in the act of holding the bowl (*pātra*) with the right hand. The second level recapitulates the preceding scene. The four gods are represented by only one still holding in his right

hand the vase to be offered to the Buddha. Therefore the scene runs in a continuous movement as a movie; the same figure is reproduced facing the Buddha to whom he hands the bowl and the Buddha, seated European fashion, takes it in his hands. It is to indicate that the miracle has been performed and the four bowls have been united into one, the bowl in the hands of the Buddha has become of bigger proportions.

Above it, two kneeling figures adoring the Buddha seated with his hands in the attitude of the symbol of concentration (*samādhi-mudrā*). Two interpretations of this scene are possible. Either the painter wanted to depict the gods rendering homage to the Buddha, reciting lauds and hymns in his honour, when after having attained illumination, he (the Buddha) remained absorbed in meditation for seven weeks as he wanted to rejoice over the joy of the supreme experiences actualized in himself (Lalitavistara p. 342); or in the two kneeling figures, we have to see the two merchants Trapuṣa and Bhallika rendering homage to the Buddha with offering and food (1). If this is the case, there should be a connection between this scene and the one following in the panel reproduced on plate CXXIX.

(1) This scene in any case seems to have its correspondence in a similar one found right in this place in the succession of the paintings reproduced on the thangka, often mentioned before. In this case the scene is accompanied by an inscription and has at its right the figure of the Buddha descending from above on a kind of steps. The inscription declares that it is the descent from the heaven of the thirtythree gods where he ascended for preaching the law to his mother. But this is a plain anachronism, because this episode is by almost all the sources attributed to another moment of the life of the Buddha. Moreover, in the mural paintings there is no trace of the steps.

Here we see a figure kneeling in front of the Buddha and in the act of asking something. Possibly the scene wants to reproduce the prayer that Māra made to the Buddha to take the resolution to enter into Nirvāṇa immediately, when he became sick after having eaten the honey offered by Trapuṣa and Bhallika. In this case, the figure standing somehow below that is in the act of handing a not well discernible object, must represent Indra who gave to the Buddha some myrobalan in order to restore him. In the following scene in the foreground the painter has evidently united two different episodes. In the centre the Buddha is seen surrounded by the coil of a serpent covering his person with its spread hood-crest. It is the story of Mucilinda who, during a terrible storm, recorded in our painting by a cloud gathering over the meditating Buddha, protected the Blessed One by surrounding him with its coils. The figures surrounding him are deities : Brahmā with his four heads is easily recognizable. His presence shows that the painter wanted to hint at the prayer that the gods through the mouth of Śikhī Mahābrahmā addressed to the Buddha to preach to the creatures the truth attained (Lalitavistara p. 379 and p. 393). Still above, the Buddha standing with the piṇḍa-pātra in his right hand, indicates his resolution to deliver the famous first sermon. He starts walking towards Sarnath and *en route* meets the ājīvaka Upagaṇa, here represented with the ascetic stick (Lalitavistara p. 404 merely ājīvaka) : it is to him that he reveals his proposal to go to Benares to preach the law. The scene of preaching is, in fact, represented on the following panel. The Buddha sits on a throne covered by a rich canopy, with his hands in the attitude of the preaching mudrā. On the

basement of the throne are the traditional symbols of this culminating moment in the life of the Saint of the Śākya's namely, in the middle, the wheel representing, according to ancient symbolism, the first preaching; and on both sides two deer, reminding of the park actually called "the Deer Park", where the famous sermon was pronounced. Around him, in the act of devoted concentration and kneeling as a mark of homage, is a numerous crowd of every kind of creatures : garuḍas above, nāgas slightly below, gandharvas and kinnaras, and then deities guided by Brahmā and ascetics. The five emaciated yogins praying in the foreground possibly reproduce his first disciples or the so-called *pañca-bhadravargīya*. In the following panel (plate CXXX) some deer are seen grazing on the banks of a river together with three standing men. Higher up is the Buddha standing under a tree. Facing him a figure kneeling and prostrate; another in the attitude of adoration or of prayer; around are adoring monks with a background of trees. The scene reproduces the meeting of the Buddha with Yaśas on the banks of the river Vāraṇa. In the figure kneeling near the Buddha we have to recognise Yaśas himself, while the praying layman should represent the father of Yaśas, who was determined to prevent at any cost the conversion of his son, but as soon as he sees the Buddha he too takes the minor vows and becomes the first lay brother (upāsaka) (1).

(1) In this case too there is perfect correspondence between these frescoes and the thanka, which accompanies the scene with the caption *rigs-kyi-bu grags ḥkhor-bcas rab-tu-byun* "the son of good family Yaśas takes his vows together with persons in his train".

The following scene is not as clear. Above, two figures kneel before the Buddha. In the background a line of trees to signify a garden, with many flowers in the free space. One is inclined to think of the park of Jetavana, presented to the Buddha and to the community by Anāthapiṇḍada, but our representation is too different from the usual ones of the same episode, so celebrated in the Buddhist legend.

Nevertheless, the same scene appears and with the same background on the thanka, and it is accompanied by a small inscription declaring its subject : *btsun-mo-rnams kyañ rab-byuñ* “the women too are authorized to take the vows”. It is clear that the scheme worked out by the painters of Guge is slightly different from the traditional one. The trees on the ground should then represent the Kūṭāgāra. The scene, as it seems, is divided in two moments, the one of request and the other one of granting in which the Buddha is seated in *bhūmiṣparśa-mudrā*. Facing him, two kneeling figures in the attitude of prayer; to his left, a group of monks and then a figure starts walking towards the Buddha, and as he reaches near him prostrates himself. On the thanka, both the scenes are equally proclaimed by only one inscription, as moments of a single episode; the widow Gotamī can be well distinguished by her green colour. The frescoes then represent the same episode in its development, according to that narrative criterion characteristic of this school. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the painter succeeded in clearly showing the figure of the lady going to be initiated and to have her distinguished from the usual adorers of the masculine sex.

In the next panel (plate CXXXI) two figures of the Buddha, in the act of walking, seem to point out to an ideal connection between this scene and the ones surrounding it on both sides; in the middle the saint seated in the attitude of preaching. His listeners are : on the right six ascetics and on the left a group of monks.

The episode, represented here would have been doubtful. Nevertheless, once more the thanka comes to our help. We find here the same scene reproduced almost to its minutest detail, and accompanied by the following inscription : *rdzu-ḥphrul ya-ma zuñ bstan-nas chos-la bkod* "the Buddha converts by showing a double miracle (*yamaka-prātihārya*)". Which of the miracles, so frequently recorded in the scriptures they wanted to record here I do not know with surety. Although the *yamaka par excellence* has been the miracle of Śrāvastī, it cannot be thought to be this famous episode because it is reproduced on plate CXXXII according to the traditional schemes, already amply described in the *Divyāvadāna* (p. 161); the presence of gods, ascetics and of the small lake leads us to think of the conversion of Urubilvā Kāśyapa and to the small lake excavated by Indra so that the Buddha could wash his clothes.

In the following panel the scene takes us to a mountain. The Buddha preaches in two succeeding moments to two different assemblies represented by figures arranged in various ways, on two planes forming the frame. Among the listeners there is also a yakṣa who seems almost to come out from a tree. It is a conventional representation, which goes back in India to the time of Mohenjodaro, of the fable-based connection between the deity or the genii and the plant hosting it. Which episode

the painter wanted to reproduce, we know once more from the inscription accompanying a wholly similar scene in the thanka : *bya-rgod-phuñ-pohi rir chos hkhhor* “the preaching of the law on the Gṛdhrakūṭa”. This is not a secondary event, at least for the Mahāyānic tradition, but a fundamental one. Actually, as I have said in another study of mine, the preaching of the law according to Mahāyāna did not occur in a single moment; it cannot be spoken, as the Hīnayāna does, of single preaching at Sarnath in the Deer Park. Three have been the preachings of the Buddha, and always to different communities, and to listeners able to understand the different and higher and higher formulations of the doctrine. In Sarnath he revealed the little vehicle to the “listeners” (*śrāvaka*) and limited himself to explain the four truths and the eightfold path; the second preaching occurred precisely on the Gṛdhrakūṭa and in it he revealed the Prajñāpāramitā. Finally, the third one did occur at Vaiśālī when he revealed the most secret doctrines and his listeners were the Bodhisattvas (1).

Soon after this scene of preaching on the Gṛdhrakūṭa, almost as a second moment of the same episode, the Buddha is seen in the middle of some monks in the act of preaching. Below, four figures possibly of Bodhisattvas are listening. Therefore, another preaching, where it is said by the inscription accompanying this very scene on the thanka : *Ḥod-maḥi-tshal*. Ḥod-maḥi-tshal is Tibetan corresponding to Veṇuvana Kalandakani-vāpa near Rājagṛha, where in fact various other sūtras of Mahāyāna would have been revealed.

(1) See, for example, *Rgyud-sde spyi nam-par-bzhag brgyas-par bhad-pa* by Mkhas-grub Dge-legs-dpal-bzan-po, pp. 9 and 10.

The plate CXXXII does not offer special difficulties of interpretation. It reproduces one of the most famous of miracles that legend had attributed to the Buddha namely, the miracle of Śrāvastī, consisting actually of two different moments : on one side, the complete submission of the heretics who wanted to get the better of the master by all means; and on the other, the multiplication of his figure which emanates from himself infinite luminous projections filling the space. This miracle, very popular in Buddhist legends and also in art, is represented with that richness of detail that the very celebrated episode required. The multiplication of the figure of the Buddha is symbolized by the triplex image of the Buddha, seated on the throne, in the preaching attitude. All around him a cohort of creatures representing the various categories or classes of beings : garuḍas, gods, kinnaras. Among the gods can be recognized Indra and Brahmā; not absent are Nanda and Upananda, who play a notable role in this moment of the Buddhist legend. The story of the final defeat of the heretics is represented in a more dramatical way in the panel below, during three successive moments. Below on the left, a group of six ascetics represents the six heretics (Tīrthika) confabulating and plotting their snares. Then these six heretical masters are disposed one besides the other below the Buddha, in various postures. The painter wanted, possibly, to record the various moments of their useless game that was bound to have for them the sad result realistically reproduced at the end of the panel. The six masters tumble down or sink or drown, forever won by the thaumaturgical power of the Saint of the Śākyas.

Above, following a rather common iconographic tradition, the whole panel is dominated by the figure of Vajrapāṇi, the typical defender of the faith.

On plate CXXXIII the Buddha is seen surrounded by a train of monks; he proceeds under a canopy, while behind him are painted various figures of gods. Below, both on the right and on the left, kneeling persons. All the monks have, in their left hands, a bowl for collecting alms and in their right a kind of sceptre.

What this painting intends to signify is explained this time too by the inscription accompanying the identical scene on the thanka of Guge, about which I have often spoken : *gron-khyer-du bsod-sñoms-par phebs* "the Buddha proceeds towards the city to beg". Which is this city is said by a small epigraph that can be read below a completely similar banner painted in frescoes on the walls of a chapel in Upper Mangnang "the Buddha honored or worshipped by the gods and accompanied by the monks starts walking towards Rgyal-poḥi-khab/Rājagṛha". Then it is the visit made by the Buddha to king Bimbisāra, after the conversion of Kāśyapa. It is described in great details in all narrations; it is not even impossible that the perfectly identical and symmetric figures of the monks surrounding Śākyamuni represent the miracle of Kāśyapa, represented more often than it is believed in Buddhist art (1). He, according to the biographies, lets doubts arise in the inhabitants of Rājagṛha as to who was

(1) See Waldschmidt E., Wundertätige Mönche in der ost-turkestanischen Hīnayāna-Kunst, *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* 1930:3.

the true master, whether the Buddha or Kāśyapa; only when this latter knelt before the Saint of the Śākyas were all convinced of the truth and the Brahmans who did not believe got converted.

The following panel is easy to interpret. The presence of the elephant records the episode of Dhanapāla, the furious elephant that Devadatta let go against the Buddha with the intention to kill him. The painting represents the fact in two subsequent moments; in the first the elephant is seen running headlong against the Buddha, and in the second its flight before the miraculous powers of the Saint.

On plate CXXXIV is seen, above, the Buddha to whom a monkey offers a vase. More on the right, the same monkey climbs a tree in the act of collecting some fruits. Below the tree, Brahmā and Indra. In the foreground, various monks facing one another and, on the right, a person with his legs up in the very moment in which he falls down into a well. The episode is easy to identify: it represents the offering of palm juice to the Buddha at Vaiśālī by a monkey, who immediately commits suicide while formulating the vow to be born again in better conditions of life. In fact, as soon as it dies, it rises in heavenly choirs as recompense for its faith in the Buddha. The legend was famous in the Buddhist communities : in Vaiśālī was shown a stūpa which should have been constructed on the place where the miracle occurred. On the thanka too the same scene is reproduced together with the following inscription : *Yañ-pa-can-du ru* (sic) *spreḥus sbrañ-rtsi ḥphul-ba; ḥchihi-dus byas-pas lhar skyes*, namely, "in Vaiśālī a monkey offers some honey to the Buddha, and having committed suicide, rises to heaven".

Immediately after, follows the representation of the supreme moment of the life of the Buddha, namely, of his dissolving himself in the indiscriminate ground of being.

The Buddha lies down on his bed, leaning on his right side, between two sāla trees. All around, his image seems to multiply itself in miraculous emanations surrounded by flames, pictorial symbol of that ecstasis to which he rises before entering in parinirvāṇa. Eventually follows the last scene, the one of the actual passing away, while the crowd of gods and disciples, kneeling and praying, surround the couch of the sublime. The depicted biography continues on the wall to the right of the temple's door; a line of stūpas/mchod-rten shows the ideal continuity of the law after the passing away of the Master. The body is cremated, the relics are divided in eight parts and each of them is repositied in a stūpa. But this tradition of the eight monuments as big reliquaries wherein the remnants of the Saint of the Śākya were worshipped, was soon inserted in the other recording the eight monuments built on the most famous places of Buddhist hagiography in order to perpetuate the memory of the most outstanding facts of the preaching or of the most known miracles. Since I had amply spoken about these stūpas in full details in the first volume of the *Indo-Tibetica*, it is out of place that I still dwell on them. I will only add that the frescoes of Tsaparang give the pictorial representation of the eight traditional types of stūpas/mchod-rten according to the schemes I have inferred from literary sources.

On plate CXXXV are reproduced the stūpas of 'illumination', of the 'descent from heaven', of the 'reconciliation' and of the 'miracle of Śrāvastī'. On plate CXXXVI those of 'nirvāṇa',

of the 'collected lotuses', of 'Vaiśāli', and of 'many doors'. The same series, although with a somewhat different order, appears in the *thāṅka*.

§30. *Scenes of the foundation of the temple.* The paintings on the band to the left of the door recall scenes of the foundation of the temple. They have, therefore, to be put into relation with other similar ones that we have already seen in the cella of the white temple. They can be divided in two series. The first (plate CXXXVII) represents the actual religious ceremony which had perhaps accompanied the consecration of the temple with the concourse of the king, princes and all the magnates of Guge. There is the image of Amitāyus on an altar towards whom the crowd of adorers address themselves and to whom offerings are destined. To the right of the god, on the first line, are the king and the queen in gala paludaments seated on high cushions; two attendants hold an umbrella, traditional insignia of regal majesty. There follow on the same plane other princes of the royal house, while the dignitaries of state are crowding behind them. In the second line are the princesses and then a crowd of men with turbans and caps of various colours, who if they were not in the act of adoration, could be mistaken for Kashmiri Muslims. On the last plane are painted with great realism the caravans bringing offerings or rather the materials which served for the construction and consecration of the temple; Chinese with asses, horses and yaks, Kashmiri merchants and people from Garhwal with baskets on their shoulders (plate CXXXVIII). Above and below the altar ritual objects or bountiful offerings are lined or heaped up. To the right of the god, on three lines, the community of lamas (plates CXXXIX-CXL) who performed the ceremony of consecration; in the foreground and in a noticeable distance from others, two monks in rich paludaments; probably they are the

supreme lamas of the monastic congregation, and also of royal blood. It seems that in the kingdom of Guge a custom was perpetuated which was introduced by its first founders that is one of the princes should become the chief of the church. This usage is recorded also by Andrade; it is not impossible that the antagonism between the two brothers, representing different interests, namely the lay power and the religious community, has been the principal cause of the ruin of the State.

The very words of Andrade, when he tells us about the commercial importance of Tsaparang and of its bazars and talks about Chinese and Kashmiri caravans and about the relations that Guge had with the merchants of the Indian plains, are confirmed and figured by these frescoes that must have only slightly preceded the arrival of the Portuguese Jesuit. After the crowd of the praying people, the artist wanted to eternalise the memory of the consecration of the temple and of the festivities that according to custom should have celebrated it (plate CXXXVIII, compare CIV). They consist specially of music and masked dances. People disguised as demons dance rhythmically with improvised leaps and jumps as they had been possessed by malefic forces, tossing in the air clubs and bludgeons; others are hiding themselves behind big animals of mashed paper, lions or horses, richly caprisoned by coloured clothes and let these monsters dance at the sound of the big copper trumpets (*duñ rin*) which the band is blowing into. Other still extract melodies from flutes (*rkañ glin*) or beat the drums. Drums look like being of two kinds: the ones played by standing people are perfect cylinders; others have the shape of the "tabla" and are played by people, wearing turbans and drawers, moving in the characteristic mimic of Indian musicians. One is lead to think of

the Mon, that is of that class of people who by profession even today are either musicians or iron-smiths all over Ladakh and also in a great part of Western Tibet and who have been the object of a very accurate study by Dainelli. Those who have an experience of the Tibetan country will find then in these paintings, the faithful reproduction of those festivals and of those dances that are celebrated even today both for profane as well as for religious motives, in every Tibetan countryside that has not become as desolately poor as by now the province of Guge is. I myself have seen both in Darjeeling and in Ladakh where there is much more prosperity than in Western Tibet proper, lion dances and demonic dances — I do not speak about the ritual ones that are another thing altogether — of which the paintings of Tsaparang seem to be a schematic evocation. Among the many games that celebrated the consecration of the gumpa, the frescoes of the "White Temple" reproduce the very characteristic ones. But the painting is so disfigured that it was impossible to photograph it. A man is seen descending from the top of a rock walking on a rope: a ritual play, rather dangerous, that can be witnessed in Lhasa (1) today too, on some special festivals or anniversaries, and was in use also at the ports of India, in Nirmand for instance, where it was observed by Harcourt. There follow, then, other caravans; there are the porters who, on yaks or on shoulders, carry up the materials used for the construction of the temple. A costly and difficult thing. In Western Tibet no tree grows and the enormous pillars, the capitals, the beams, the axes forming the

(1) Bell Ch., *The Religion of Tibet*, p.127.

ceiling had to be ordered to be brought appositely either from low Kunuwar or from Chitkul with long marches along a ground that even today is not easy to tread and that in those days should have been extremely risky. It is a wonder for him who knows the country as well as one could, along those uncomfortable Himalayan paths, by those precipitous, steep gorges or ravines and those vertical cliffs, to transport during days of walking these gigantic and heavy trunks. The painting too is rather realistic. At the very first sight the Tibetan types are distinguishable from those of Indian mountaineers, bare-legged, a woollen blanket around the waist and the stick on the shoulder as is used till today by the shepherds of high Kunuwar or of Garhwal. In order to vivify the scene are not lacking even small herd of sheep, each of which carries its small pack-saddle, as done by merchants of salt.

The temple on whose walls we had seen upto now the panels of cold and fearful deities and which in their desolate wilderness looked as pale phantoms in a kingdom of death, are suddenly made alive by these paintings. They throw a ray of light on the life that once throbbled within these ruins. They revoke somehow the multicoloured swarming of bazars, the shouting of the caravans, and the bivouacs within the boundaries of serais where people of different speeches exchanged merchandise and ideas bringing far away cultures closer.

CHAPTER V

THE TEMPLE OF THE "PREFECT".

§31. *General description.* Tsaparang is, as I have said elsewhere, the seat of one among the four prefectures in which Western Tibet is divided. The magistrate governing the province goes for summer months to the estate at Shang-tze-dzon which is a more ventilated and higher place, and he comes back to Tsaparang only in winter months. He uses as his private chapel a temple externally painted in red, which stands not very far from his house. It is the temple of Rdo-rje-hjigs-byed/Vajrabhairava. It is not very big and is kept almost always closed because they do not like to violate the fearsome silences of a chapel dedicated to one of the most powerful but also one of the most feared deities of the Lamaistic pantheon. When I wanted to visit it for the first time in 1933, I had to insist and to exert sweet pressure on the guardian of the prefecture palace for having the doors of the small shrine opened for me.

On the back of the cella many images of gilded bronze are heaped up (plate CXXLI). I remember that the most noteworthy statue both for its valuable workmanship and graciousness of design is a superb statue of Rdo-rje-hjigs-byed/Vajrabhairava coupled with his śakti. Near it, one can admire another statue not less valuable of Guhyasamāja, which is followed by an image, also of gilded bronze, of Maitreya seated European style, and

with his hands in the attitude of his characteristic mudrā. All are works of very accurate execution and modelling, documenting once more the perfection, perhaps never more reached in Tibet, which the moulders and casters of the Guge kingdom had reached.

§32. *The cycle of Tārā.* On the walls of the temple large pictorial panels of the greatest interest follow one another. They are blackened by time and in some places are already obliterated. Nevertheless, they still reveal the profusion of gilding, the mastery of design, and the richness of ornamental motifs framing the sacred images. Terrific figures alternate with images of Lamas symbolizing, as I have mentioned above, the continuity of the initiatic teaching.

Below them are seen well-known deities, but multiplied in many of their manifestations and particular subspecies, according to the liturgical schemes of Tantric schools that are no longer easy to identify.

First of all, we find various figures of Tārās (plates CXLII, CXLIII). They represent an iconographic system different from the usual one which reduces the fundamental types of this goddess to only two: the Green Tārā and the White Tārā. In fact, as it will be seen from the following list, our frescoes reproduce eight different forms of Tārā. One is led to think that the painters of this temple took their inspiration from that large liturgical literature dedicated to the cult of the most popular of the Mahāyānic goddesses and that had classified into twentyone fundamental types the various manifestations of Tārā. In volume *La* of the *Btsan-ḥgyur*, almost all dedicated to

Tārā, are actually included different hymns, due to various authors (1), listing and iconographically describing these twentyone hypostases of the goddess, which are often reproduced together on Tibetan thankas. Waddell too has given their list, but not the iconography. Therefore it will not be out of place to sum up in a brief scheme the fundamental characteristics of these twentyone forms, so that it will be easy to identify them, whenever the occasion arises.

(1) In Tibet, the most famous is that of Sūryagupta. But the most ancient hymn to the twentyone forms of Tārā, inspiring the other authors was already in the third chapter of the *Sgrol-ma las sna-tshogs hbyun-bahi rgyud*. Thus Mkhas-grub-rje in his treatise on tantras entitled *Rgyud-sde spyiḥi mam-par-bzhag brgyas-par bsad-pa*, folios 37.6.

TWENTYONE TĀRĀS

1. Myur-ma dpaḥ-mo/Turā-virā (Lokesh Chandra 1986 : 2145), red, one head, eight arms:

right	left
pramuditā mudrā	
arrow	bow
disc	lance
sword	noose

2. Ston-ka-zla-ba/Śaraccandrā, white, three heads: white, blue, yellow, twelve arms:

right	left
samādhi-mudrā	
khaṭvāṅga	ampule
disc	lotus
gem	bell
vajra	vase
flower	book

3. Gser-mdog-can-ma/Kanakavarṇā, yellow, one head, ten arms:

right	left
rosary	band
sword	noose
arrow	lotus
vajra	bell
baton	bow

4. Gtsug-tor-rnam-rgyal-ma/Uṣṇīṣavijayā, yellow, one head, in vajraparyāṅka posture, four arms:

right	left
varada mudrā	ampule
rosary	baton

5. Hūm-gi-sgra-rab-tu-sgrogs-ma/Hūm-svara-nādinī, yellow, one head, two arms: right in the mudrā of preaching and yellow lotus in the left, in vajra-paryāṅka posture.

6. H̄jig-rten-gsum-las rnam-par-rgyal-ma/Trailokyavijayā, red, one head, in vajra-paryāṅka posture, four arms:

right	left
vajra	mudrā of menacing
sword	noose

7. Gzhan-hjoms-ma/Para-pramardanī, black, one head, in āliḍha posture, two arms:

right	left
disc	noose
sword	mudrā of menacing

8. Bdud-thams-cad-hjoms/Māra-sūdanī (400 Icons: 214), yellow, one head, in vajra-paryāṅka posture, four arms:

right	left
twig of aśoka	lotus
varada-mudrā	vase

9. Mchog-gsol-ma/Varadā, ruby-coloured, one head, four arms:

right	left
pramuditā mudrā	
beats the tempo of dance twig of aśoka	

10. Mya-ñan-thams-cad-sel-bar-byed-ma/Śoka-vinodanī, red, one head, four arms:

right	left
pramuditā mudrā	
sword	twig of aśoka

11. Hgro-ba-thams-cad-hgugs-ma, dark, one head, in āliḍha posture, two arms: hook for capturing (*bsnams-paḥi lcags-kyu*) in the right, and noose for play (*rol-paḥi lcags-kyu*) in the left.

12. Bkra-śis-thams-cad-sbyin-ma/Maṅgala-dāyinī, yellow, one head, in vajra-paryāṅka posture, eight arms:

right	left
trident	gem
hook	hook
vajra	baton
sword	vase

13. Yoñs-su-smin-par-byed-ma/Paripācanī, red, one head, in āliḍha posture, four arms:

right	left
sword	disc
arrow	bow

14. Hgugs-paḥi khro-mo, black, three heads: black, white, red, in āliḍha posture, six arms:

right	left
sword	cranium
hook	noose
baton	human head

15. Zhi-ba-chen-mo/Mahāśānti, white, one head, in vajra-paryaṅka posture, six arms:

right	left
rosary	lotus
mudrā of giving	sword
baton	book

16. Chags-pa-ḥjoms-ma/Rāga-niṣūdanī, red, one head, in vajra-paryaṅka posture, two arms: trident at the level of the heart in the right, and mudrā on the heart (*sñin-po dan-bcas-paḥi phyag-rgya*) in the left.

17. Bde-ba-thams-cad-sgrub-ma/Sukha-sādhanī, red yellow, one head, in vajra-paryaṅka posture, two arms with circle of the moon in the right.

18. Rnam-rgyal-ma/Vijayā, white, one head, in vajra-paryaṅka posture, four arms:

right	left
	pramuditā mudrā
mudrā of giving	mudrā on the heart

19. Bdug-bsñal-thams-cad-sreg-ma/Duḥkha-dahanī, white, one head, in vajra-paryaṅka posture, two arms holding a vase of fire at the height of the breast.

20. Dños-grub-thams-cad-ḥbyuñ-ma/Siddhi-sambhavā, red yellow, one head, in vajra-paryaṅka posture, two arms holding a vase of gold.

21. Yoñs-su-rdzogs-par-byed-ma/Paripūraṇī, white, one head, in vajra-paryaṅka posture, two arms: rosary in the right and a trident in the left.

Thus schematically reproduced is a list of the twentyone kinds of Tārā diffused in the schools of Mahāyāna and, therefore, later in Tibet. Our frescoes record eight absolutely different forms, which are hereafter enumerated according to the inscriptions accompanying them. It is evident that between the two lists, that recorded above and the one derived from the frescoes, there is no relation whatsoever; except that in the above quoted hymns Tārā is invoked as one who “protects from every kind of fear” (Bstan-ḥgyur, vol. LA, op. cit. folios 24 and 34: *h̄jigs kun skyob/sarva-bhaya-trāna*. It seems that from this epithet is derived, for successive dissimilation, the other eightfold scheme that was reproduced in the temple of Tsaparang. In effect, in an other place (Ibid. no. 21 folio 42) Tārā is adored as one who “saves from the eight kinds of fears” (1); and the fears are eight sins that keep us attached to the round of births and deaths.

Here then are the eight kinds of Tārās painted in this temple:

1. The-tshom h̄jigs-skyob Sgrol-ma: Tārā protecting from the fear of doubt.
2. Ḥod-chags h̄jigs-skyob Sgrol-ma: Tārā protecting from the fear of passion.
3. Ser-sna h̄jigs-skyob Sgrol-ma: Tārā protecting from the fear of avarice.
4. Phra-dog h̄jigs-skyob Sgrol-ma: Tārā protecting from the fear of envy.
5. Ltas-nan h̄jigs-skyob Sgrol-ma: Tārā protecting from the fear of the false religious doctrines.

(1) *H̄jigs-pa brgyad skyob khyod phyag-ḥtshal*. In the Sādhanamālā p. 207 is inserted an Āryāṣṭa-mahābhaya-tārā-sādhana (in the Bkaḥ-ḥgyur there is a *H̄phags-ma sgrol-ma h̄jigs-pa brgyad-las skyob-paḥi mdo*).

6. Zhe-sdañ *h̄jigs-skyob Sgrol-ma*: Tārā protecting from the fear of anger.

7. Gti-mug *h̄jigs-skyob Sgrol-ma*: Tārā protecting from the fear of the clouding of the mind.

8. Na-rgyal *h̄jigs-skyob Sgrol-ma*: Tārā protecting from the fear of pride.

I have translated the word *h̄jigs* by “fear”, but “fear” has to be understood in this case in an active sense, as “that which rouses fear”. In effect, the eight sins from which Tārā has to free us rouse fear because, till we do not get rid of them they drag us fatally into the vortex of *saṃsāra*, of which, according to Buddhism and Hinduism alike, every wise person should have the utmost terror. Tārā is, therefore, the goddess who with her grace takes the devotee beyond (*tārayati*) these sinful tendencies. Special moments in the long meditative process and various states of spiritual purity, derived from mental and moral discipline, were symbolized by new aspects of the goddess of salvation, as many and as varied as are the possible ways to purification.

In this case as well we find again a fact that we already had many occasions to point out during these studies about Mahāyāna, namely, a tendency to express spiritual concepts in symbols.

Imagination was always alert to find forms and iconographically adequate types, which when meditated on, the mystic could experience as an inner psychological process the truths expressed in the dogma.

Tārā lost her original character, and although remaining for the crowd the merciful goddess ready to grant the humble prayers of her faithful devotees, in the initiatic schools she

symbolized in her figure the quintessence of the redemptive doctrine.

This is how these schools read the image of Green Tārā following the interpretation of Nāgārjuna (Bstan-hgyur, vol. LA, folios 5b f.). “The goddess has a single face because the global knowledge of things is gnosis. The green colour points to the power of performing every kind of action. Green is, in fact, also the colour of Amoghasiddhi, a Buddha of the supreme pentad who presides over action. Her hands are two because the one on the right is the symbol of the relative or conventional truth, and the one on the left is the symbol of the transcendent or absolute truth. Her right leg is stretched because the gnosis symbolized by Tārā implies the renunciation of all kinds of sin. Her left leg is bent towards her body because this gnosis realizes every kind of virtue. Her ornaments mean the perfection of knowledge and of moral praxis. Her right hand is in the attitude of gift in order to point out that the perfection of liberality (dānapāramitā) should be a companion of gnosis; her left hand is in the attitude of protection because it protects creatures from all kinds of fear. She holds the lotus flower in order to show that from her all beings, taking refuge in her, derive their blessedness. She is conceived of as being sixteen years old (the years of eternal youth, *kiśora*) because she has the power to realize the welfare of all). She sits on a seat as white as the moon, because she is consubstantial with mystic knowledge. This seat leans over a double lotus (viśvapadma) because this mystical knowledge is accompanied by compassion, the other indissoluble coefficient of the thought of illumination”.

§33. *The cycle of Vajrapāṇi.* After Tārā follow various hypostases of Vajrapāṇi, to whom Buddhism entrusted the actual office of *defensor fidei*/defender of the faith. Vajrapāṇi does not only have his two forms, generally the most known of him, the pacified and the angry ones; but he assumes multiple types listed and described in the large literature of Sādhanas dedicated to him and about which it is not my task to insist upon in this description of temples in Western Tibet. I shall only say that on the walls of the temple we are studying now, there are the following forms of Vajrapāṇi (Plate CXLII first figure, CXLIV, CXLV, CXLVI)

Phyag-na-rdo-rje, Ḥgro-bzañs/Jagadbhadra Vajrapāṇi

Phyag-dor(=Phyag-na-rdo-rje), Khyuñ-ḥdra, that is Vajrapāṇi similar to Garuḍa

Phyag-na-rdo-rje tum (for gtum)-chuñ/Alpaçaṇḍa Vajrapāṇi

Phyag-na-rdo-rje tum (for gtum)-chen namely Vajrapāṇi Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa

Phyag-na-rdo-rje atsala that is Vajrapāṇi Acala.

All these forms are more or less well known and common : Acala that in Tibetan is translated as Mi-g.yo-ba appears rather frequently in the protective cycles (*rakṣā, sruñ-ba*); Gtum-chuñ is perhaps Caṇḍaroṣaṇa in order to distinguish him from Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa (Gtum-chen). As for Vajrapāṇi (plate CXLII) similar to Garuḍa, he is evidently that very form of Vajrapāṇi known, according to the collections of Sādhanas, under the name of Vajrapāṇicunda, a name usually translated in Tibetan as: Nam-mkhaḥ-lđiñ-gi rgyal-po rdo-rje.

This hypostasis of Vajrapāṇi corresponds to a Buddhist adaptation of Garuḍa and is especially invoked as protection and defence against serpents. It is to say that, although Garuḍa is assimilated to a truly Buddhist deity, he nevertheless maintains

unaltered both his iconographic type and his very special attributes. According to liturgical literature (for instance: Vajrapāṇi-rāja-cuṇḍa-sādhana, Bstan-ḥgyur ṅu 297b) he is represented with golden wings and with two arms; in the right hand he holds heads of three serpents and in the left he has a stick with gems, as in our painting. The figure standing above the frames around the statues of the deities in the Tibetan temples and of which we have seen beautiful examples also in Tsaparang, is usually called Garuḍa because of his perfect similarity to his Hindu prototype, but it is not impossible that to the eyes of Buddhists this figure should appear rather as the Mahāyānic hypostasis of that god, that is to say as an emanation of Vajrapāṇi namely, not merely as Garuḍa, but rather as Garuḍa-Vajrapāṇi.

Ḥbyuñ-po-ḥdul-byed (plate CXLV) namely Bhūtaḍāmara is another terrific deity. His inclusion in the pictorial series dedicated to Vajrapāṇi is not surprising because he too is a subspecies of this very god. Other deities appearing in the frescoed panels are: Ḥgegs-mthar-byed/Vighnāntaka, Ḥdod-rgyal/Ṭakkirāja, and Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala (plates CXLVI, CXLVII) gods that are often met with in Tantric literature and often, for instance, mentioned in the Guhyasamāja.

Thus, as the series of the angry deities comes to a close, the other series of various Bodhisattvas starts (plates CXLVII-CL). The Bodhisattvas in Mahāyāna, as is well known, are infinite. But, for motives not always easy to guess, special lists of some Bodhisattvas are soon worked out. They partake, although secondarily, in the maṇḍala, of which almost always they occupy the periphery.

Our paintings represent: Kun-bzañ/Samantabhadra, Sgripa-rnam-sel/Nivaraṇaviṣkambhin, Nam-sñiñ = Nam-mkhaḥ-sñiñ-po/Ākāśagarbha, Sa-sñiñ/Kṣitigarbha, Khasarpaṇa, Hgro-drug-sgrol namely Avalokiteśvara and precisely that form specially worshipped for instance at the border of India in the famous shrine of Triloknath, Chos-kyi-blo-gros, Dbañ-po-zhi, Smon-iam-blo-gros, Ye-śes-blo-gros.

CHAPTER VI

THE LO-THAN DGON-PA

§34. *General description.* In the planes below Tsaparang, and precisely on the right bank of the stream running at its feet and merging in the Sulej, there is another temple surrounded by many stūpas/mchod-rten. It is nearly always closed and the keys are kept by the abbot of Toling. The Lama who came appositely from this monastery to open its door has written the name of the temple in this way: Blo-thañ lha-khañ and referred us to the usually accepted tradition in the whole region that it is the temple of the Lotsava. The fact that almost all the temples built by Rin-chen-bzañ-po are in the planes and the very figure of the temple does not allow me to doubt the truth of this tradition. The name has to be corrected, very possibly, to lo thañ dgon-pa that is "the temple of the Lotsava in the planes". But even if it had been actually founded by the great translator, that does not imply that it has remained unaltered. Today it is covered by frescoes which are surely of the same age as the latest paintings that we have seen at Tsaparang.

According to the custom of these regions there is no space on the walls that has not been covered with paintings; gigantic figures of meditating Buddhas, accompanied by their accolytes

and surrounded by figures of lamas and minor deities. The cycle represented here can be easily identified because every figure is accompanied by a formula of invocation containing its name. This time too we are faced by a well-known cycle, that is the one of the "Buddhas of Medicine". We have seen them in the previous volume, where we have studied them and we have seen that they are very common in the ancient temples of Western Tibet.

The figures follow one another in the following order: to the left of the door a Sman-bla/Bhaiṣajyaguru in the same attitude as Tshe-dpag-med, namely: Mya-ñan-med-mchog-dpal/Aśokotamaśrī,

On the left wall:

1. Gser-bzañs-dri-med/Suvarṇa-bhadra-vimala,
2. Rin-chen-zla-ba/Ratnacandra,
3. Mtshan-legs/Sunāman,

4. The name is cancelled; in the right hand he holds the vase of consecrated water (kalaśa) and the left is in the mudrā of protection (abhaya),

5. Tsoñ-kha-pa.

On the right wall beginning from above:

1. Tsoñ-kha-pa,
2. Tshe-dpag-med/Amitāyus,
3. The figure has disappeared completely,
4. Mñon-mkhyen-rgyal-po/Abhijñārāja (plate CLI).

Above the door a fresco reproduces motifs that are not infrequent in these temples of Guge; Kargyal on a white goat, namely, the tutelary spirit (*sa-bdag*) of Bon-po origin, whom according to the tradition also collected by Bu-ston, Rin-chen-bzañ-po had converted to Buddhism (1). Then follow, Dpalldan Lha-mo/Śrīdevī and Rdo-rje-chen-mo/Mahāvajrā. To the

(1) See *Indo-Tibetica* II.67.

right of the door: Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho/Dharmakīrti-sāgara in the same attitude as Vairocana.

Above the figure of this Sman-bla/Bhaiṣajyaguru, a series of smaller figures represent the thirtythree Buddhas invoked during the ceremony of the confession of sins.

In the cella, a big stucco statue of Vairocana in his customary attitude, and behind him another statue of Śākyamuni in whose background are the images of sixteen arhats.

On the side walls of the cella there are four maṇḍalas, out of which two have completely disappeared, and two are very near the same fate. The first of these two is surely the maṇḍala of Tshe-dpag-med/Amitāyus and the other is of Gtsug-gtor/Uṣṇī-ṣavijayā (plate CLII).

Below, there is a long band with the painted legend of the Buddha, about which I had many occasions to speak.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE EIGHT CEMETERIES OF LITURGICAL
LITERATURE

The literatures on the “eight cemeteries” is not very large, nevertheless it is not to be despised. Almost all the texts have been lost in the original, with the single exception of the Śmaśānavidhi by Lūi-pā, found in China in its Sanskrit original and recently published by Finot (1).

Finot, in his translation, has not perceived that every cemetery was accompanied by its specific name: evidently Caṇḍogra, Gahvara etc. are the very names of such places and therefore cannot be translated as being epithets: *cimeti-ère terrible et effrayant, (un aśvattha) touffu*, etc. To the text edited by Finot can be added an excerpt from the Vajrapradīpa-ṭippanī, a comment to the Hevajrasādhana by Suratavajra, according to a manuscript found by me in the Durbar Library of Kathmandu, and various other small treatises preserved in the Bstan-ḥgyur.

(1) Manuscrits sanscrits de Sādhana retrouvés en Chine, *Journal Asiatique* 1934: 49ff.

Eight cemeteries according to the Vajra-pradīpa-ṭīpanī of
Suratavajra (1)

अथ श्मशानानि कथ्यन्ते यथानुक्रमयोगतः । पूर्वे चाण्डोम्रं नाम
महाश्मशानं । शिरीषवृक्षे गजमुखो मर्द्दिकः सितः । इन्द्रो दि-
क्पतिः गौरः सद्मन्नातः शुक्रैरावतासनासीनः । वासुकिर्नागराजः
पीतः गर्जितो मेघो विश्ववर्णाः । सुमेरुः पर्वतश्च भूरत्नमयः । सित-
वज्रो नाम चैत्यः श्वेतः ॥

दक्षिणे करङ्कभीषाणं नाम महाश्मशानं । आम्रवृक्षे मक्षिपमुखो
मर्द्दिकः कृष्णः । यमो दिक्पालो मक्षिषाह्वः कृष्णः । पद्मो नागः
सितः । आवर्तको मेघो विश्ववर्णाः । मलयः पर्वतो गौरः । पिशुन-
वज्रो नाम चैत्यः कृष्णः ॥

पश्चिमे त्वालाकुलं नाम महाश्मशानं । अशोकवृक्षे मकराननो
मर्द्दिकः श्वेतः । वरुणो दिक्पतिः सितः । कर्कोटको नागो रक्तः ।
घोरो मेघो विश्ववर्णाः । कैलासः पर्वतः सितः । गन्तावज्रो नाम चैत्यः
सितः ॥

उत्तरे गङ्करं नाम महाश्मशानं । अश्वत्थवृक्षे मनुष्यमुखो मर्-
दिको गौरः । कुबेरो दिक्पतिः गौरो नरवाहनः । तक्षको नागः
कृष्णः । घुर्णितो मेघः विश्ववर्णाः । मन्दरः पर्वतः श्यामः । चित्तवज्रो
नाम चैत्यो गौरः ॥

ऐशान्यां लक्ष्मीवनं नाम महाश्मशानं । वटवृक्षे गोमुखो मर्-
दिकः सितः । मक्षेश्वरो दिक्पतिः सितो गोवाहनः । शङ्खपालो नागः
पीतः । चाण्डो मेघो विश्ववर्णाः । मक्षेन्द्रः पर्वतः कृष्णः । वाग्वज्रो (2)
नाम चैत्यः श्वेतः ॥

(1) From a manuscript of the Durbar Library of Kathmandu.

(2) Mss.: चित्त .

आग्नेय्यामदृक्षासो नाम मक्षाश्मशानं । करञ्जवृक्षे क्वागाननो म-
र्द्धिको रक्तः । दूताशनो दिक्पतीरक्तः क्वागाननः । मक्षापद्मो नागो
श्यामः । घनो मेघः विश्ववर्णाः । गन्धमादनः पर्वतः पीतः । कायवज्रो
नाम चैत्यो रक्तः ।

नैऋत्यां घोरान्धकारो नाम मक्षाश्मशानं । लतापर्कटीवृक्षे शत्र-
मुखो मर्द्धिकः कृष्णः । रान्तसो दिक्पतिः शत्रासनः कृष्णः । अनतो
नागः पांडुरः । पुराणो मेघो विश्ववर्णाः । केमः पर्वतः श्वेतः । रत्नवज्रो
नाम चैत्यः कृष्णः ।

वायव्यां किलिकिलारवं नाम मक्षाश्मशानं । पार्थिववृक्षे मृ-
गाननो नाम मर्द्धिकः श्यामः । मारुतो दिक्पतिः श्यामो मृगाङ्गः ।
कुलिको नागः कर्बुरः । वर्षाणो मेघो विश्ववर्णाः । श्रीपर्वतो नीलः ।
धर्मवज्रो नाम चैत्यः श्यामः ॥

SMALL TREATISE ON THE EIGHT CEMETERIES (1)

(from Bstan-ḥgyur WA, folio 357b)

In Sanskrit *Aṣṭa-śmaśāna-nāma*; in Tibetan *Dur-khrod brgyad-
kyi ḥśad-pa*.

Homage to the blessed Lokeśvara. Having to declare the
eight cemeteries, it is said:

To the East there is the cemetery called Gtum-drag (2). In
it there is the tree arura (3) on which is its lord (the yakṣa)

(1) By Rnal-ḥbyor-pa.

(2) Caṇḍogra.

(3) = Skt. harītakī, see Laufer, *Loan words in Tibetan*, no. 62.

Gtum-drag (1) white in colour, he has the head of an elephant. Near the tree: Dbañ-po (2), lord of the corresponding region. He is yellow in colour, his right hand holds the vajra and his left one is in the attitude of threatening; his vehicle is Sa-sruñ (3) the white elephant. Near him is Vāsuki the serpent of yellow colour; above is the cloud sgra-sgrogs (4) of blue colour.

To the north is the cemetery Tshañ-tshiñ-can (5). In it is the Tree of "Illumination" (6) on which is its lord Gahvara (7). He has a human head and is of yellow colour. Near the tree is Lus-nan (8) lord of the corresponding region, yellow in colour; his right hand is in the attitude of protection and the left one has a club (9). His vehicle is a corpse (10). The serpent is H̄jog-po (11) of red colour. Above is the cloud smugs-pa (12) of white colour.

(1) All these *bdag-po-chen-po* "great lords" staying on the characteristic trees of the eight cemeteries, are yakṣas. They have generally the same name as the cemetery.

(2) Indra.

(3) Airāvata.

(4) Garjita.

(5) Gahvara.

(6) The tree of illumination is the *aśvattha* (*Ficus religiosa*) under which the Buddha got illumination.

(7) The xylograph cannot be read clearly.

(8) Kubera.

(9) In the xylograph *ghaha* is evidently a corruption of *gadā*, traditional symbol of Kubera also in Brahmanic iconography. See G. Rao, *Hindu Iconography* II/2.535-36.

(10) Doubtful.

(11) Takṣaka.

(12) Ghana.

To the west is the cemetery Ḥbar-bas-ḥkhrigs-paḥi-keṅ-rus (1). In it is the tree Mya-nān-med/Aśoka on which is its lord Ḥbar-bas-ḥkhrigs-keṅ-rus having the head of a sea-monster and yellow in colour. Near the tree is the lord of the corresponding region Varuṇa, white in colour. His vehicle is the sea-monster (*chu-srin*, *makara*); his right hand is in the attitude of the mudrā of menacing and in the left he holds the noose. The serpent is Stobs-kyi-rgyu/Karkoṭaka, green in colour. Above is the cloud drag-po/ghora of white colour.

To the south is the cemetery Ḥjigs-sde/Bhīṣaṇa. In it is the tree barura/bibhītaka (a variety of myrobolan) on which is its lord Ḥjigs-sde/Bhīṣaṇa, with a human head and of black colour. Near the tree is the lord of the corresponding region, namely Gśin-rje/Yama, of black colour. In the right hand he holds a club and in the left a noose; his vehicle is the buffalo. The serpent is Padma, of white colour. Above is the cloud ḥkhrigs-pa/āvarttaka of yellow colour.

In the region of the god of the fire (south-east) is the cemetery Dpal-gyi-nags/Lakṣmīvana, in which is the tree karaṅja; above it is its lord Dpal-gyi-nags/Lakṣmīvana, who has the head of a goat and is of white colour. Near the tree is the lord of the corresponding

(1) This Tibetan form presupposes an original Jvālākula-karaṅka that is just found again in the small treatise by Lūi-pā, published by Finot; in the Sanskrit list of Suratavajra, *karaṅka* appears in the name of the southern cemetery.

region Byin-za/Hutāśana (namely fire), of red colour. In the right hand is the rosary and in the left the vessel for consecrated water; his vehicle is the goat. The serpent is Pad-machen/Mahāpadma, of white colour. Above is the cloud ḥkhyil/ghūrṇita of red colour.

In the region of the south-west (*Bden-bral, Nirṛti*) is the cemetery H̄jigs-paḥi-mun-pa/Ghorāndhakāra. In it is the tree udumbara on which is its lord H̄jigs-pa/Bhīṣaṇa, with the head of a buffalo and of black colour. Near the tree is the lord of the corresponding region Srin-po Bden-bral/Nirṛti of black colour. His right hand is in the mudrā of menacing and his left holds a human head. The serpent is Mthaḥ-yas/Ananta, of blue colour. Above is the cloud sgra-sgrogs/garjita of white-yellow colour.

In the region of the wind (north-west) is the cemetery Kīlī-kīlar-sgrogs-pa/Kīlīkīlārava in which is the tree srid-sgrub/arjuna; above it is its lord Kīlī-kīlar-sgrogs with the head of a buffalo and grey in colour. Near the tree is the lord of the corresponding region, the god of the wind, of white colour. He holds two standards in both hands. His vehicle is the antelope. The serpent is Rigs-ldan/Kulika, of variegated colour. Above is the cloud ḥbebs-pa/vārṣaṇa of green colour.

In the region north-east is the cemetery Ha-har-rgod-pa/ Aṭṭahāsa; in it is the tree nyagrodha on which is its lord Ha-har-rgod-pa, with the head of a bull and white in colour. Near the tree is the lord of the corresponding region Dbañ-ldan/ Īsāna, of light blue colour. In the right he holds the trident and in the left the kapāla; his vehicle is the bull. The serpent is Duñ-skyon/Śaṅkhapāla of yellow colour. Above is the cloud gtum-mo/caṇḍa, multicoloured. All the lords of the regions have human heads and two hands.

The three texts studied above, therefore, follow an almost identical scheme going back to a single tradition that can be summed up as follows.

THE EIGHT CEMETERIES

Cardinal Point	Inferno	Tree	Nāga	Mountain	Caitya	Cloud	Protector
East	Candogra	śiṛṣa or arura	Vāsuki	Sumeru	Sitavajra	Gārjita	Indra
South	Karankabhīṣana	āmra	Padma	Malaya	Pīṣunavajra	Āvarttaka	Yama
West	Jvālākula	aśoka	Karkoṭa	Kailāsa	Samjñāvajra	Ghora	Varuṇa
North	Gahvara	aśvattha	Takṣaka	Mandara	Cittavajra	Ghūrṇita	Kubera
SE	Lakṣmivana	karañja	Mahāpadma	Gandhamādana	Vāgvajra (1)	Ghana	Rakta Fire
NE	Aṭṭhāsa	vaṭa	Sankhapāla	Mahendra	Kāyavajra	Caṇḍa	Isāna
SW	Ghorāndhakāra	latā parkaṭi or udumbara	Ananta	Hema	Ratnavajra	Purana	Nirrti
NW	Kīlīkīlāra	pārthiva (arjuna)	Kullika	Śrīparvata	Dharmavajra	Varṣana	Vāyu

(1) Mss. cittavajra

Besides, the Bstan-ḥgyur has preserved two other small treatises dedicated to the eight cemeteries (vol. WA no. 13 and no. 14, folios 354ff) both without the name of the author (1). The second of the two is hardly important and it follows more or less the scheme outlined above; but more different is the first one whose list is inspired by a totally different tradition:

Inferno	Tree	Protector	Nāga	Cloud
E .. Aṭṭahāsa	Nāgapuṣpa	Dban-po Isāna	Pad-ma-chen Mahāpadma	Ghora
S .. Caritra	Āmra	Gsin-rje Yama	Rigs-ldan Kulika	Caṇḍa
W .. Kolagiri	Aśvattha	Chu-bdag Varuṇa	Stobs-kyi-rgyu Karkoṭaka	Ghana
N .. Jayanti	Punnagara (2)	Lus-nan Kubera	Dun-skyon Śaṅkhapāla	Āvartta
NE .. Ujjayana	Nyagrodha	Drag-po Rudra	Hjog-po Takṣaka	Garjita
SE .. Prayāga	Karaṇja	Me Agni	Padma Padma	Gharmata (3)
SW .. Rna-ḥchus-sa-ma	Latādzata (Latā jāti, 4)	Srin-po Nirrti	Mthaḥ-yas Ananta	Hbab-pa (5)
NW.. Lha-moḥi-mkhar (Devikoṭa)	Udumbara	Rlun Vāyu	Nor-gyas Vāsuki	Pūrana

This list seems to be influenced by the schemes of the pīṭhas or sacred places, common both to Hinduism as well as to Buddhism: even more some places, as Kolagiri, Prayāga and Devikoṭa, are famous especially among the Hindu communities rather than among the Buddhists. Ujjayana is perhaps for Uḍḍiyāna, Rna-ḥchus-sa-ma is perhaps Karṇāta.

(1) Compare also Śrīheruka-bhūta-nāma-maṇḍalopāyikā, Bstan-ḥgyur ṅa folio 317.

(2) Namely punnāga.

(3) Probably corruption of ghūrṇita.

(4) Jasmine.

(5) Varṣaṇa.

APPENDIX II

THE THIRTYTWO DEITIES OF THE CYCLE
OF GUHYASAMĀJA (1)

1. Akṣobhyavajra or Vajradhara (Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje, Rdo-rje-ḥchan), of dark blue colour. Three heads: the central one blue and terrific (drag-po), on the right white (peaceful); on the left red (expressing passion). Six arms; on the right: the vajra, the disc and the lotus; on the left: the small bell, the gem and the sword. This type of Akṣobhya has a special name: he is called Zhe-sdañ-rdo-rje/Dveṣavajra. The image of Dveṣavajra (also called simply Guhyasamāja, Gsañ-ba-ḥdus-pa) is reproduced on a type of tsha-tsha rather frequent in Western Tibet, where on account of Rin-chen-bzañ-po and his followers the Guhyasamāja had great diffusion. This type is reproduced in *Indo-Tibetica* I. 96 (plate XXXIII b) and was erroneously identified by me as Vajraḍāka, on the basis of the mantra read in the formula impressed thereon. But the iconographic descriptions preserved in ritualistic literature and the very figure of the deity seen by me in the temples of Western Tibet, leave no doubt that he is Dveṣavajra i.e. Akṣobhya as the central deity of the cycle of Guhyasamāja. One of the more beautiful representations of this kind can be admired in the temple of Ri (2).

2. Vairocana, white. Three faces: white, blue, red. Six arms; on the right: the disc, the vajra, the white lotus; on the left: the bell, the gem and the sword.

(1) See above p. 60.

(2) About this monastery see Tucci-Gherzi 1933: 359.

3. Ratnasambhava, yellow. Three faces: yellow, black, white. Six hands; on the right: gem, vajra, disc; on the left: bell, yellow lotus, sword.

4. Amitābha (Amitavajra/Mthaḥ-yas-rdo-rje), red. Three faces: red, black, white. Six hands: with the first hand on the left, leans on the thigh, holds the stem of a lotus which he opens with the right hand at the height of the breast; with the other two hands on the right, vajra and disc; in the other two on the left: gem and sword.

5. Amoghavajra, green. Three faces: green, black, white. Six hands; on the right: sword, viśvavajra, disc; on the left: small bell, green lotus, gem.

6. Locanā, white: on the diadem the image of Vairocana. Three faces, six arms: all similar to Vairocana, but instead of the padma, she has the white utpala (1).

7. Māmakī, blue: on the diadem the image of Akṣobhya, all similar to Akṣobhya, but instead of the padma, the blue utpala.

8. Pāṇḍaravāsinī, red; on the diadem the image of Amitābha and similar to him; but instead of the padma, the red utpala.

9. Green Tārā: on the diadem the image of Amogha and similar to him. In the six arms, on the right: viśvavajra, wheel, utpala marked by a vajra; on the left: bell, gem and sword.

10. Rūpavajrī/Gzugs-rdo-rje-ma, white; on the diadem image of Vairocana; like Locanā, but her first two hands hold a mirror.

(1) The padma corresponds to *Nelumbium speciosum*, and the utpala to *Nymphaea stellata*.

11. Śabdavajrī/Sgra-rdo-rje-ma, yellow; image of Ratnasambhava in the diadem. Three faces: yellow, black, white, similar to Māmakī, but in her first two hands holds a lute.

12. Gandhavajrī/Dri-rdo-rje-ma, red; image of Amitābha in the diadem; similar to Pāṇḍaravāsīnī, but in her first two hands bears a conch full of perfume.

13. Rasavajrī/Ro-rdo-rje-ma, green; image of Amoghavajra in the diadem; similar to Tārā, but her first two hands hold a vase full of tasty substances (*rohī snod*).

14. Sparśavajrī/Reg-bya-ma embraces no. 1.

15. Maitreya, white; has the image of Vairocana in the diadem; similar to Vairocana, but in the first hand to the right holds a flower of nāgakesara/*Mesua ferrea*.

16. Kṣitigarbha, white; Vairocana in the diadem; like Vairocana.

17. Vajrapāṇi, yellow; like Ratnasambhava and with the image of Ratnasambhava in the diadem.

18. Ākāśagarbha, similar to the previous one.

19. Lokeśvara, red; image of Amitābha in the diadem; like Amitābha.

20. Mañjuśrī, as above.

21. Nīvaraṇaviṣkambhin/Sgrib-sel, green, image of Amogha in the diadem; similar to Amoghasiddhi.

22. Samantabhadra, as above.

All these twentytwo divinities are in their peaceful aspects (*śānta* or *śiva*).

23. Gśin-rje-gśed/Yamāntaka, black; image of Vairocana in the diadem. Three faces: black, white, red. Six arms; on the right: stick, vajra; on the left: holds at the height of the breast

the lasso with the hands in menacing *mudrā*; in the other two, bell and axe.

24. Śes-rab-mthar-byed/Prajñāntaka or Gzhan-gyis-mi-thub/Aparājita, white; image of Ratnasambhava in the diadem. Three faces: white, black, red. Six arms; in the right: vajra, stick marked by a vajra and sword; in the left as above.

25. Rta-mgrin/Hayagrīva, red; image of Amitābha in the diadem. Three faces: red, black, white. Six arms: in the right the padma, the sword, the pestle (*gtun-siñ*); in the left as above.

26. Bgegs-mthar/Vighnāntaka or Bdud-rtsi-ḥkhyil/Amṛta-kunḍalin, blue; image of Amoghasiddhi in the diadem. Three faces: blue, white, red. Six arms; in the right: viśvavajra, disc, pestle; in the left: like Yamāntaka (*mudrā* of menacing, bell, axe).

27. Mi-g.yo-ba/Acala, black; image of Vairocana in the diadem. Three faces: black, white, red. Six arms; in the right: sword, vajra and disc; in the left: *mudrā* of menacing at the height of waist, axe, lasso.

28. Ḥdod-rgyal/Ṭakkirāja, blue; image of Ratnasambhava in the diadem. Three faces: black, white, red. Six arms; the first two in the *mudrā* of hūmkāra, in the other two on the right vajra and sword, and in the other two on the left, lasso and hook.

29. Dbyug-sñon-can/Nīladaṇḍa, blue; image of Amitābha in the diadem. Three faces: blue, white, red. Six arms; on the right: blue stick marked by vajra, sword, disc; on the left: lasso at the height of breast held in the hand in the attitude of menacing, padma and axe.

30. Stobs-po-che/Mahābala, blue; image of Amoghasiddhi in the diadem. Three faces: black, white, red. Six arms; in the right black stick marked by a vajra, vajra and disc; in the left, mudrā of menacing at the height of the breast, trident and axe.

31. Gtsug-tor-ḥkhor-lo-bsgyur-ba/Uṣṇīṣacakravartin, blue; image of Akṣobhya in the diadem. Three faces: blue, white, red. Six arms; with the first two in the mudrā called uṣṇīṣa, with the other two on the right vajra and padma; the other two on the left mudrā of menacing and sword.

32. Gnod-mdzes/Śumbha, blue; image of Akṣobhya in the diadem. Three faces: black, white, red. Six arms; in the right: vajra, disc and gem; in the left: gesture of menacing (tarjanī-mudrā) at the height of the breast, lotus and sword.

The last ten divinities are in terrific attitude and they form a group of ten terrific deities (*daśa-krodha*) who, settled around the maṇḍala, serve to keep far away the bad influences or contrary forces that may put obstacles in the rite or in the meditation of the sādḥaka.

Except for the symbols and the colours, that necessarily are different from divinity to divinity, the representation of the ten irate deities follows a common scheme. According to our liturgical treatises, all have red hair standing high, eyelashes and beard flaming. On the red face are three kindled eyes. They have a grim smile showing four sharp teeth, laugh in a loud way; frowning brows, big and flaccid belly, jewelled ornaments, a band of tiger's skin on the waist, bracelets made of yellow shells; at the ankle of the feet the mahāpadma serpent rounded up as a bracelet.

APPENDIX III

THE "CYCLE" OF PROTECTION

(see page 65)

1. Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ/Vajrasattva, white. Three faces: the central one white and in a pacified aspect, the one on the right yellow and the one on the left green. Both the side faces are of irate aspect. Six arms: with the first two he embraces the śakti, similar to him, holding in the fist the vajra and the bell. In the other two to the right: kapāla and noose; in the other two to the left: lotus and hook; he is seated in vajraparyaṅka; diadem of skulls.

2. Hūm-mdzad/Hūmkāra, blue; on the diadem a figure of Vajrasattva. Three faces: blue, yellow, green. Six arms: the first two as in the preceding image; in the other two on the right: hook and khaṭvāṅga; in the other two on the left noose and kapāla; diadem of fifteen skulls and garland of fifty heads recently cut. With the right leg extended and the left bent he steps on H̄jigs-byed/Bhairava, lord of the bad potencies (gdug) and on Dus-mtshan-ma/Kālarātrī.

3. Rdo-rje-rtag-pa/Vajranitya, blue. Three faces: blue, yellow, green. Six arms: in the ones to the right: kapāla, noose, bell; in those to the left: khaṭvāṅga, hook, ḍamaru; with his last two arms embraces the śakti, similar to him, while the stretched right leg steps on Indra.

4. Rdo-rje-ñi-ma/Vajrasūrya, yellow. Three faces: yellow, black, green. Six arms; on the right: kapāla, noose, bell; those on the left as above. Thus, also the śakti: with the distended right leg she steps on a yakṣa.

5. Rdo-rje-gtsug-tor/Vajroṣṇīṣa, red. Three faces: red, yellow, green. Six arms; on the right: kapāla, noose, bell; on the left as above. So also the śakti. With his right leg distended steps on the god of water.

6. Rdo-rje-thab-sbyor/Vajrakuṇḍa, green. Three faces: green, yellow, black. Six arms and śakti as before; steps on Yama/Gśin-rje.

7. Rdo-rje-gnod-sbyin/Vajrayakṣa, of grey colour. Three faces: grey, yellow, green. Arms and śakti as in the preceding images; he steps over the god of fire.

8. Rdo-rje-dus/Vajrakāla, white. Three faces: white, yellow, green. Arms and śakti as in the preceding images. He steps on Srin-po/Nirṛti.

9. Rdo-rje-stobs-po-che/Mahābala, black. Three faces: black, yellow, green. Arms and śakti as in the previous ones; steps on the god of wind.

10. Rdo-rje-hjigs-byed/Vajrabhairava, blue. Three faces: blue, yellow and green. Arms and śakti as in the previous images. He steps on Dbañ-ldan/Īśāna.

11. Gtsug-tor-ḥkhor-los-ḥgyur-ba/Uṣṇīṣacakravartin, white. Three faces: white, yellow, green. Eight arms; on the right: vajra, hook, spear with three points, kapāla; on the left: bell, noose, khaṭvāṅga; steps on Brahmā.

12. Rdo-rje-sa-ḥog/Vajrapātāla, black. Three faces: black, green, yellow. Eight arms; to the right: vajra, hook, spear with three points, kapāla; on the left: bell, noose, disc, khaṭvāṅga; steps on Thags-bzañ-ris/Vemacitrin.

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ON THE CYCLE OF ŚAMVARA

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SECOND DALAI LAMA DGE-ḤDUN-RGYA-MTSHO
(No. 889)

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5. *Bde-mchog dril-bu lugs-kyi sbyin-sreg* (fasc. NA).

6. *Grub-chen dril-bu lugs-kyi bde-mchog lus dkyil-gyi bskyed-rim* (fasc. PA).

7. *Dpal ḥkhor-lo-sdom-paḥi rim-pa dañ-poḥi lam-la slob-paḥi tshul go bde-bar rjod-pa ḥdod-pa ḥjo-baḥi sññ-po* (fasc. PHA).

(1) The numbers refer to the catalogue of my collection of Tibetan texts.

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SOURCES ON MAHĀVAJRABHAIRAVA

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// SARVA – MAṄGALĀM //

INDEX

A

abhedyā 62
Abhidhānottaratantra 29, 63,
73
Abhijñārāja 132, 168
Acala 94, 161, 165, 185
Agni 120
Airāvata 36, 176
Airāvātī 39
Ājivaka Upagaṇa 142
Ākāśagarbha 41, 166, 184
Akṣobhya 11, 59, 60, 61, 62,
70, 71, 84, 121, 123, 124,
132
Akṣobhyavajra 182
akulavīra 88
ālaya 51
ālī 25, 84
Amitābha 60, 71, 121, 122,
124, 132
Amitavajra 183
Amitāyus 124, 151, 168, 169
Amoghasiddhi 60, 71, 118,
121
Amoghavajra 111, 183
Amoghavajra major 80
Amṛtakuṇḍalin 185
Ananta 178, 180
Anāthapiṇḍada 144
Andrade 152
Aṅkuraka 39

antaka 89
Anuttaratantra 134
Arbuda 39
Aparājita 185
Arapacana 133
arghya 55
Arghyā 55
arhat 189
Aśokottamaśrī 168
Aṣṭāṅgaḥḍaya 97
Asthiravajra 61
Asura 87
Atīśa 80
Aṭṭahāsa 179, 180, 181
Avalokiteśvara 115, 133, 166
Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin 166, 184
āveśa 56
avidyā 70

B

Banerji 123
Bcom-ldan-ḥdas dpal-ḥkhor-
lo-sdom-paḥi dkyil-ḥkhor-
gyi cho-ga 49
Bcom-ldan-ḥdas dpal-ḥkhor-
lo-sdom-paḥi mñon-par-
rtogs 24
Bde-ba thams-cad sgrub-ma
160
Bde-chen-mkhaḥ-ḥgro 66, 72
Bde-mchog 9, 17, 18, 65, 120

- Bdud 100
Bdud-rtsi-ḥkhyil 185
Bdud-thams-cad-ḥjoms 159
Bdug-pa-ma 33
Bdug-spos-ma 35, 54
Beck 18, 28
Bendall 18
Bgegs-mthar see Ḥgegs-mthar
-byed
bhadrakalpa 121, 125
bhadravargīya (pañca) 136
Bhairava 187
Bhairava (sādhana) 80
Bhaiṣajyaguru 168, 169
Bhallika 141, 142
Bha-ro 80, 83
bhūmisparśamudrā 125, 139
Bhūtaḍāmara 165
Bimbisāra 148
Bkaḥ-gdams-pa 67, 99
Bkaḥ-rgyud-pa 114
Bkaḥ-sruñ-ma-chen-po sgrub-
paḥi-phrin-las 96
Bkraḥ-śis-bskyed-lde-ñi-ma
127, 128
Bkra-śis-thams-cad-sbyin-ma
159
bla-maḥi-rgyud 110
bla-ma rdo-rje-ḥchañ 126
Bla-ma-ye-śes-dpal 111
Blo-bzañ-chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan
99, 100
Blo-bzañ-skal-bzañ-rgya-mtsho
65
Blo-bzañ-tshui-khrims-byams-
pa-rgya-mtsho 107
bodhimaṇḍa 139
Bonpo 68 *passim*
Beil Ch. 153
Brahmā 120, 142, 143, 147,
149, 188
Brahmāṇī 120
Bṛhadjātaka 98
Brtson-ḥgrus-chen-mo 41
Bskal-bzañ-rgya-mtsho 100
Bsod-ma 93
Bstan-sruñ-chen-po btsan
rgod yam-śud dmar-po tso-
ḥkhor-gyi bskañ cho-ga
dños-grub bdud-rtsi-ḥkhyil-
baḥi rin-chen bum-bzañ 107
Bstan-sruñ dam-can rgya-
mtshoḥi miñ-gi grañs 42
Bstan-sruñ-ma 94, 96, 99, 104
Buddha-ḍāka 66
Buddhaḍākinī 69, 71
Bu-ston 42, 168
Bya-gdoñ-ma 40
Byañ-chub-ḥod 68
Byañ-gi gśin-rje sñon-po 36
Bya-rgod-phuñ-poḥi ri 146
Bya-rog-gdoñ-can 36
Byin-za 178
Byug-pa-ma 34
Bzhad-ma 34

C

Caitanyacaritāmṛta 44
 Cakrasaṃvara 11, 18
 Cakrasaṃvara-tantra 29
 Cakravarmaṇī 41
 Cakravartinī 41
 Cakravegā 40
 Cāmuṇḍā 98
 Caṇḍālī 96
 Caṇḍaroṣaṇa 164
 Caṇḍikā 56, 58
 Caṇḍogra 173, 175, 180
 Carcikā 89, 91
 Chags-pa-hjoms-ma 160
 Chañ-ḥthuñ-ma 40
 Chañ-ḥtshoñ-ma 41
 Chos-dbyiñs-rdo-rje-ma 35
 Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho 132,
 169
 Chos-kyi-blo-gros 166
 Chos-ñid mkhaḥi kloñ-mdzod-
 las mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ḥdus-paḥi
 skor-las dur-gcod dños-grub
 bañ-mdzod 70
 Chos-rab of Rva 111
 Chos-rgyal 76, 77
 Chos-rje don-grub-rin-chen
 111
 Chos-sgos 132
 Chos-skyoñ 115, 133
 Chos-skyoñ dgoñs-ḥdus-sñiñ-
 po 107
 Chu-bdag 181

Chu-lha 36, 93
 chu-srin 177
 Citta-dāka 66
 Cittadākinī 72
 Cordier 18

D

Dainelli 153
 Dākinī 38, 42, 65, 68
 Dam-sri 104
 Dam-sri gson ḥdre sogs luñ-
 bstan-ciñ ḥdul-baḥi thabs śiñ-
 tu zab-pa 104
 Dam-sri-ma nag-mo 93
 dam-tshig 73
 Dam-tshig-gi mkhaḥ-ḥgro 66,
 72
 Dānapāramitā 163
 Daṇḍa-Yamāntaka 91
 dbañ 96
 Dbañ-ldan 93, 120, 179
 Dbañ-phyug 120
 Dbañ-phyug-chen-po 36
 Dbañ-phyug-rdo-rje 31
 Dbañ-po 36, 176, 181
 Dbañ-po-zhi 166
 Dbyañs-can-ma dmar-mo 92
 Dbyug-pa-gśiñ-rje-gśed 31
 Dbyug-sñoñ-can 185
 Devadatta 149
 devaputramāra 26
 Devīkota 39, 181
 Dge-legs-dpal-bzañ 107, 108

- Dge-lugs-pa 76, 107
Dgra-nga 94, 108
Dhanapāla 149
dharmacakra-mudrā 117
dharmadhātu 19
Dharmakīrti-sāgara 132, 169
dharpāla 81, 133
Dharmarāja 76, 77
Dharmavajrī 35
Dhṛtarāṣṭra 94, 108
Dhūpā 33, 35, 54
dhyāna 13
dhyāna-mudrā 124
dikpāla 95
Dīpā 34, 35, 54, 55
Dīpaṃkararakṣita 111
Divyāvadāna 145
Dmag-zor-ma 96, 98, 99, 101,
103, 108
Dmag-zor-rgyal-ma 93
dme-yug 107
Dños-grub-thams-cad-ḥbyuñ-
ma 160
Dohākoṣa 21
Don-grub 60
dpaḥ-bo 57
Dpaḥ-bo-chen-po 40
dpaḥ-bo-gcig-pa 87
Dpaḥ-boḥi-blo-can-ma 39
Dpaḥ-boḥi-gcig-paḥi sgrub-
thabs 80
Dpal gśin-rje-dgra-nag-gi sgrub
-paḥi-thabs rin-po-che-ḥbar-
ba 108
Dpal gśin-rje-gśed-nag-poḥi
rgyud rtog-pa-gsum-pa 79
Dpal-gyi-nags 177
Dpal-ḥdzin 80
Dpal Heruka 41
Dpal-ḥkhor-btsan 127
Dpal ḥkhor-lo-bde-mchog
mñon-dkyil 70
Dpal ḥkhor-lo-sdom-paḥi
sgrub-thabs 49
Dpal-ldan A-phyi-ma 100
Dpal-ldan Dmag-zor-gyi-rgyal-
mo Rematī 99
Dpal-ldan dmag-zor-ma 100
Dpal-ldan Lha-mo 99, 169
Dpal-ldan rañ-ḥbyuñ-rgyal-
moḥi skor-las ma-mo srog-
sgrub-gi gzuñs 96
Dpal-ldan Rematī 101
Dpal-mgon phyag-bzhi 93
drag 96
Drag-po 42, 181
Dri-chab-ma 35, 54, 55
Dri-ldan-ma 100
Dri-rdo-rje-ma 184
Drumacchāyā 39
Dum-skyes-ma 41
Duñ-skyoñ 37, 181
Durgatipariśodhana 108, 118
dur-khrod 52
Dus-kyi-ḥkhor-lo 000
Dus-mtshan-ma 42, 93, 104,
187

Dus-zhags-ma 93
dvārapāla 115
dveṣa 70
Dveṣavajra 31, 182
Dzam-bha-la nag-po 94
Dzam-bha-la ser-po 94

E

ekaśūla vajra 86
ekavīra 87, 88

F

Filliozat 97
Finot 173, 177
Francke 128

G

Gahvara 173, 180
Gaṇapati 120
Gaṇ-bzaṅ 00
Gandhā 34, 35, 54, 55
Gandhamādana 53, 180
Gandharva 108, 143
Gandhavajrī 184
Gaṅs-can 53
Gar-gyi-dbañ-phyug-ma 49
Gar-ma 35
garuḍa 122, 125, 143
Garuḍa Vajrapāṇi 165
Gaurī 92
gdug-pa 26
Getty 22
Ghaṅṅāpā 29

Gherṣi 5 *passim*
Ghorāndhakāra 178, 180
Gītā 35
Gliñ-bu-ma 34
Glu-ma 35
Gñan 100
Gnas 81
gnod 106
Gnod-mdzes 186
gnod-pho-mo 107
Gnod-sbyin 93, 120
go-cha 56
Godavari 39
Gotama 144
Gṛdhrakūṭa 146
Gṛhadevatā 41
Gri-gśin-rje-gśed 91
Grünwedel 22, 23, 97, 100
Gsañ-ba-ḥdus-pa 182
Gśed-dmar 94, 107
Gser-bzaṅs-dri-med 132, 168
Gser-mdog-can-ma 158
Gśin-rje 36, 93, 94 (four), 177,
181, 188
Gśin-rje-brtan-ma 33, 49
Gśin-rje-dkar-po 93
Gśin-rje-gśed 93, 108, 185
Gśin-rje-gśed Rdo-rje-ḥjigs-
byed-chen-po 76
Gśin-rjeḥi-ḥbebs 104
Gśin-rjeḥi-pho-ña-mo 33, 49, 104
Gśin-rje-ḥjoms-ma 33
Gśin-rje-ma 57, 58

- Gśin-rje mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma 33,
49
Gśin-rje-mo 56
Gśin-rje pho-brgyad mo-brgyad
(sādhana) 80
Gśin-rje ser-po 93
Gsod-byed-ma 32
Gsuñ-gi-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma 72
Gti-mug 70
Gti-mug-gśin-rje-gśed 89
Gti-mug-ḥjigs-skyobs Sgrol-ma
162
Gti-mug-rdo-rje 31
gtso-bo 22
Gtsug-maḥi-bu-mo 100
Gtsug-tor 169
Gtsug-tor-ḥkhor-las-ḥgyur-ba
188
Gtsug-tor-ḥkhor-lo-bsgyur-ba
186
Gtsug-tor-rnam-rgyal-ma 158
Gtum-chuñ 164
Gtum-drag 125
Guhyasādhana Hayagrīva 94
Guhyasamāja 11, 21, 60, 62,
63, 89, 155, 165, 182
Guhyasamāja-tantrarāja-vṛtti
19
Guñ-srañ-gaṅ-btsan 127, 128
Gzhal-yas-khañ 115
Gzhan-gyis-mi-thub 185
Gzhan-ḥjoms-ma 159
Gzi-legs-ma 100
Gzugs-can-ma 38
Gzugs-ma 35
Gzugs-rdo-rje-ma 184
- H
- Hackin 137
Ha-har-rgod-pa 179
Harcourt 153
Hāsyā 34
Hayagrīva 41, 113, 114, 128,
185
Hayakarnī 40
Hayaśiras 113
Ḥbar-bas-ḥkhrigs-keñ-rus 177
Ḥbar-bas-ḥkhrigs-paḥi-keñ-
rus 177
Ḥbebs-ma 93
Ḥbrag-rdzi-legs 127
Ḥbrug-pa 70
Ḥbum-señ-ge 111
Ḥbyuñ-po-ḥdul-byed 165
Ḥdod-chags 70
Ḥdod-chags Gśin-rje-gśed 90
Ḥdod-chags-ḥjigs-skyob Sgrol-
ma 161
Ḥdod-chags-rdo-rje 31
Ḥdod-khams-dbañ-phyug-ma
dmag-zor-maḥi sgrub-thabs
gtor cho-ga 59
Ḥdod-khams-dbañ-phyug-ma
dmag-zor rgyal-moḥi sgrub-
thabs gtor cho-ga tshogs-
mchod-pa dañ gsol-bcas 100

Ḥdod-rgyal 165, 185
Hema 180
Heruka 11, 22, 31, 48, 57, 61,
71, 84
Herukābhyudaya 29
Hevajra 11, 63
Hevajrasādhana 173
Ḥgegs-mthar-byed 165
Ḥgegs-paḥi-khro-mo 160
Ḥgro-ba-thams-cad-ḥgugs-ma
159
Ḥgro-bzañs 164
Ḥgro-drug-sgrol 166
Ḥgugs-byed-ma 32
Himalaya 40, 53
Ḥjam-dpal-dbyañs 80
Ḥjam-dpal-ye-śes (sādhana) 80
Ḥjig-rten-gsum-las-rnam-par-
rgyal-ma 158
Ḥjig-rten-paḥi lha-chen brgyad
95
Ḥjigs-byed 187
Ḥjigs-byed-chen-mo 40
Ḥjigs-byed-chen-po 40
Ḥjigs-paḥi-mun-pa 178
Ḥjigs-sde 177
Ḥjog-po 37, 176, 181
Ḥkhor-lo-chen-po 94
Ḥkhor-loḥi-go-cha-ma 41
Ḥkhor-loḥi-śugs-can-ma 40
Ḥkhor-lo-sdom-pa 18
Ḥkhor-lo-sgyur-ma 41
Ḥod-dpag-med 39, 60

ḥod-gsal 60, 84
Ḥod-ḥbyuñ 81
Ḥod-ldan-ma 39
Ḥod-maḥi-tshal 146
Ḥod-sruñ 128
Hor-mo-gñan-gyi spun dguḥi
gtso 100
Ḥphags-ma sgrol-ma ḥjigs-pa-
brgyad-las skyob-paḥi mdo
161
Ḥphags-skyes-po 94, 108
Ḥug-gdoñ-ma 32
Ḥūm-gi-sgra-rab-tu-sgrogs-ma
158
Hūmkāra 64, 187
Hūm-mdzad 64, 187
Hutāśana 178
Ḥzaḥ tshon-ma-niñ zhi-baḥi
las-tshogs mkhaḥ-ḥgro-grib-
sel bklags chog-tu bkod-pa
śel-dkar bum-paḥi chu-rgyun
105

I

idā 84
Indra 36, 142, 145, 147, 149,
170, 180, 187
Indrabhūti 29
īrṣyā 70
Īrṣyāvajra 31
Īrṣyāvajra-Yamāntaka 90
Īśāna 36
Īśvara 120, 179, 188

J

Jalandhara 39
 Jambhala 104, 105, Black Jambhala 94, Yellow Jambhala 94
 Jātakapārijāta 98
 Jayanti 181
 Jetavana 144
 Jñānaḍākinī 100, 110
 Jñānākara 80
 Jñānākara Gupta 111
 Jvālākula 180
 Jvālākula-karaṅka 177

K

Kailāsa 53
 Kākāsyā 32, 96
 Kālabhairava 23, 25
 Kālacakra 63, 94
 Kālacakra-tantra 21
 Kalandakanivāpa 146
 Kālarātri 104
 Kālī 42, 99, 187
 Kālī 25, 84
 Kālika 139
 Kaliṅga 40
 kalpadruma 127
 Kāma 136
 Kāmarūpa 39
 Kambala 29
 Kāncī 40
 Kaṅkāla 39
 kapāla 23

Karaṅkabhīṣaṇa 180
 Kargyal 168
 Karkoṭa 37, 180
 Karkoṭaka 177
 Karmaḍākinī 69, 71
 Karmāgni 120
 Karṇāta 181
 Kāśyapa 148, 149
 Kathāsaritsāgara 98
 kavaca 56
 Kāya-ḍāka 66
 Kāya-ḍākinī 72
 Keith 18
 Kesar 107
 Khaḍga-Yamāntaka 91
 Khagānanā 40
 Khams-gsum-rnam-par-rgyal 120
 Khaṇḍakapāla 38
 Khaṇḍarohā 41
 Khaṇḍarohī 38
 Kharvarī 39
 Khasamatānta 29
 Khasarpaṇa 166
 Kha-thog-nam-rdig-btsan 127
 khatvāṅga 23
 Khojarnath 7
 Khra-ba-na 127
 Khri-sgra-dmun-btsan 127
 Khro-boḥi sme-ba-brtsegs-paḥi sgrub 105
 Khro-bo sme-ba-brtsegs-paḥi sgrub-thabs dan khrus cho-

- ga-rnams nag-po ḥgro-śes-
su-bkod-pa mig gtsaṅ dag-
byed 104
- Khro-bo sme-brtsegs 104
- Khro-mo 48
- Khro-rgyal Smre-rtsegs 93,
107
- Khrus 106
- Khva-gdoṅ-ma 32, 48
- Khyab-ḥjug 120
- Khyi-gdoṅ-ma 32
- Khyuṅ-ḥdra 164
- Kilikilārava 178, 180
- Kīli-kīlar-sgrogs-pa 128
- kinnara 125
- kleśamāra 26
- Kloṅ-rdol bla-ma 42, 95, 96,
99, 104
- Klu-ḥbum bsdus-paḥi-sñiṅ-po
100
- Kolagiri 181
- Kośala 40
- Krodhinī 32
- Kṛṣṇācārya 29, 49
- Kṛṣṇayamāri-karma-sarva-sid-
dhi-karaṇa-nāma-tantra 78
- Kṛṣṇayamāri-sarva-tathāgata-
kāya-vāk-citta-kṛṣṇayamāri-
nāma-tantra 78
- Kṣamā 98
- Kṣetrapāla 110
- Kṣitigarbha 166, 184
- kṣobha 62
- Kubera 176, 180
- Kulika 36, 37, 180
- Kulūṭa 41
- Kumāra 143
- Kumāratantra 97
- Kumbhāṇḍa 108
- Kun-bzaṅ 166
- Kun-rig 118, 121
- Kūṣmāṇḍa 108
- kūṭāgāra 144
- L
- Lakṣmīvana 177, 180
- Lalitavajra 79, 80, 110, 111
- Lalitavistara 136, 137, 138
- Lalou 28
- Lāmā 38
- Lampāka 39, 40
- Laṅ-kaḥi-dbaṅ-phyug-ma 39
- Laṅkeśvarī 39
- Las-kyi me-lha 120
- Las-kyi mkhaḥ-ḥgro 69
- Lāsyā 34
- Laufer 100, 175
- laukika 109
- Laukika-mahādeva 119
- Lha-btsun Byaṅ-chub-ḥod-kyi
Mon-bu-pu-tra miṅ srin-gi
sgrub-thabs ka-bkol-maḥi
gzhuṅ lde-ba 68
- Lha-chen brgyad 95
- Lha-mo, eight 104
- Lha-moḥi mkhar 181

- Lha zhe-dgu-maḥi sgrub-thabs 80
Locanā 183
Lo fu na śuo kiu liao siao eul tsi piñ kiñ
Lokapāla (four) 108
Lokeśvara 184
Ltas-nan-hjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma 161
Ituñ-bśags 131
Ltuñ-byed-ma 32
Lugs-srol 67
Lūi-pā 24, 29, 30, 47, 173, 127
Lus-nan 93, 126, 181
- M
- Madhvācārya 19
Mahābala 40, 186, 188
Mahābalā 41
Mahābhairava 40
Mahābhairavī 40
Mahābhārata 98
Mahācakra 94
Mahādeva 83, 120
Mahādeva, eight 95
Mahākāla 96, 107, 133
Mahākānkāla 39
Mahānāsā 39
Mahāpadma 37, 178, 180
Mahārāja (four) 108
Mahāsthāmaprāpta 127
mahāsukha 23
Mahāsukha-ḍāka 66
Mahāsukha-ḍākinī 72
Mahāvajrā 169
Mahāvajrabhairava 75, 79, 85
Mahāvajradhara 61
Mahāvīra 40
Mahāvīryā 41
Mahendra 53, 180
Maheśvara 36, 83, 84, 107, 180
Maitreya 122, 124, 125, 131, 132, 134, 156, 184
makara 122, 177
Mālava 39
Malaya 180
Māmakī 189
ma-mo 56
Ma-mo 100
māna 70
Mandāra 53, 180
Ma-ne-btsan 127
Mangnang 8
Mañjuśrī 78, 82, 83, 125, 131, 132, 184
manokliṣṭa-vijñāna 51
manovijñāna 51
Mañ-srañ-mañ-btsan 127, 128
Māra 26, 86, 140, 142
maraṇamāra 26
ma-rig 70
Mar-me-ma 34, 35, 54, 55
Maru 41, 45
Marut 36
Māruta 180

māṭṛkā 56
Māṭṛkā 100
Mātsaryavajra 31
Mātsarya-Yamāntaka 90
Mchod-paḥi lha-mo 54
mchod-rten 122, 150
mchod-yon 55
Mchod-yon-ma 55
Mchog-gsol-ma 159
mdzad-pa bcu-gñis 133, 134
Me = Me-lha
Me-lha 36, 93, 120, 181
Mes-ḥag-tshom 127
Me-tog-ma 33, 35, 54, 55
Mgon-po 96, 107, 133
Mgon-po gzag-ldan 93
Mgon-po phyin-kha 93
Mgu-ca-legs 127
Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje 182
Mig-mi-bzañ 40, 94, 108
Mi-g.yo-ba 94, 164, 165, 185
Mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma 66
Mkhas-grub 111
Mkhas-grub-rje 80, 89, 157
Mñon-mkhyen-rgyal-po 168
moha 70
Mohavajra 31
Moha-Yamāntaka 89
Mṛdaṅgā 34
Mthaḥ-yas 37, 178, 181
Mthaḥ-yas-rdo-rje 183
Mtshan-legs 168
Mucilinda 142

Mudgara-Yamāntaka 90
mudrā-pramuditā 158
Mu-le-diñ 102
Murajā 37
Mus P. 123
mya-ñan-med 177
Mya-ñan-thams-cad-sel-bar-
byed-ma 159
Myu-gu-can 39
Myur-ma-dpaḥ-mo 158
Myur-mdzad 93, 107
Myur-mdzad ye-śes-kyi mgon-
po phyag-drug-paḥi gtor
cho-ga bskañ-gso cha-lag
dañ-bcas 107

N

nāga 107, 122, 125
Nāga 53, 100, 108, 139, 143
Nāgara 41
Nāgārjuna 29, 163
Nairañjanā 136, 138
Naivedyā 34, 55
nakṣatra 98
Nam-mkhaḥi-sñiñ-po 41
Nam-mkhaḥ-ldiñ-gi-rgyal-po-
rdo-rje 164
Nam-sñiñ 166
Nanda 147
Nandabalā 138
Ñan-lugs khro-mo rme-brtsegs-
maḥi sgrub-thabs dbaḥi-bskur
khrus cho-ga dañ-bcas-pa 105

Ĵāraka 73
Nārāyaṇa 44
ṇa-rgyal 70
Ṇa-rgyal-hjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma
162
Nāro-pā 18
Narteśvarī 32
Ñe-dbañ 93
Nīladaṇḍa 185
Nirmāṇakāya
Nirṛti 36
Nor-ḥdzin-ma 100
Nor-rgyas 37, 181
Nor-sbyin 36
Nṛṭyā 35
Nub-kyi gśin-rje dmar-po 93

O

Obermiller 86, 134
O-rgyan 79
Oṭeviśa 40
Oṭṭiyāna 39

P

Padma 37, 180, 181
Pad-ma-chen 37, 178, 181
Padma-dāka 66
Padmaḍākinī 69, 71
Pad-ma-dkar-po 114
Pad-ma-gar-gyi-dbañ-phyug 31,
41, 57
Pad-ma-gśin-rje-gśed 91
Padmaḥi-dra-ba-can 32

Padmajāla 32
Pad-ma-mkhaḥ-ḥgro 66, 69
Padmanarteśvara 31, 41, 57
Padmapāṇi 74, 127
Padmasambhava 68, 80
Padmavajra 111
Padma-Yamāntaka 91
pādyā 55
Pādyā 55
pāmśu-piśāca 137
Pañca-bhadravargīya 143
Pāṇḍarayāsini 183
paramavyoma 44
pāramitā 25
Pārvatī 97
Pāśā 104
Phag-gdoñ-ma 32
Phag-mo 91, 92
Phyag-na-rdo-rje tum-chuñ
164
Pho-ñā-mo-nag-mo 93
phrag-dog 70
Phrag-dog-hjigs-skyob Sgrol-
ma 161
Phrag-dog-rdo-rje 31
Phrag-dog-rdo-rje-gśin-rje-gśed
30
Phyag-dor *see* Phyag-na-rdo-rje
Phyag-na-rdo-rje 93, 164
Phyag-na-rdo-rje atsala 164
Phyag-na-rdo-rje tum-chen 164
Phyag-saṅs 93
Phyag-stoñ spyān-stoñ 115

phyogs-mthun rgyud 29
phyogs-skyon 95, 120
piṅgala 84
Piśāca 52
pīṭha 181
Pi wañ ma 34
Prabhāvatī 39
Prabhūtacandra 29
Pracaṇḍākṣī 39
Prajñāntaka 165, 185
prāṇapraṭiṣṭhā 125
Pratisarā 133
Prayāga 181
Pretapurī 40
pūjādevī 33
Pullira Malaya 38
puruṣa 43, 44
Puṣpā 33, 35, 54, 55

R

Rab-gtum-ma 38
Rab-tu-bzañ-po 40
rāga 70
Rāgavajra 31
Rāga-Yamāntaka 90
Rājagṛha 146, 148
rakṣā 56, 164
rakṣācakra 64
Rākṣasa 100
Rakta 180
Raktasarasvatī 92
Ral-gri-gśin-rje-gśed 91
Rāmeśvara 39

Rao V.G. 176
Rasā 35
Rasavajrī 55, 184
Ratnacandra 168
Ratnaḍāka 66
Ratnaḍākinī 69, 71
Ratnasambhava 59, 71, 121,
128, 183
Ratnavajra 41
Rāvaṇa 97
Rdo-rje-bzañ-po 40
Rdo-rje-chen-mo 169
Rdo-rje-dus 188
Rdo-rje-gnod-sbyin 64, 188
Rdo-rje-grags-pa 111
Rdo-rje-gtsug-tor 188
Rdo-rje-ḥchañ 182
Rdo-rje-ḥdus 64, 188
Rdo-rjeḥi-ḥod 39
rdo-rjeḥi sku 39
Rdo-rje-ḥjigs-byed 64, 77, 78,
81, 155, 188
Rdo-rje-ḥjigs-byed-chen-po 75
Rdo-rje-ḥjigs-byed yab-yum 89
Rdo-rje-hūm-mdzad 40
rdo-rje-lus 38
Rdo-rje-ma 184
Rdo-rje-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma 66,
69
Rdo-rje-ñi-ma 31, 57, 64, 188
Rdo-rje-Phag-mo 38
Rdo-rje-ral-pa-can 40
Rdo-rje-rgyal-po 31

- Rdo-rje-ro-laṅs-ma 89
Rdo-rje-rtag-pa 65, 187
Rdo-rje-sa-ḥog 64, 188
Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ 31, 64, 71,
187
Rdo-rje-stobs-che 64
Rdo-rje-thab-sbyor 188
Rdo-rje-zhe-sdañ 59
Rdo-ses *see* Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ
64
Rdza-rña-ma 34
Reg-bya-ma 35, 184
Rematī 93, 96, 97, 99, 103,
108
Revatī 97, 98
Rgya-byin 93
Rgyal-poḥi-khab 148
Rgyal-rabs 127
rgyas 96
Rgyud-sde-nas gsuṅs-paḥi
tshogs-du-maḥi sgrub-thabs-
kyi rim-pa phyogs-gcig-tu
bkod-pa phan-bdeḥi ḥdod-
dug-ster-ba yonṅs-ḥduḥi ḥkhri
-śiñ 65
Rgyud-sde spyiḥi rnam-par-
bzhaḡ brgyas-par-bśad-pa 157
Ribback 23, 100
Rigs-ldan 37, 181
Rin-chen-bzañ-po 6, 7, 61, 126
167, 168, 182
Rin-chen-gter-mdzod 96, 104
107
Rin-chen-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma 66,
69
Rin-chen-rdo-rje 41
Rin-chen-zla-ba 168
Rin-ḥbyuñ 59
Rluñ-gi-śugs-can-ma 40
Rluñ-lha 36, 93
Rme-brtegs-ma 105
Rmoṅs-byed-ma 56, 58
Rna-ḥchus-sa-ma 181
Rnal-ḥbyor-ma 36
Rnal-ḥbyor-pa 175
Rnam-par-snañ-mdzad 31, 41,
59
Rnam-rgyal-ma 160
Rnam-snañ *see* Rnam-par-snañ
-mdzad
Rnam-sras 94, 104, 108
Rnam-thos-sras *see* Rnam-sras
Rña-zlum-ma 34
Rñiñ-ma-pa 67, 68, 70, 104,
107
Ro-laṅs-brgyad sgrub-thabs 80
Rol-pa-tshar-dgu-ma 93
Ro-ma 35
Roñ-pa Śes-rab-señ-ge 111
Ro-rdo-rje-ma 55
Rta-mchog 57
Rta-mgrin 41, 93, 113, 185
Rta-mgrin gsañ-grub 94
Rta-rña-ma 40
rtsa-rgyud 29
Rudra 42, 83

Rudraka 136
rūpa 71
Rūpā 35
Rūpavajrī 184
Rūpiṇī 38
Rva 80
Rva Rdo-rje-ḥgrags 81

S

Sa-bdag 100, 168
Śabdavajrī 187
Ṣaḍakṣara Avalokiteśvara 115
Ṣaḍānana 83
sādhana 17, 28
Sādhanamālā 161
Sāgara 139
sahaja 19
sahajīya 21
Śa-ka-ra-li 93
Śakta 69
Śakti 69
Śākyamuni 122, 125, 127, 132
śam 19
samādhimudrā 117
samāja 18, 71
Samantabhadra 166, 184
samāpatti 20
Samaya 72
Samayaḍāka 66
Samayaḍākinī 72
sambhogakāya 123
Śamkhapāla 37, 180
sampradāya 110

Sampuṭatantra 29
saṃskāra 71
saṃvara 18
śaṃvara 29, 30, 62, 63
Śaṃvara 16, 17, 19, 32 ff., 44,
48, 67, 70, 78
ṣaṇmudrā 24
Ṣaṇmukha 83
Saṅs-rgyas-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma
66, 69
Sarnath 146, 147
Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha
= Tattva-saṅgraha
Sarvavid Vairocana 118, 121
Sa-skyapa 76
Sa-sñiṅ 166
Sa-sruṅ 176
Sa-sruṅ-ma 38
Śauṇḍinī 41
Schlagintweit 131
Sdug-bsnal-thams-cad-sreg-ma
160
Sekoddeśatikā 18
Seṅ-ge-rnam-rgyal 9
Ser-sna-gśin-rje-gśed 90
Ser-sna-ḥjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma
161
Ser-sna-rdo-rje 31
Śes-rab-mthar-byed 165, 185
Sgeg-mo 34
Sgra-dbyaṅs-rgyal-po 132
Sgra-rdo-rje-ma 184
Sgrib-pa-rnam-sel 166

- Sgrib-sel 184
Sgrol-ma hjañ-khu 92
Sgrol-ma las-sna-tshogs hbyuñ
-bañi rgyud 157
sgrub-thabs 17, 28
Shastri H.P. 17
Śikhī Mahābrahmā 142
Sindhu 41
Śin-grib-ma 39
Śin-rje-gśed *see* Gśin-rje-gśed
Śin-tu-bzañ-mo
Śin-tu-dpañ-mo 41
Śiva 22
Skanda 98
Skanda-Kumāra 83
skandha 63
skandhamāra 26
Skrag-byed-ma 56, 58
Sku-yi-mkhañ-ḥgro 66, 72
Skyod-byed-ma 56, 58
sman-bla 169
Sman-bla 168
Śmaśānavidhi 173
Sme-ba-brtegs-pañi sgrub-thabs
ñams-grib-kun-sel rgyal-chen
-po 105
Sme-ba-rtsegs 105
Sme-brtsegs ñams-grib-kun-
sel-gyi dbañ cho-ga zla śel
bdud-rtsiñi chu-rgyun 106
Smon-lam-blo-gros 166
Smugs-pa 176
Sna-chen-ma 39
Sna-tshogs-mkhañ-ḥgro-ma
66, 69
sna-tshogs-rdo-rje 26
Sño-bsañs-lha-mo 40
Sñon-mo-mgrin-bzañ-ma 100
Sparśā 35
Sparśavajrī 184
Spran-btsan-lde 127
Spyan-ras-gzigs 93
Spyi-rin-lan-bran-ma 100
Śraddhākaravarman 61
Śrāvastī 145, 150
Sreg-ma 93
Śribhadra 80
Śrīdevī 99
Śrīguhyasamāja-maṇḍala-deva-
kāya-stotra 61
Śrī-Heruka *see* Heruka
Śrīheruk-ādbhuta-nāma-maṇ-
ḍalopāyikā 181
Srin-po 36, 93, 181, 188
Srin-po bden-bral 178
Śrīparvata 53, 180
Śrīraktayamāri-tantrarāja 79
Śrīvajrabhairava-kalpa-tantra-
rāja 78
Śrīvajrabhairava-maṇḍala-vidhi
-prakāśa nāma 95
Śrīvajramahābhairava-tantra
78
Srog-bdag yam-śud dmar-poñi
thugs-sprul bstan-sruñ hñkhu

- dgra-lhaḥi sgrub-thabs gtor-
 chog-gi rim-pa cha-lag thañ-
 ma 107
 Sroñ-btsan-sgam-po 128
 sruñ-ba 164
 sruñ-baḥi-ḥkhor-lo 64
 Stag-tshañ-ras-pa 43
 Stobs-can-ma 41
 Stobs-kyi-rgyu 177, 181
 Stobs-po-chen 40, 186
 Ston-kha-zla-ba 158
 stūpa 53, 150
 Subhadra 40
 Subhadrā 40
 Sujātā 137, 138, 139
 Sūkarāsyā 32
 Śumbha 186
 Sumeru 53, 180
 Sunāman 168
 Sundarālañkāra 108
 Surābhakṣi 40
 Surāṣṭra 41, 45
 Suratavajra 173, 177
 Surāvairiṇa 39
 Sūryagupta 157
 Śuṣkarevatī 97
 Suśruta-saṁhitā 97
 Sūtasamhitā 19
 Suvarṇabhadra-vimala 132, 168
 Suvarṇadvīpa 41
 Suvīrā 41
 Śvānāsyā 32
 Svaraghoṣarāja 132
 Svastika 139
 Swāt 79, 80
 Śyāmā devī 40
 Śyāmā Tārā 92
- T
- Tabo 7, 124
 Ṭakkirāja 165, 185
 Takṣaka 37, 176, 180
 Tārā 99, 128, 133, 156, 161,
 162, 183
 Tāranātha 79
 tarjanīmudrā 23
 Tathāgata, five 63
 Tattvasaṅgraha 118
 Thags-bzañ-ris 188
 The-tshom-ḥjigs-skyob Sgrol-
 ma 161
 Tho-ba-gśin-rje-gśed 90
 thod-pa 23
 Thomas F.W. 18, 102
 Thor-lañ-btsan 127
 Thugs-kyi-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma
 66, 72
 tīrthika 147
 Tīśakune 40
 Toling 7, 119
 Trapuṣa 141, 142
 Trilokavijaya 120
 Trinetra 29
 Tsaritra 181
 Tsa-rtsi-ka 91
 Tshañs-ma 120

Tshañs-pa 93, 120
 Tshañ-tshiñ-can 176
 Tshe-dpag-med 168, 169
 Tshe-snol-lam-lde 127
 Tshe-snol-pha-lde 127
 Tshogs-bdag 33, 120
 Tsoñ-kha-pa 23, 24, 29, 47,
 52, 81, 89, 111, 122, 124,
 126, 168
 Tucci 5, *passim*
 Tuṣita 134
 Twentyone Tārās 157

U

Ucchuṣma 105
 Uḍḍiyāna 79
 Udraka 136
 Ujjayana 181
 Ūlūkāsyā 32
 Umā 83, 100, 107
 umā 84
 Upananda 147
 upāsaka 143
 Urgan-pa 43
 Urubilvā-Kāśyapa 145
 Uṣṇīṣacakra 186, 188
 Uṣṇīṣavijayā 169
 utpattikrama 47
 Uṭre 40
 Uttara 138

V

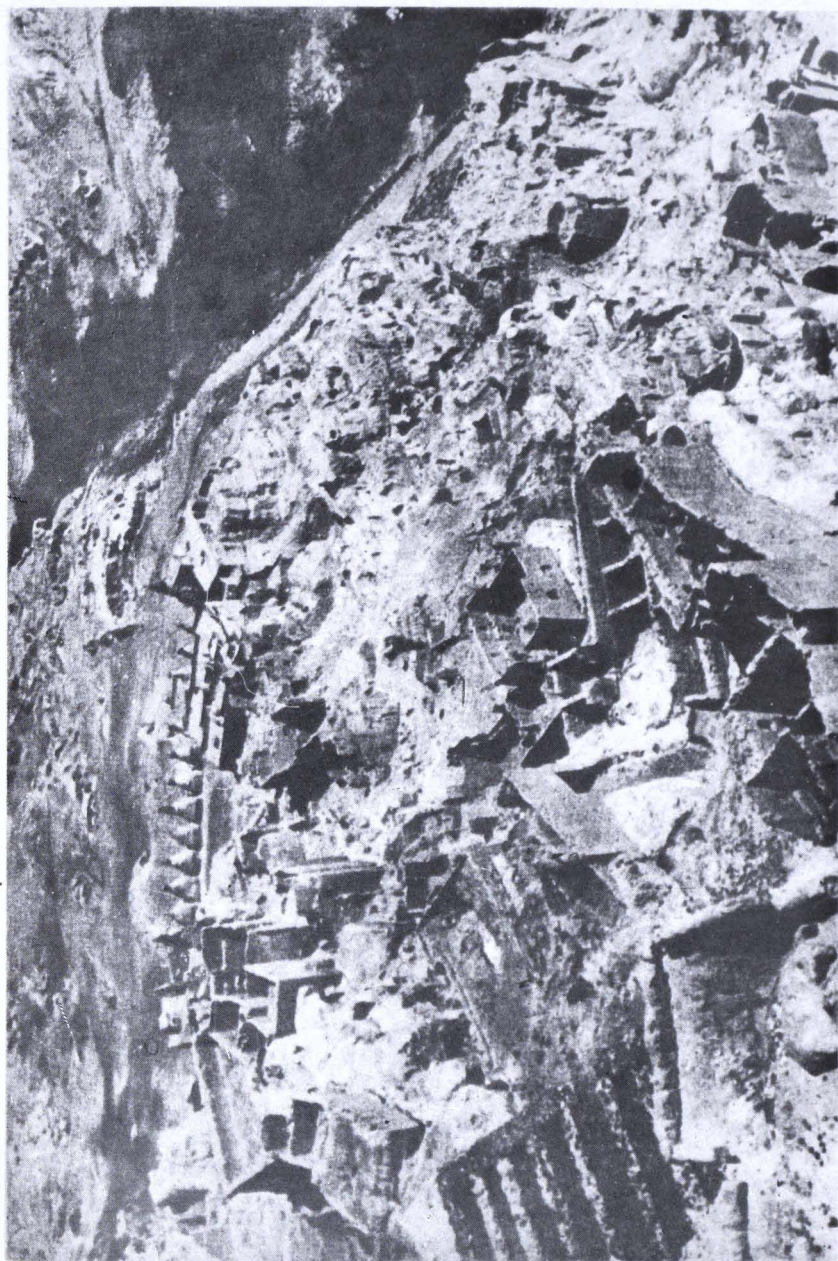
Vāgdāka 66

vaibhava-vilāsa 44
 Vaikuṅṭha 44
 Vairocana 11, 31, 41, 57, 60,
 62, 71, 117, 120, 122, 128,
 169, 183
 Vaiśālī 146, 149, 150
 Vaiśravaṇa 94, 104, 108
 Vajrabhadra 40
 Vajrabhairava 14, 64, 75, 76,
 78, 80, 81, 82, 84, 88, 110,
 111, 120, 155, 188
 Vajradāka 29, 66, 182
 Vajradāka-vivṛtti 63
 Vajradākinī 69, 71, 72
 Vajradeha 39
 Vajradhara 63, 182
 Vajrahūmkāra 40, 65
 Vajrajaṭila 40
 Vajrakāla 64, 188
 Vajrakāya 42
 Vajrakuṅḍa 188
 Vajra-mahābala 64
 Vajramanḍal-ālaṅkāra-pañjikā
 63
 Vajranitya 64, 187
 Vajrapāṇi 74, 82, 83, 108,
 121, 128, 130, 133, 164, 184
 Vajrapāṇi, Acala 164
 Vajrapāṇi, alpacaṇḍa 164
 Vajrapāṇi, Caṇḍamhāroṣaṇa
 164
 Vajrapāṇi, Guhyapati 107
 Vajrapāṇi, Jagadbhadra 164

- Vajrapāṇi-cuṇḍa 164
 Vajrapāṇi-cuṇḍarāja-sādhana
 165
 vajrapāśa 24
 Vajrapātāla 64, 188
 Vajraprabha 39
 Vajrapradīpa-tippaṇī 173
 Vajrarāja 31
 vajrāsana 123
 Vajrasattva 31, 41, 56, 64, 65,
 121, 187
 Vajrasūrya 31, 64, 188
 Vajravārāhī 31, 38, 73
 Vajravarman 108
 Vajravetālī 89
 Vajrayakṣa 64, 188
 Vajroṣṇīṣa 64, 188
 Vaṁśā 34
 Van Gulik 113
 Vārāhī 91, 92
 Vāraṇa 143
 Varuṇa 36, 177, 180
 Vaśamkuruma 100
 Vāsuki 37, 176, 180
 Vāyu 36
 Vāyuvegā 40
 vedanā 71
 Vemacitrin 188
 Vidyā 54
 Vighnāntaka 165, 185
 Vijayā 133
 vijñāna 71
 Vikaṭadamṣṭrī 39
 vikṛta 24
 Vimalaprabhā 1, 20
 vimāna 29, 115
 Vīṇā 34
 vināyaka 106
 vīra 42, 43, 44, 57
 Vīramatī 39
 Virūḍhaka 94, 108
 Virūpākṣa 40, 94, 108
 Viṣṇu 113, 120
 Viśvaḍāka 66
 viśvavajra 24, 26
- W
- Waddell 131, 157
 Waldschmidt 148
- Y
- Yab-yum 21
 Yakṣa 36, 100, 108, 120
 Yama 82, 95, 177, 180
 Yamadāḍhī 33, 49
 Yamaḍākinī 49
 Yamadamṣṭrī 33
 Yamadūtī 33, 49
 Yamaka 148
 yamaka-prātihārya 145
 Yamamathanī 33
 Yamānta 185
 Yamāntaka 82, 83, 84
 Yamāntaka, Black 94
 Yamāntaka Mahāvajrabhai-
 rava 76

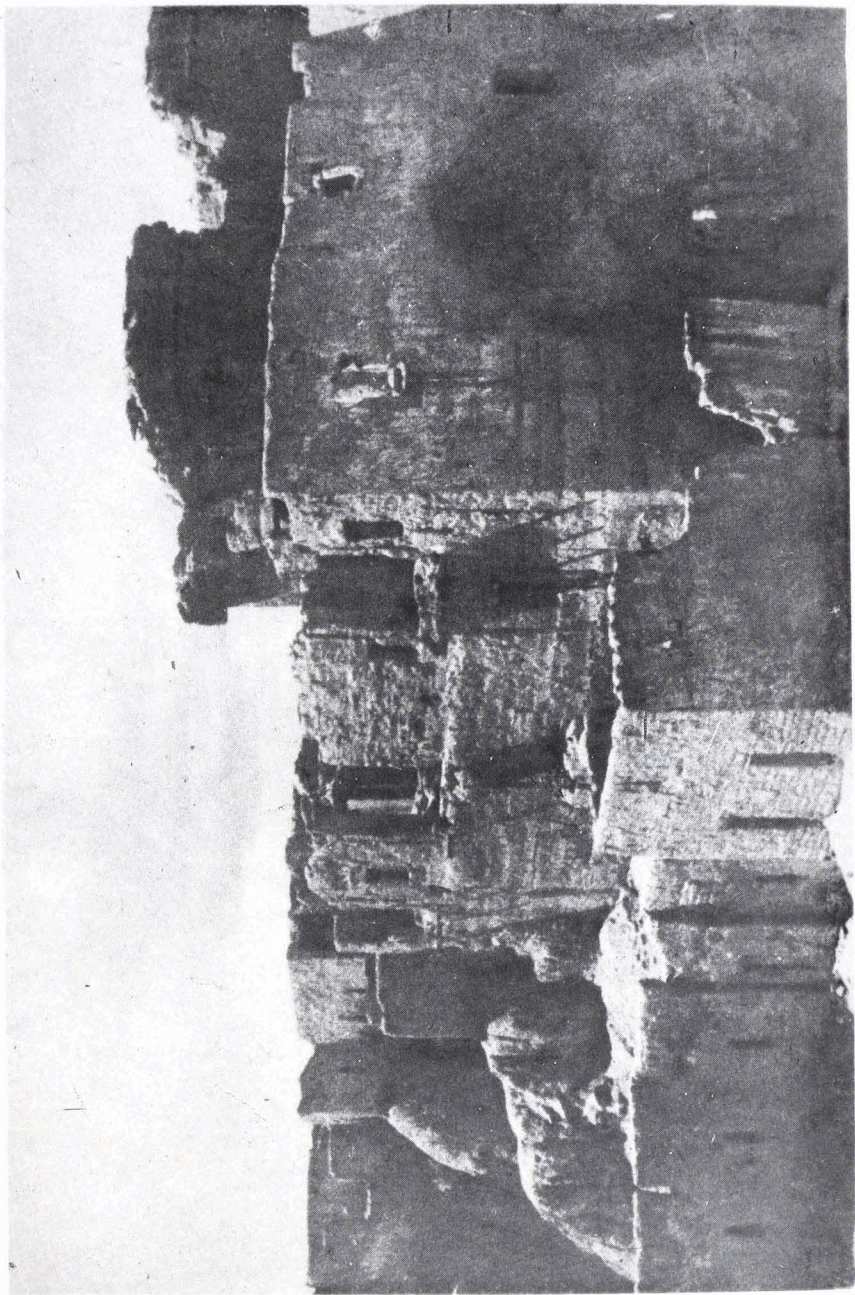
Yamāntaka, Red 94, 106		Z
Yamāri 78, 79, 94		Zaṅ 81
Yam-śud dmar 107		zḥabs-bsil 55
Yaśas 143		Znabs-bsil-ma 55
Ye-śes-blo-gros 166		Zh. ḥs-pa-mo 104
Ye-śes-mkhaḥ-ḥgro-ma 93, 104, 110, 111		Zhal-zas-ma 34, 55
Ye-śes-señ-ge 111		Zhe-sdañ 70
yi-dam 16		Zhe-sdañ-ḥjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma 162
Yoginī-sañcāra 29		Zhe-sdañ-rdo-rje 31, 182
Yoñs-su-rdzogs-par-byed-ma 160		Zhi 96
Yoñs-su-smin-par-byed-ma 159		Zhi-ba-chen-mo 160
Yul-ḥkhor-sruñ 94, 108		Zhi-baḥi-ye-śes 80
		Zhi Khro 81

PLATÉS



1. General view of Tsaparang, an immense ruin, p. 5

THE TEMPLE OF ŚAMVARA



2. The Temple of Śamvara, p. 16
2. Entrance to the maṇḍala of Śamvara.
Gotami 1979: 2.182.





4. A protector of the vajrakāya, p. 48

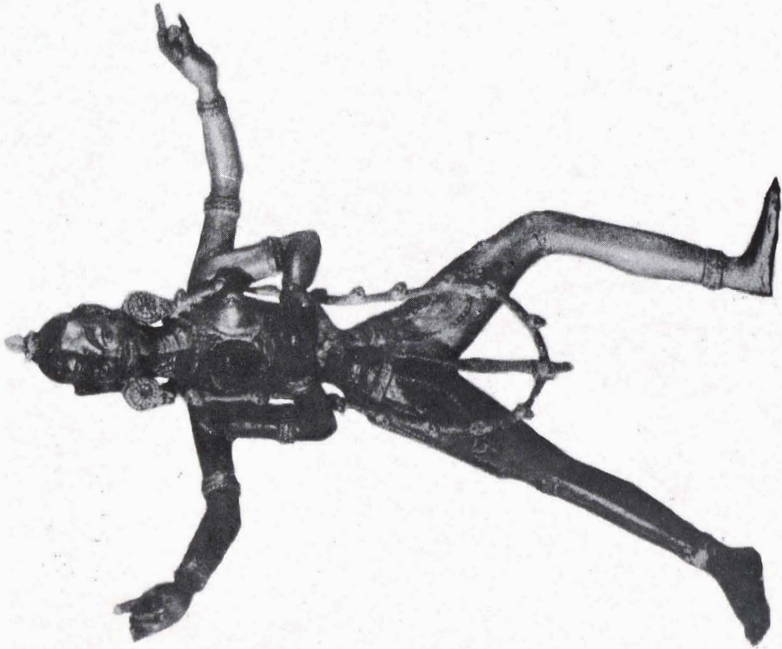




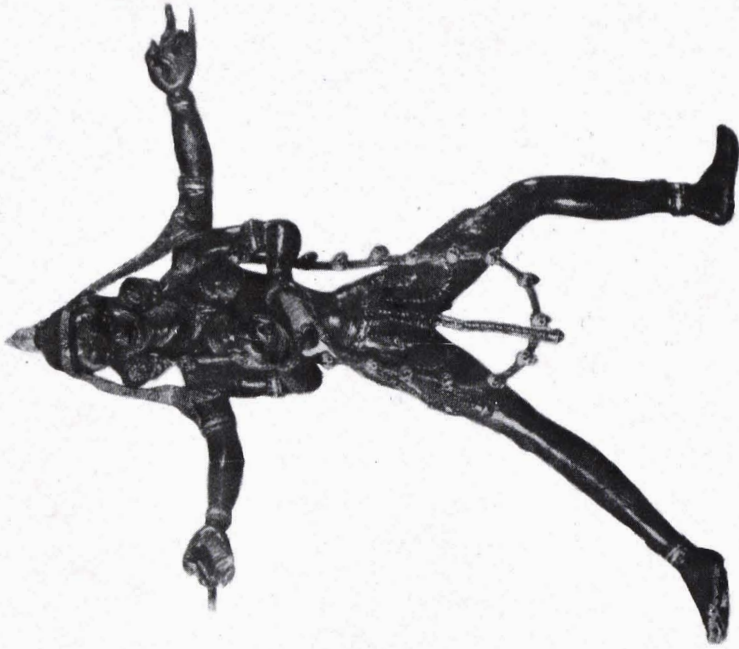
6a. Yama-dakini =
Gsin-rje-mkhaḥ-hgro-ma, p. 48



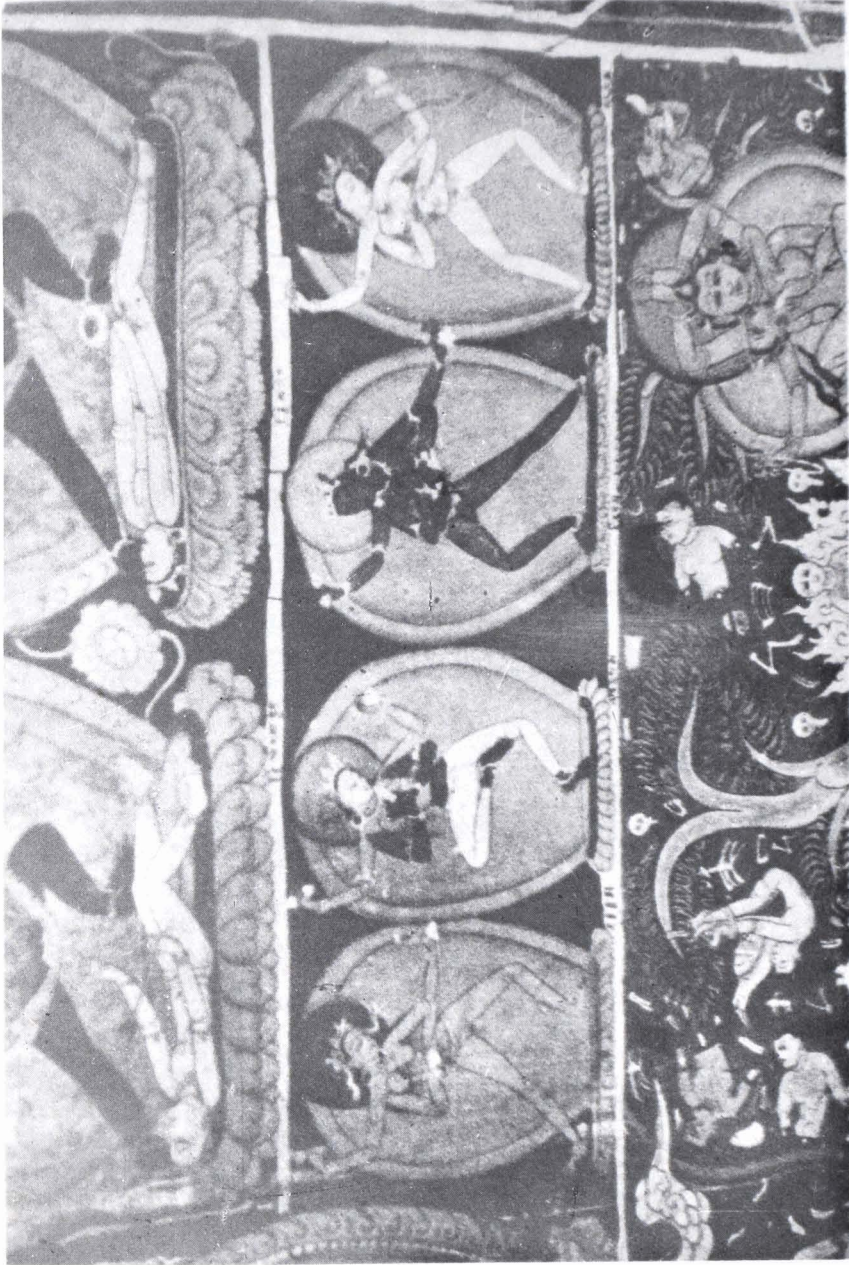
6b. Yamaduti =
Gsin-rje-pho-ña-mo, p. 48



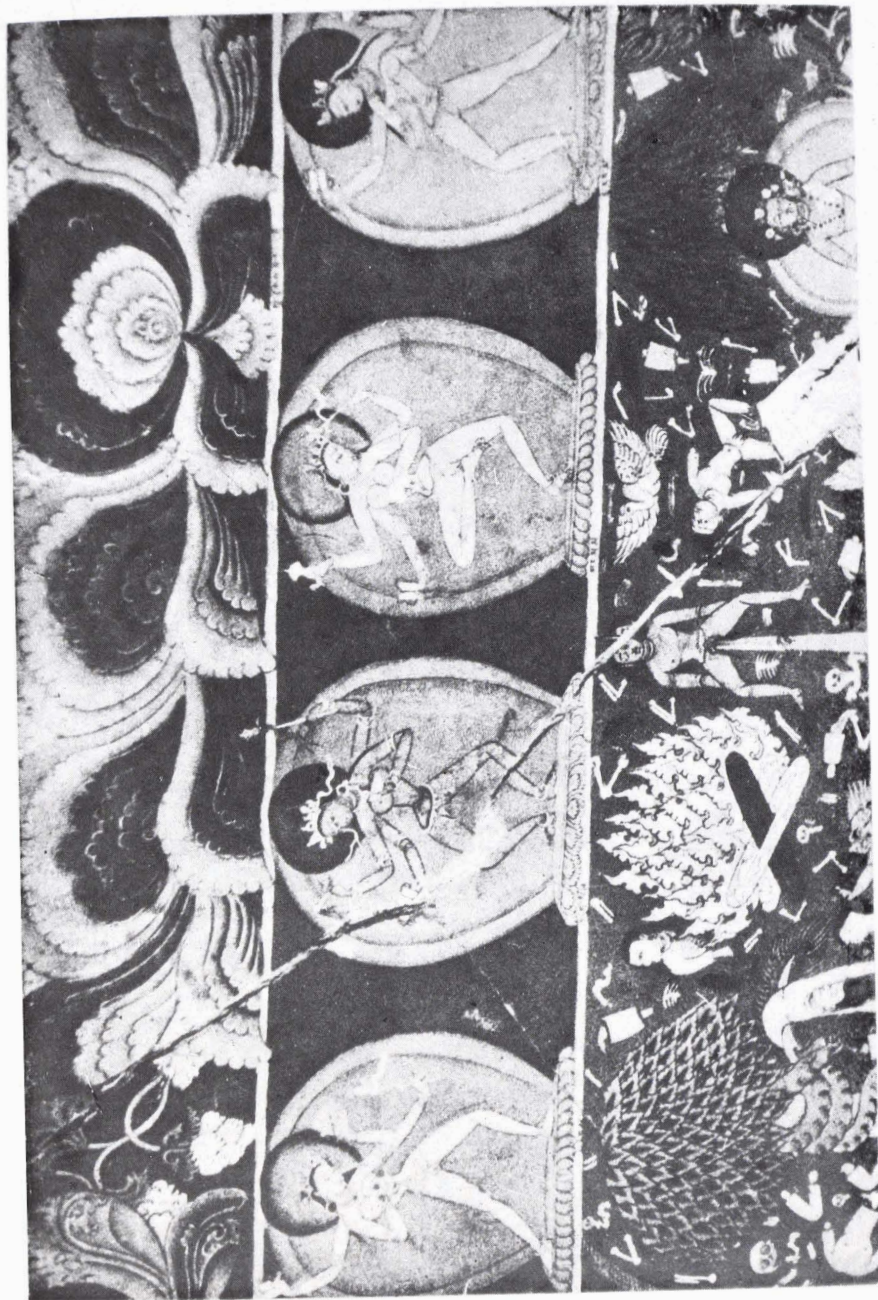
7a. Yamadādhī =
Gsin-rje-brtan-ma, p. 48



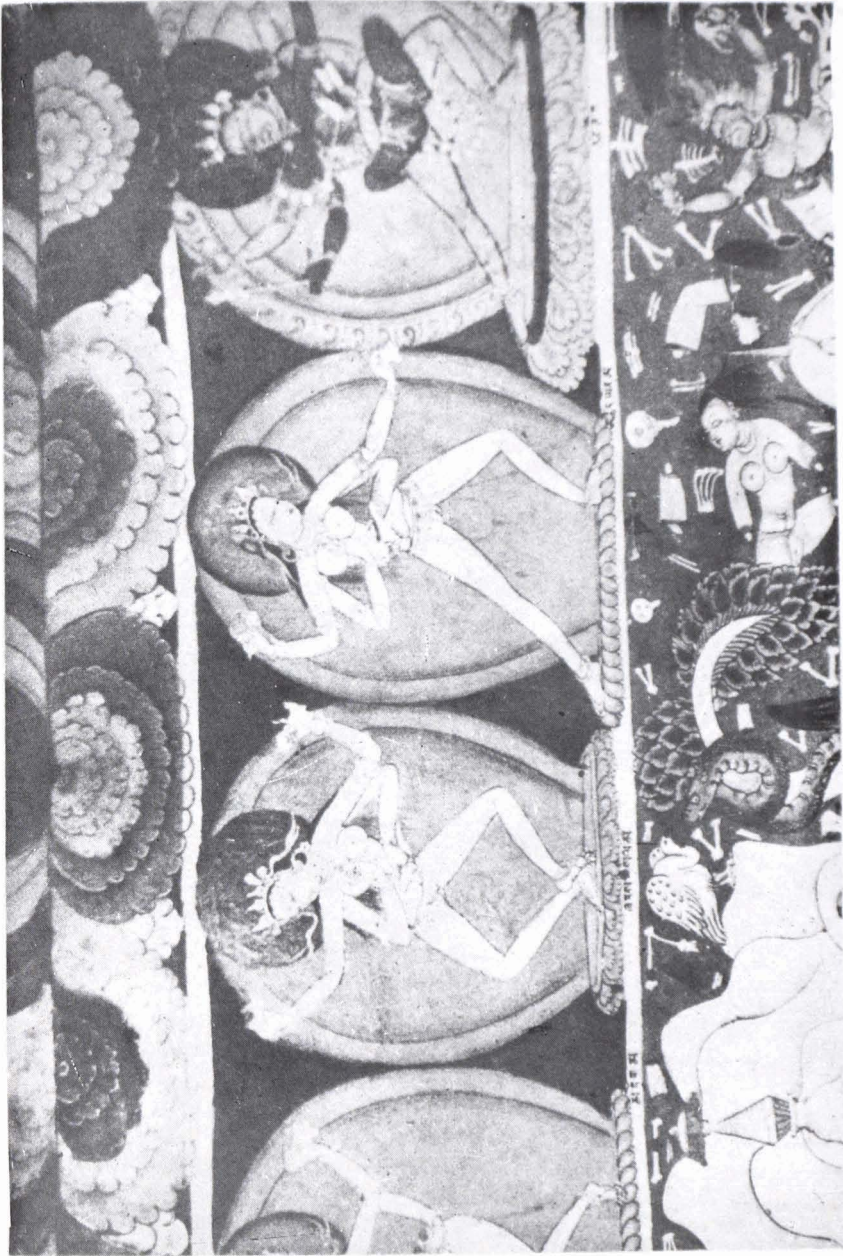
7b. Nartésvarī (?) =
Gar-gyi-dban-phyug-ma (?), p. 48



8. Rasavajri, Naivedya, Gandha, Dipa, p. 55
Lower scene: one of the eight cemeteries, p. 50



9. Puṣpā, Dhūpā, Dīpā, Gandhā, p. 54
Lower scene: one of the eight cemeteries, p. 50



10. Puspā, Pādyā, Argghyā, p. 54
Lower scene: one of the eight cemeteries, p. 50



11. Caṇḍikā, Skrag-byed-ma, Skyod-byed-ma, Pramohā, p. 56
Lower scene: one of the eight cemeteries, p. 50



12. Ratnasambhava, p. 59



13. Vairocana, p. 9, 60



14. Amitābha, p. 9, 60



15. Amoghasiddhi, p. 60



16. Vajrasattva, Vajrayakṣa, pp. 64, 187



17. Vajra-mahābala, Vajrakāla, pp. 64, 187

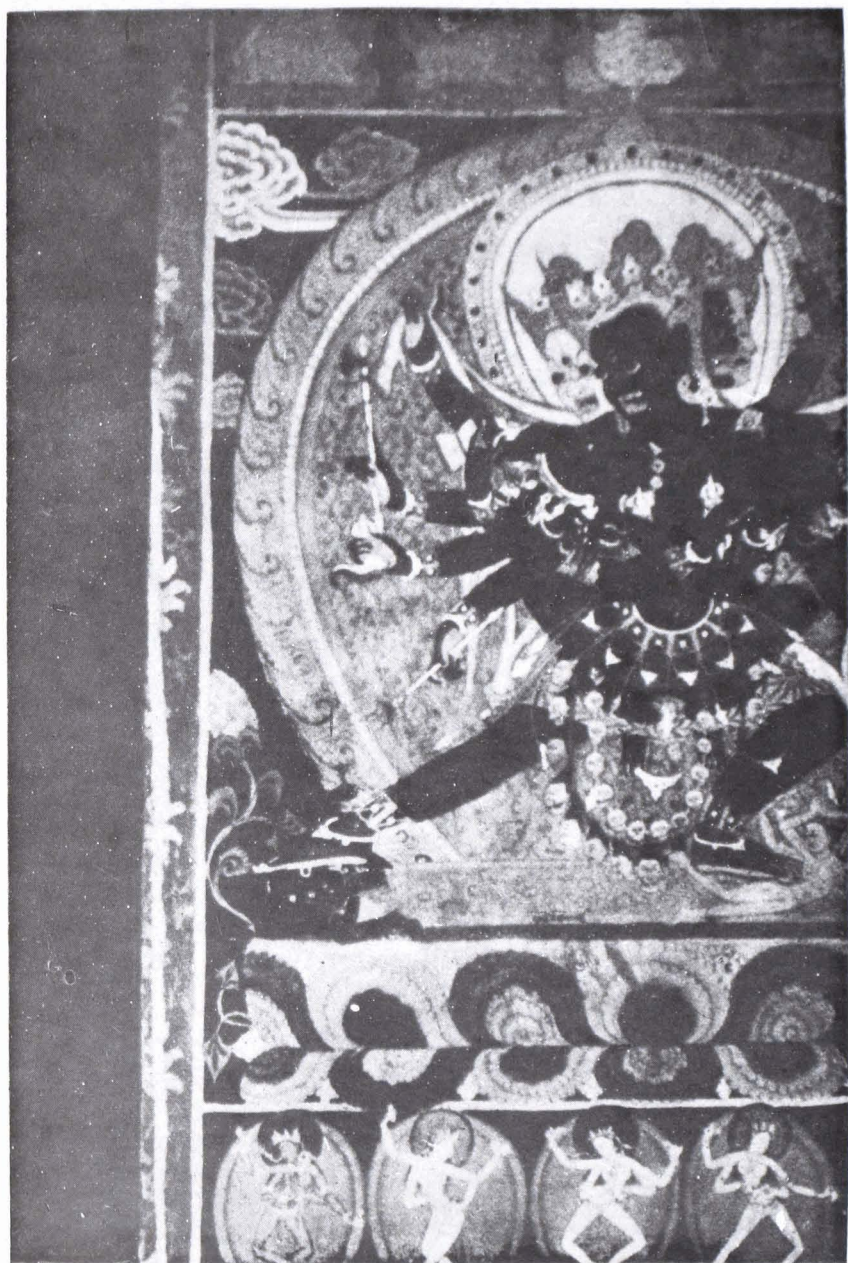


18. Vajra-bhairava, Vajra-pātāla, pp. 65, 187



19. Vajroṣṇīṣa
Vajrasūrya

Hūmkāra
Vajranitya

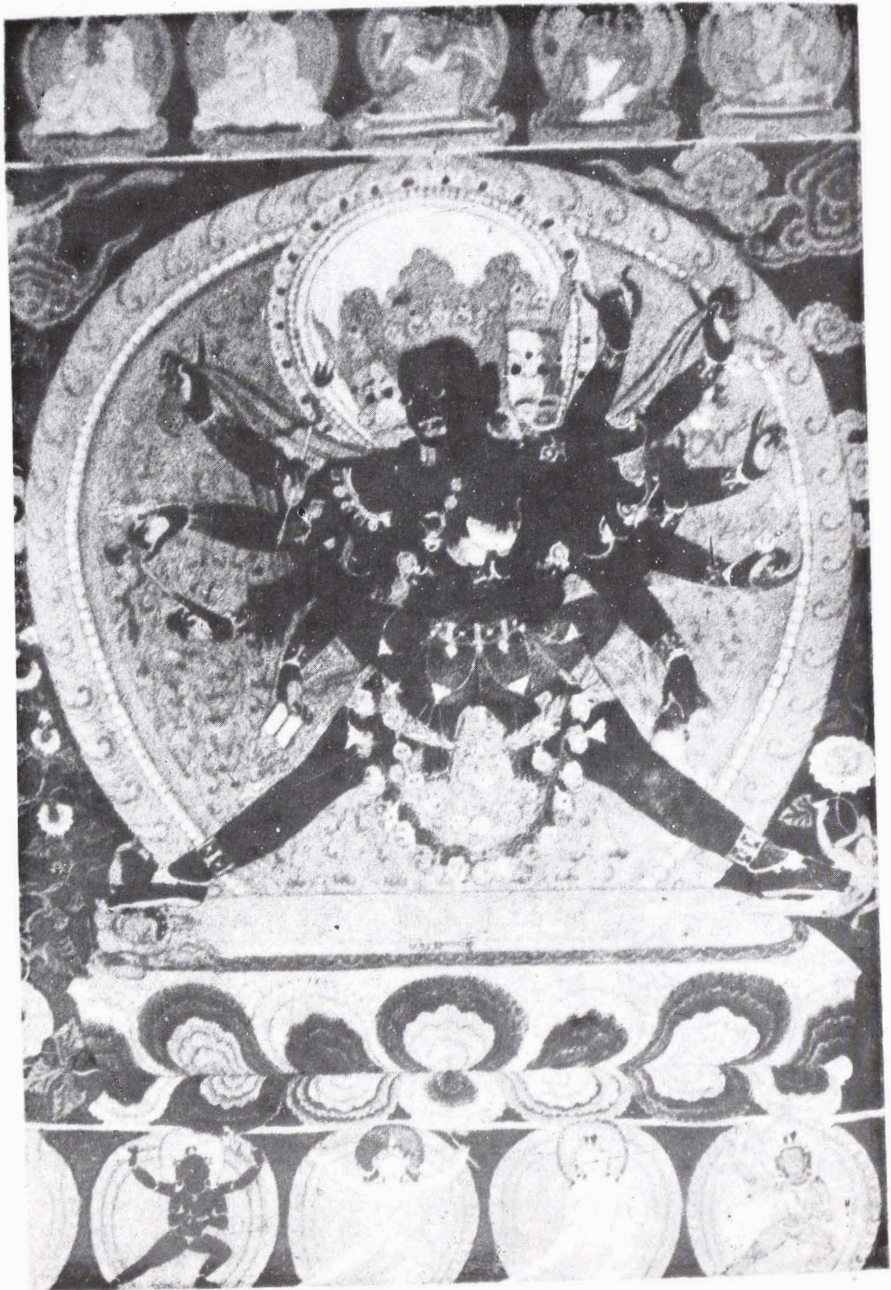


20. Samaya-dāka, p. 66



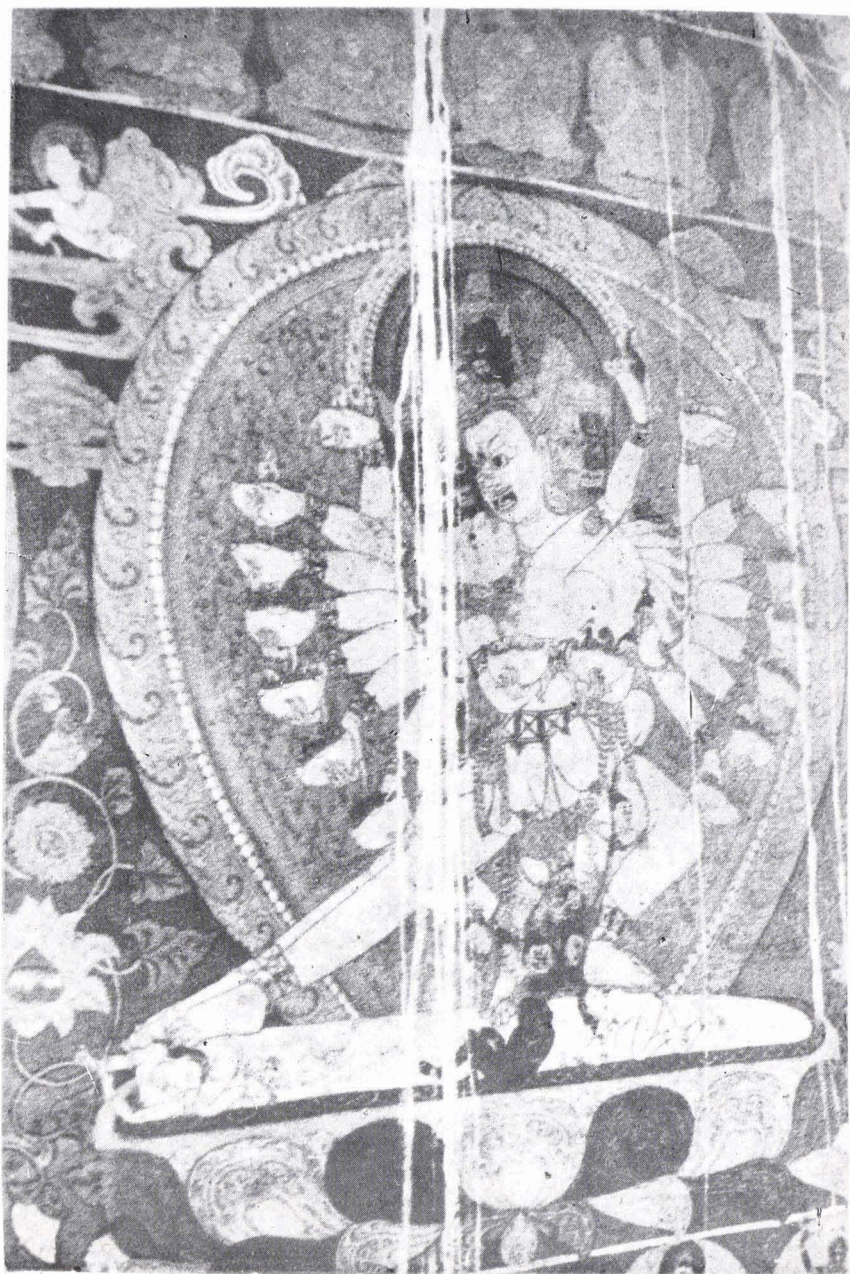
21. Kāya-dāka, p. 66





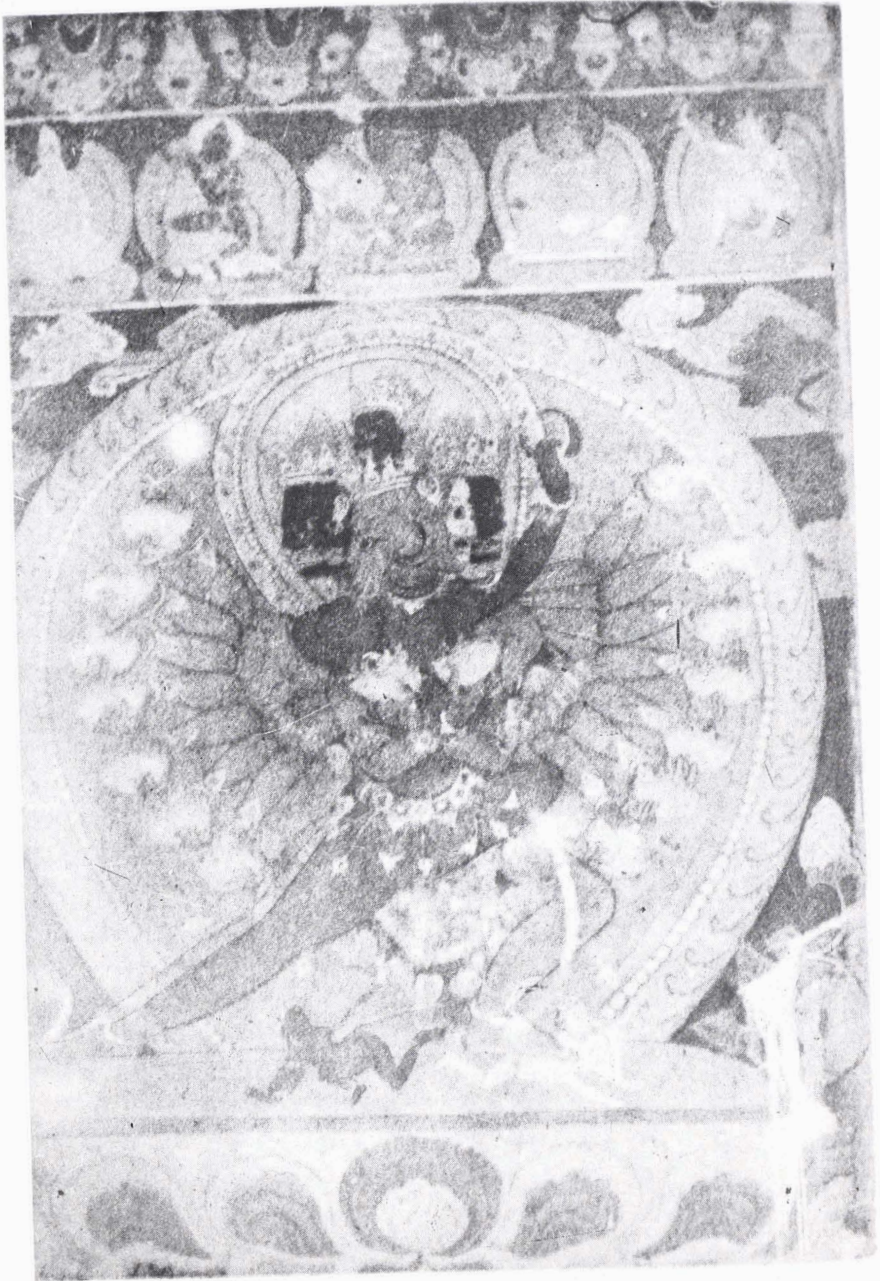


24. Ratna-dāka, p. 66





26. Vajra-dāka, p. 66



27. Padma-dāka, p. 66







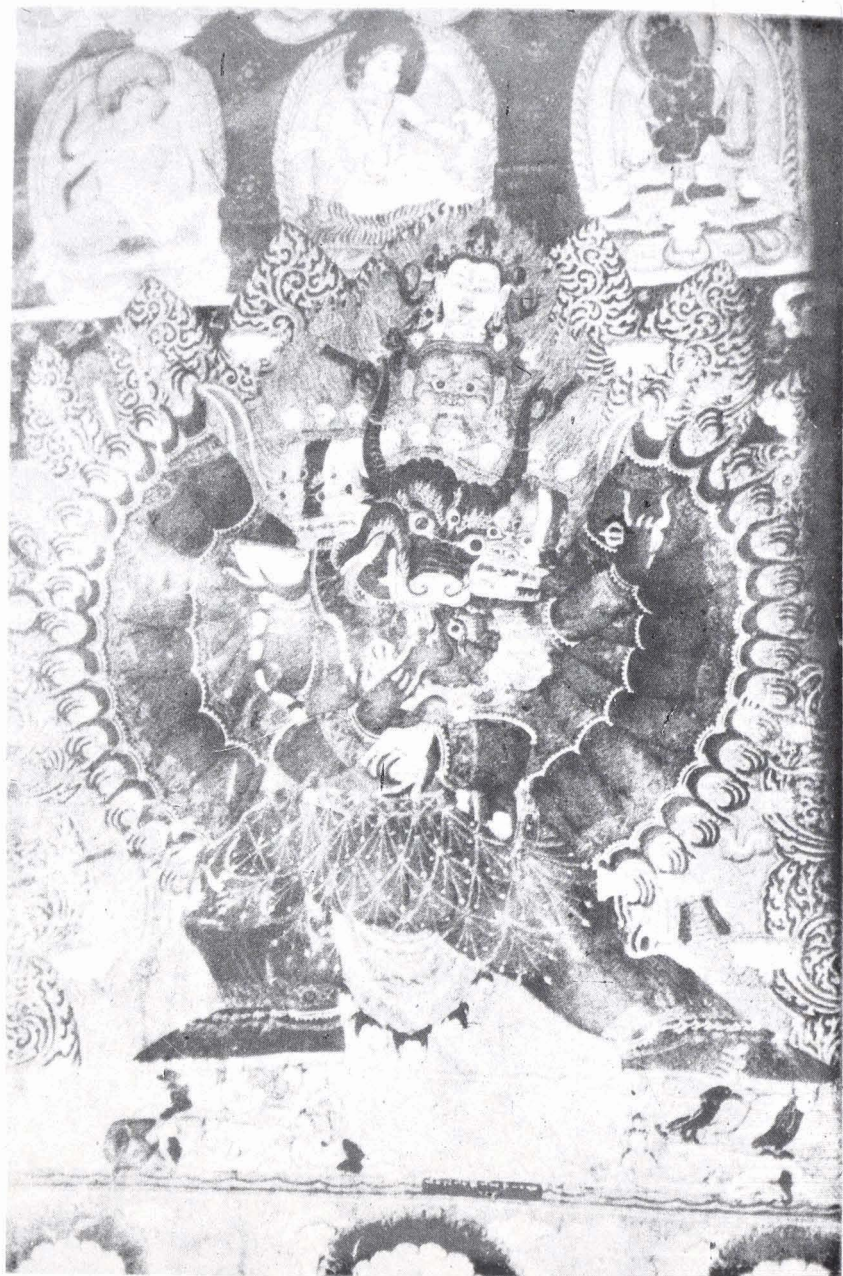
30. Padmapāṇi, Buddha, Vajrapāṇi, p. 74

THE TEMPLE OF VAJRABHAIRAVA









34. Vajra-bhairava, coupled with his consort, p. 89



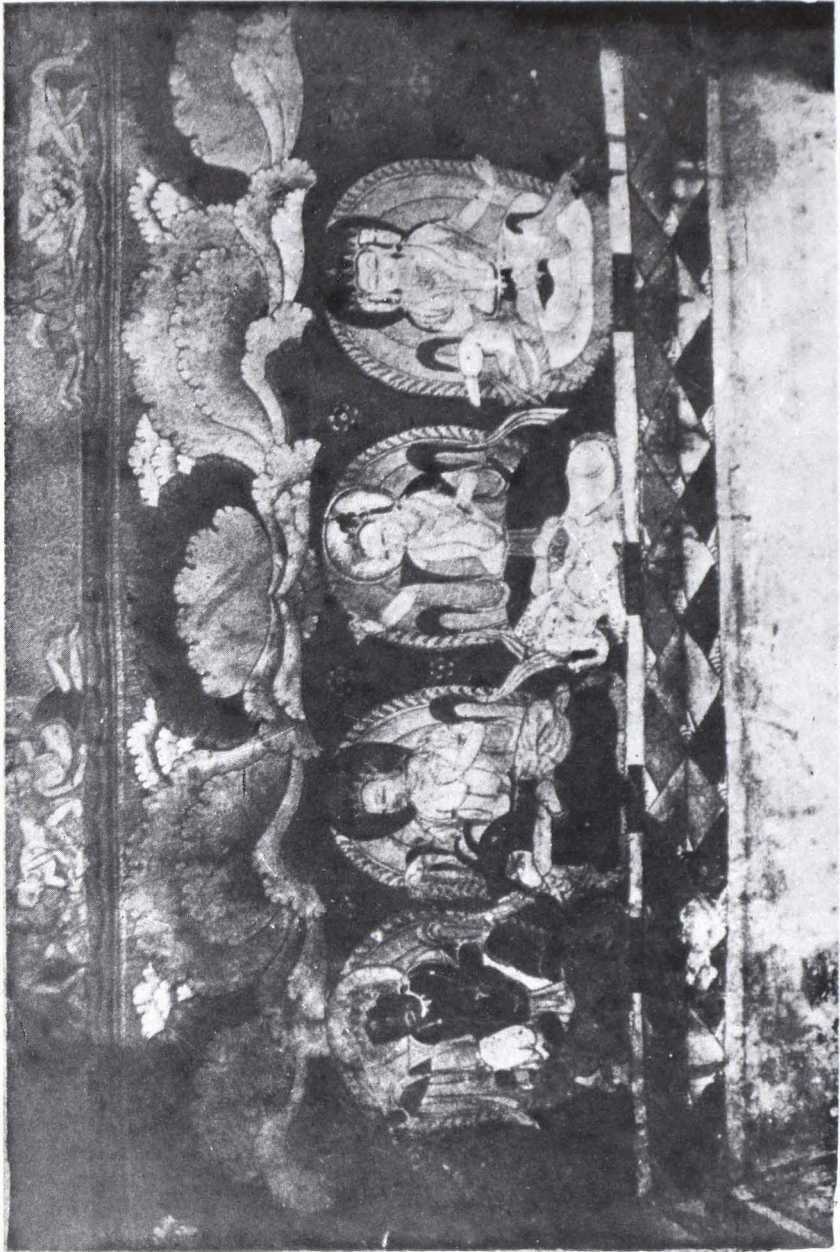


36. Khadga-Yamāntaka, p. 91





38. Rakta Sarasvatī, p. 92



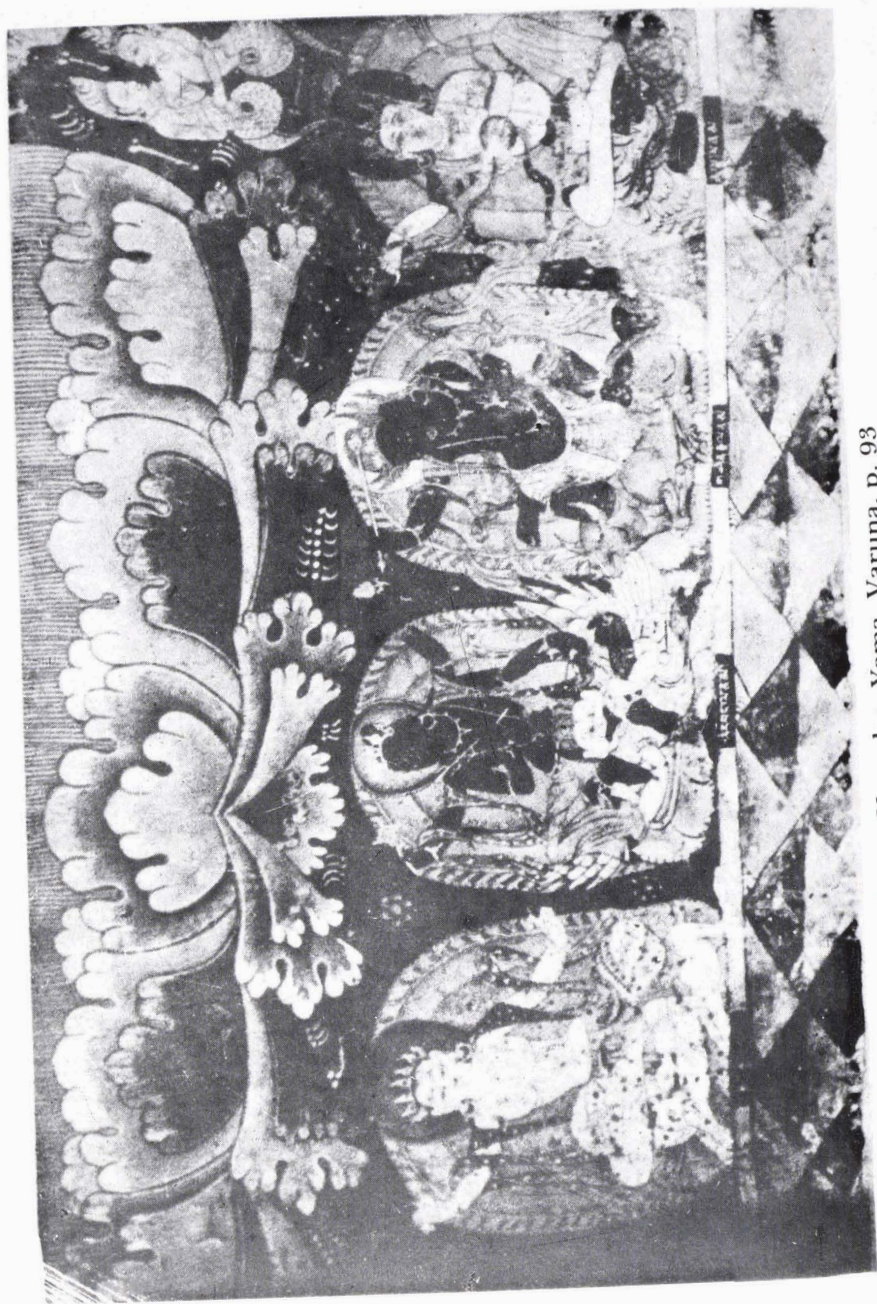
39. Yama, Agni, Indra, Brahmā, p. 93



40. Nirrti, Yama, Vayu, p. 93



41. Īśāna, Yakṣa, Vāyu, Varuṇa, p. 93



42. Indra, Upendra, Yama, Varuna, p. 93



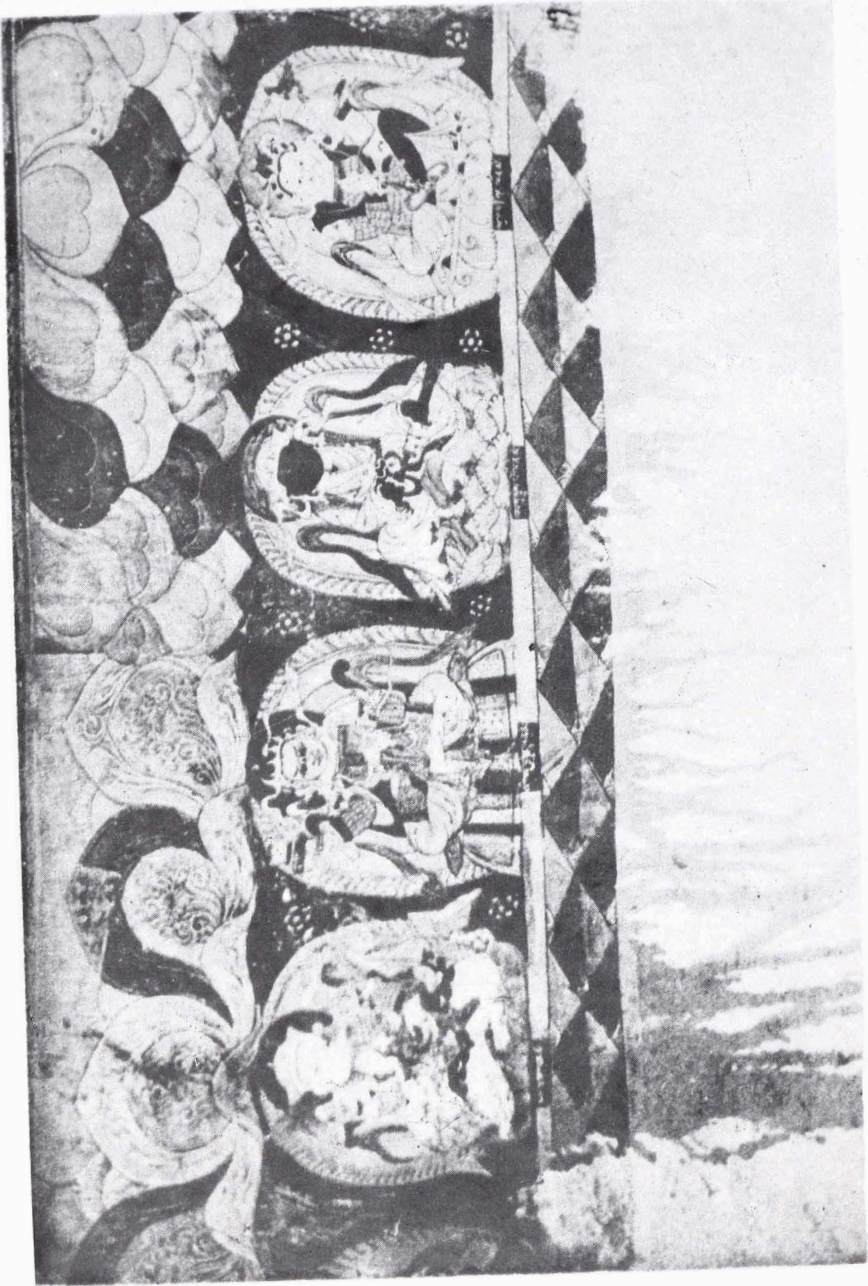
43. Srin-po, Vāyu, Agni, p. 93



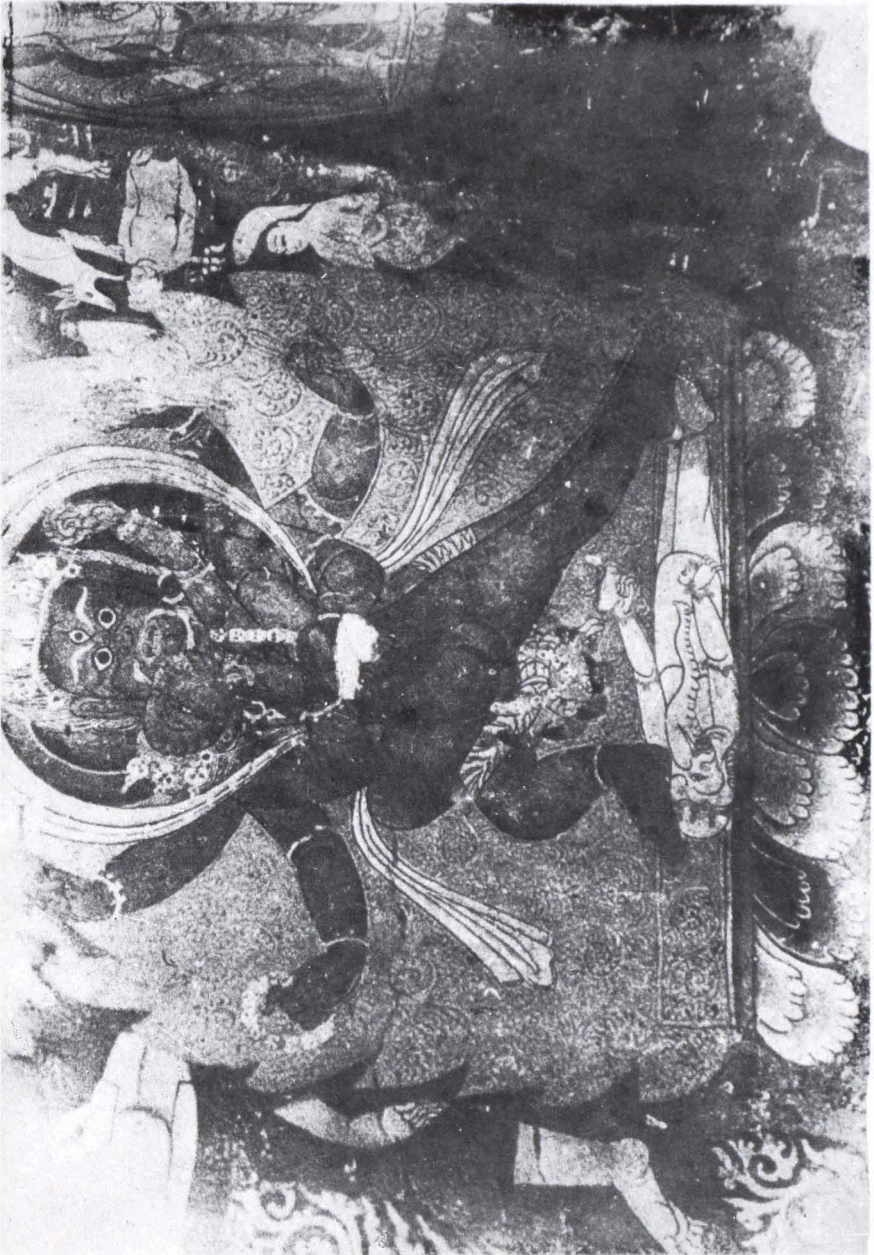
44. Kubera, Gaṇapati, Īśāna, p. 93



45. Аcala, Kṛṣṇa Jambhala, Pīta Jambhala, p. 94



46. Vaisravaṇa, Virūpakṣa, Virūdhaka, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, p. 94



47. Mahācakra, p. 94



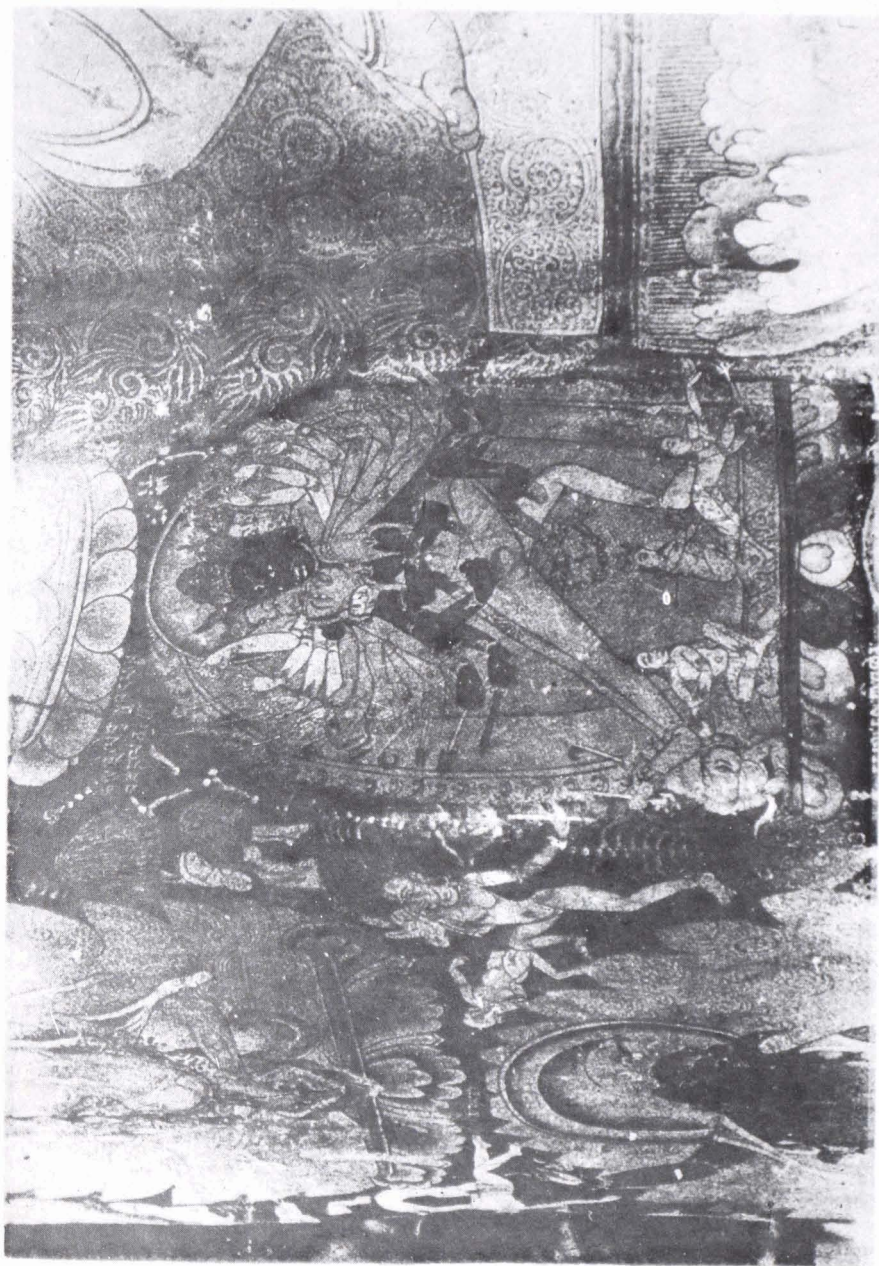
48. Raktā Yamāntakā, p. 94



49. Dgra nag, p. 94



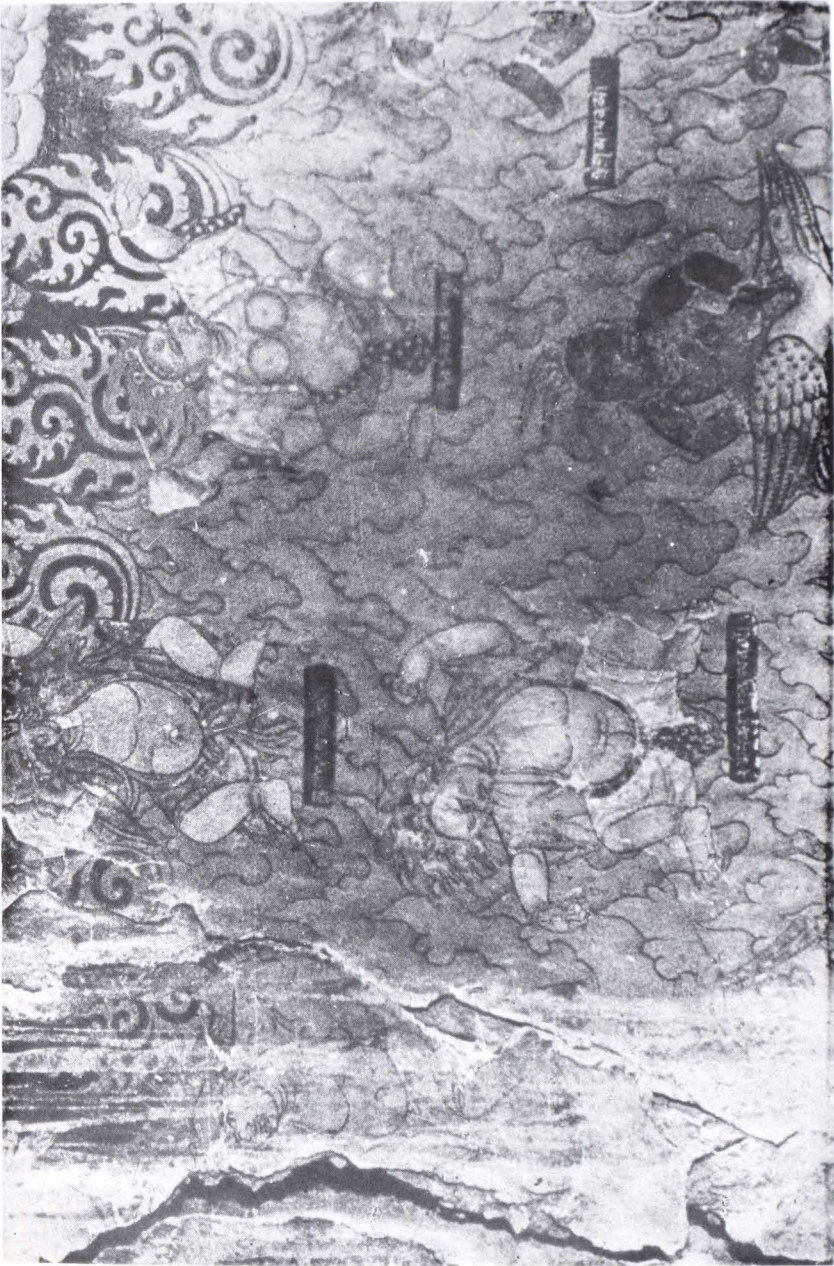
50. Guhyasādhanā Hayagrīva, p. 94



51. Kālacakra, p. 94



52. Dam-sri-ma nag-mo, Sreg-ma
Hbebs-ma, Śakarali p. 93, 104



53. Phyang-saṅs, Pho-ṅa-mo nag-mo
Rol-pa-tshar-dgu-ma p. 93, 104

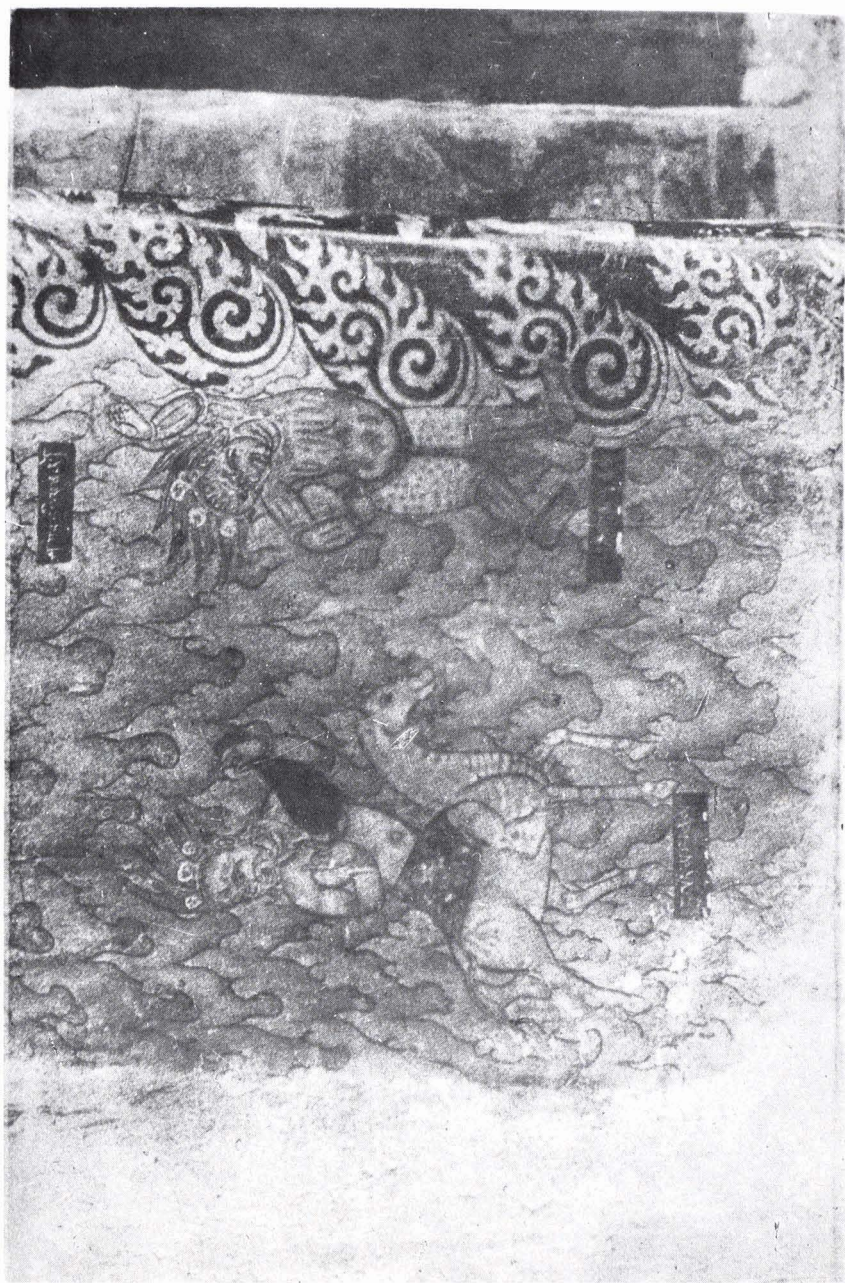


Fig. 1. — The Deities of the ... n. 93 104



55. Dus-zhags-ma, p. 93, 104



56. Avalokiteśvara
Rematī, p. 93



57. Jñāna-dākinī, p. 93, 104



58. East: White Yama, North: Blue Yama, p. 93, 95



59. West: Red Yama, South: Yellow Yama, p. 93, 95







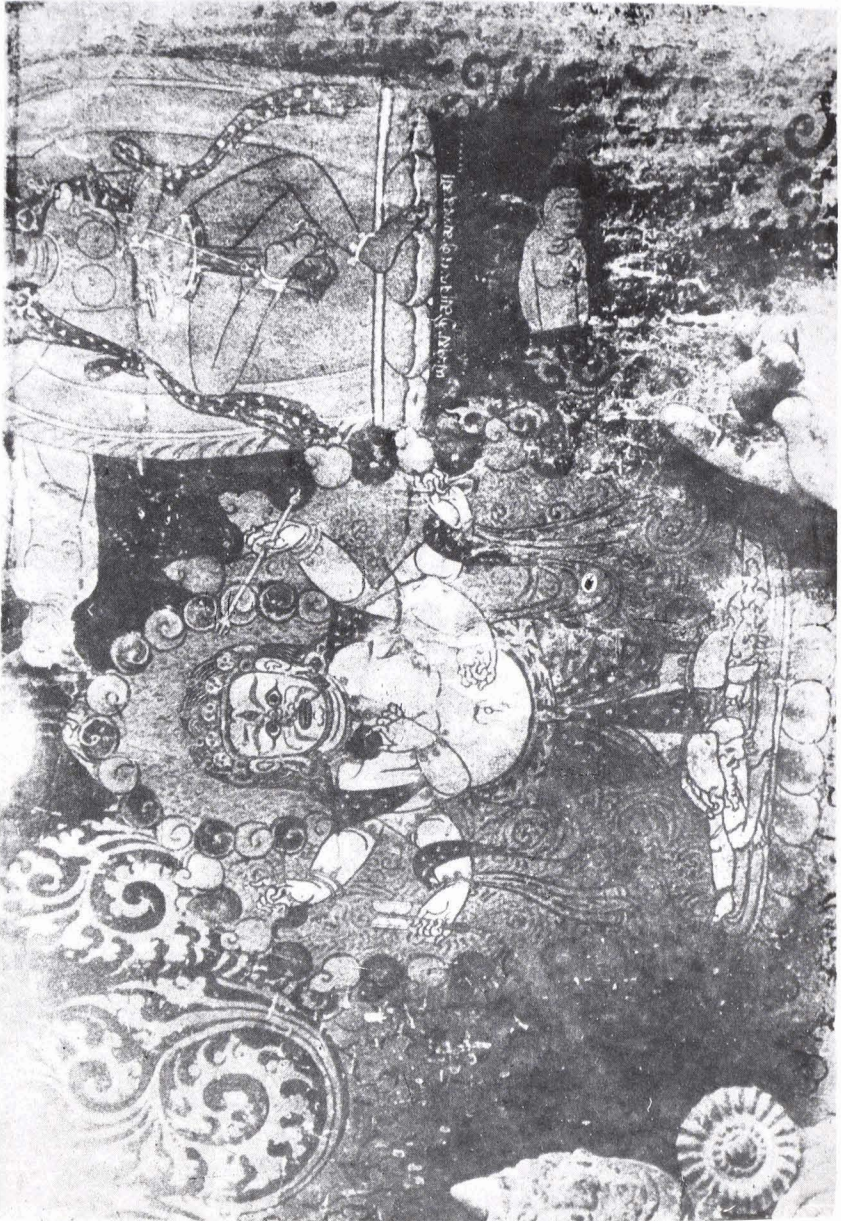




64. Caturbhujā ŚrīNātha/Mahākāla, p. 93, 96



65. Krodharāja Sme-brtsegs, p. 93, 104





67. Sampradāya of Vajrabhairava, 110

THE WHITE TEMPLE



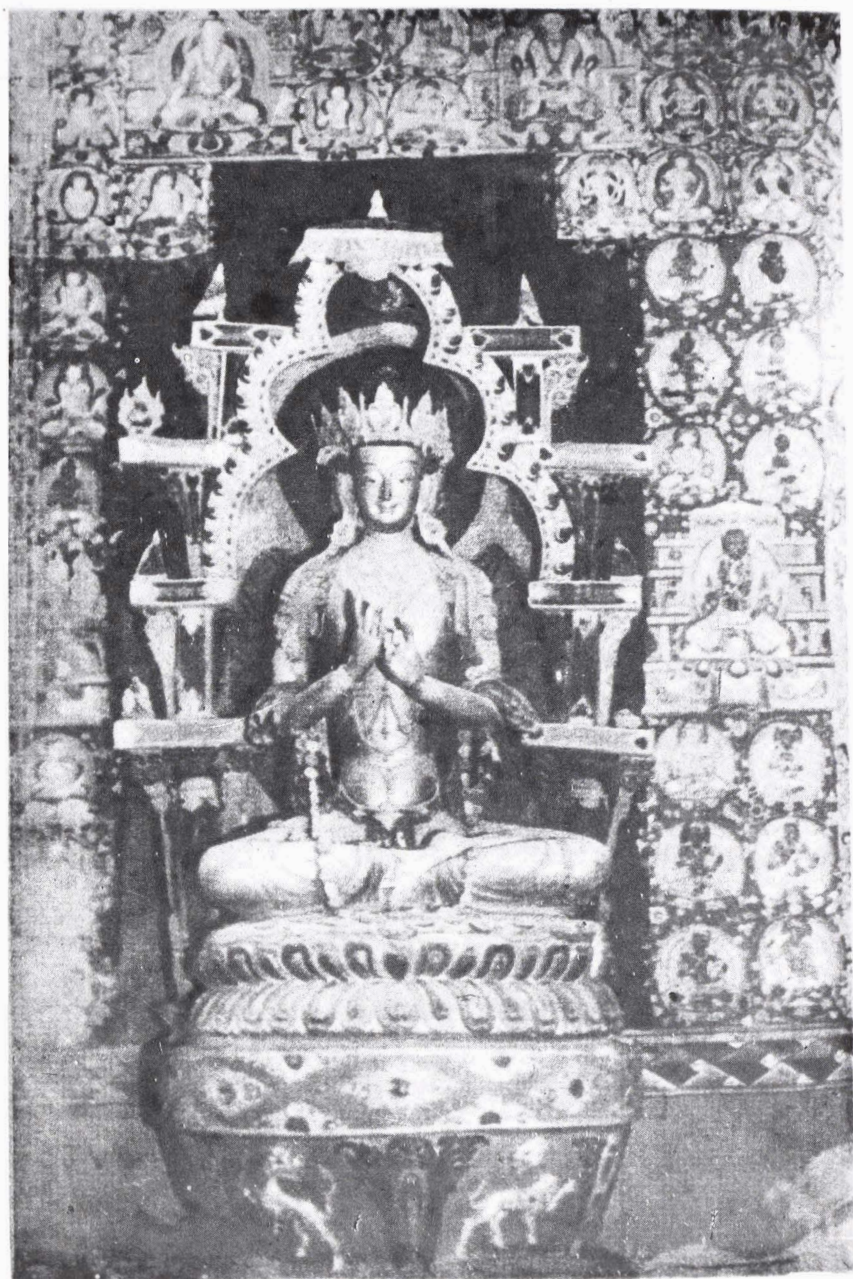
68. Red Hayagrīva, p. 113, 114

68. Gotami 1979: 2.178.



69. Şadakşara Avalokiteşvara, p. 115

69. Gotami 1979: 2.176.

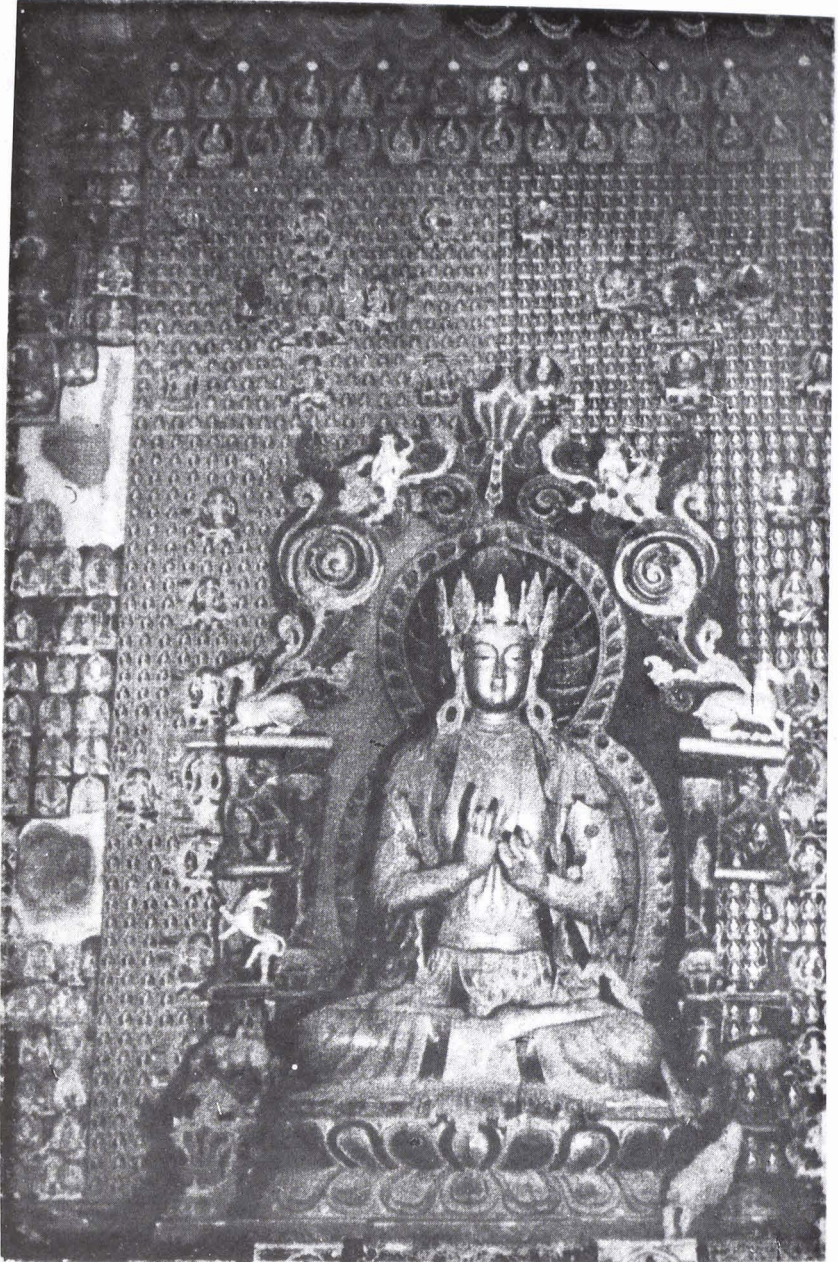


70. Vairocana, p. 117, 118



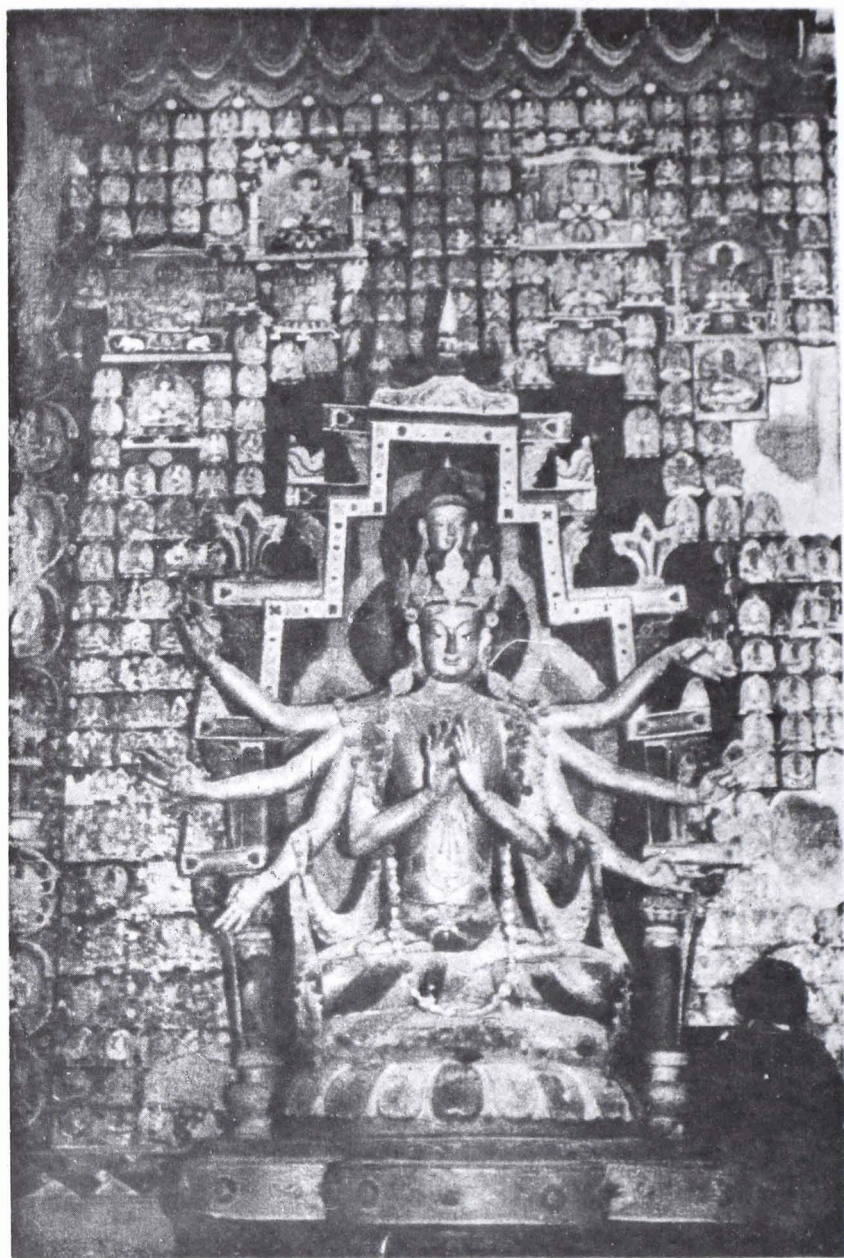
71. Vairocana, p. 117, 118

71. Gotami 1979: 2.172.



72. Vairocana, p. 117

72. Gotami 1979: 2.170.



73. Sarvavid Vairocana, p. 118, 119



74. Vairocana, p. 117, 118

74. Gotami 1979: 2.171.



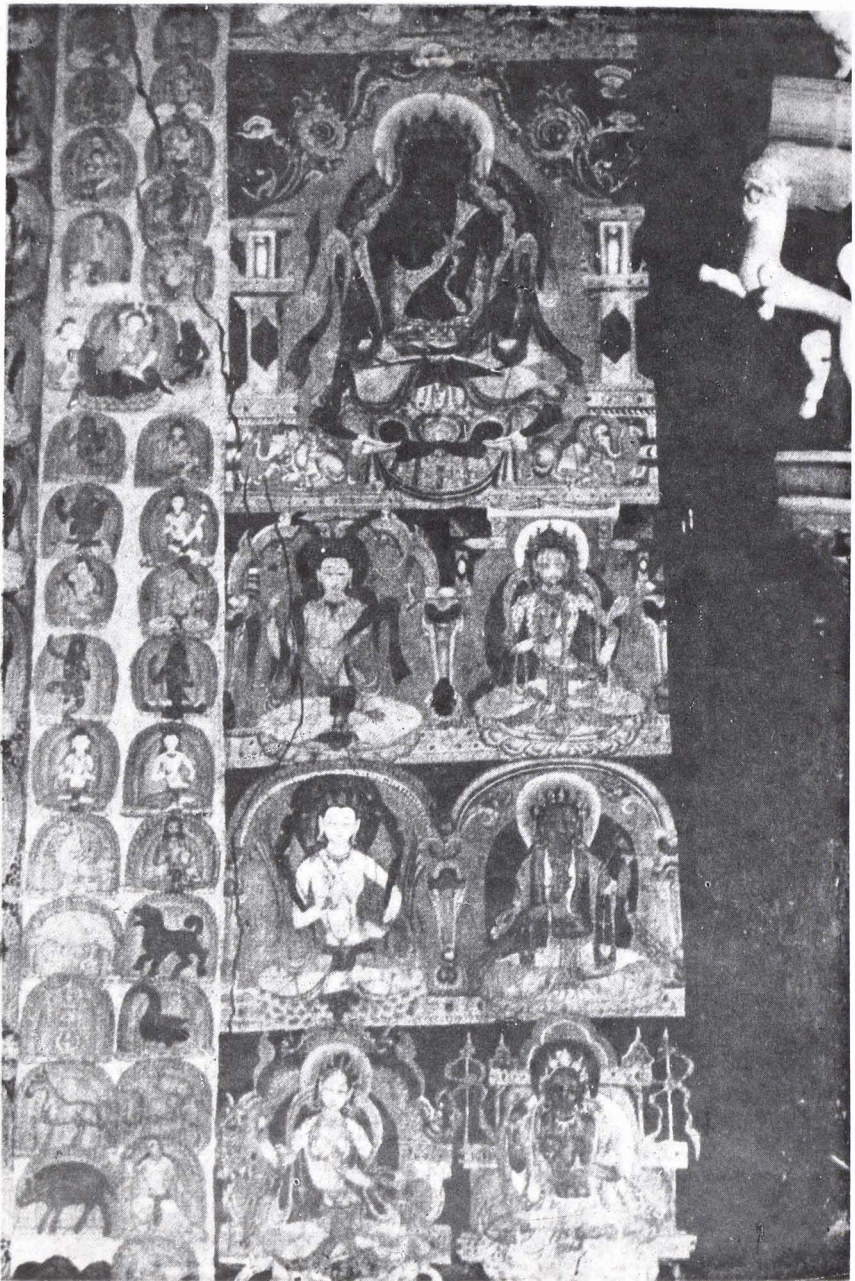
75. Vairocana, p. 117

75. Gotami 1979: 2.174,179.



76. Amoghasiddhi(?), p. 118





78. Details of plate 73, p. 118



79. Details of plate 73, p. 118





81. Laukika-mahādevas, p. 119



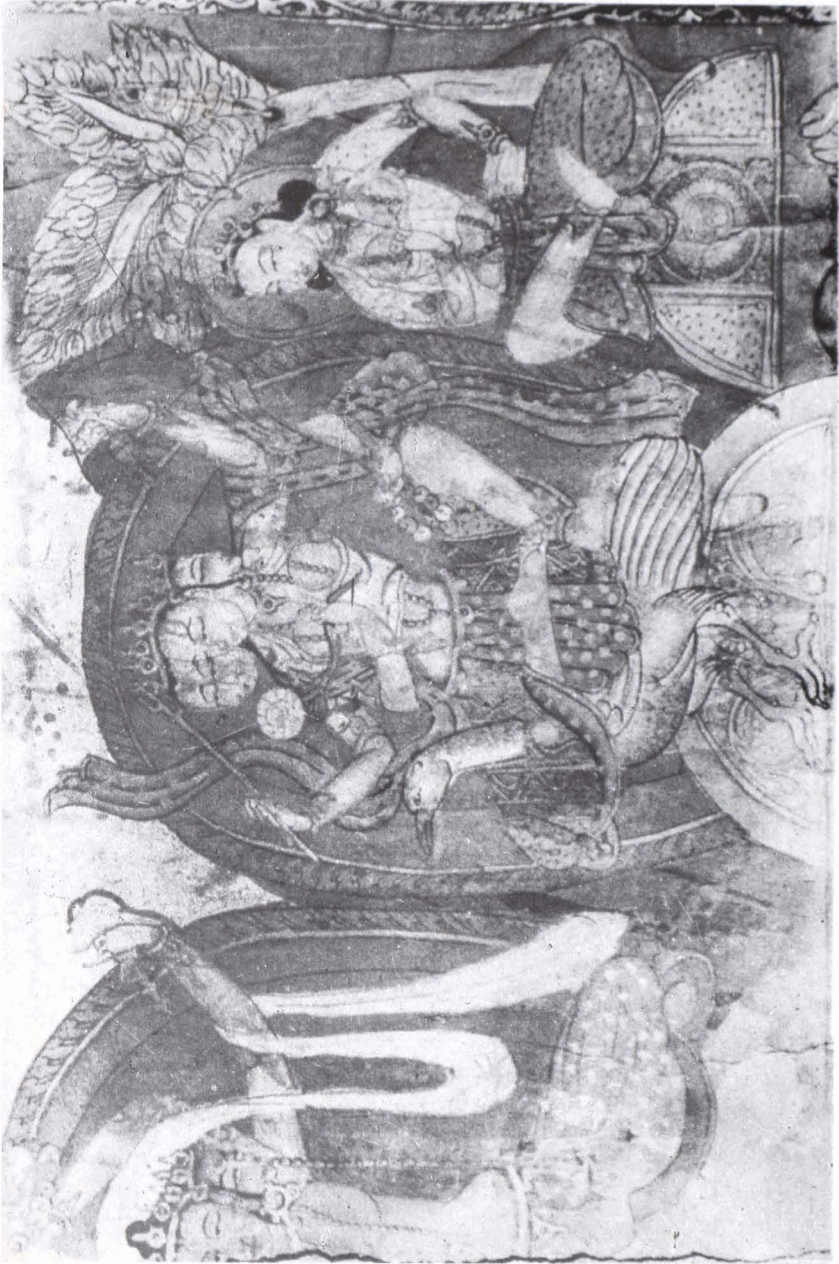
82. Isāna with his retinue, p. 120



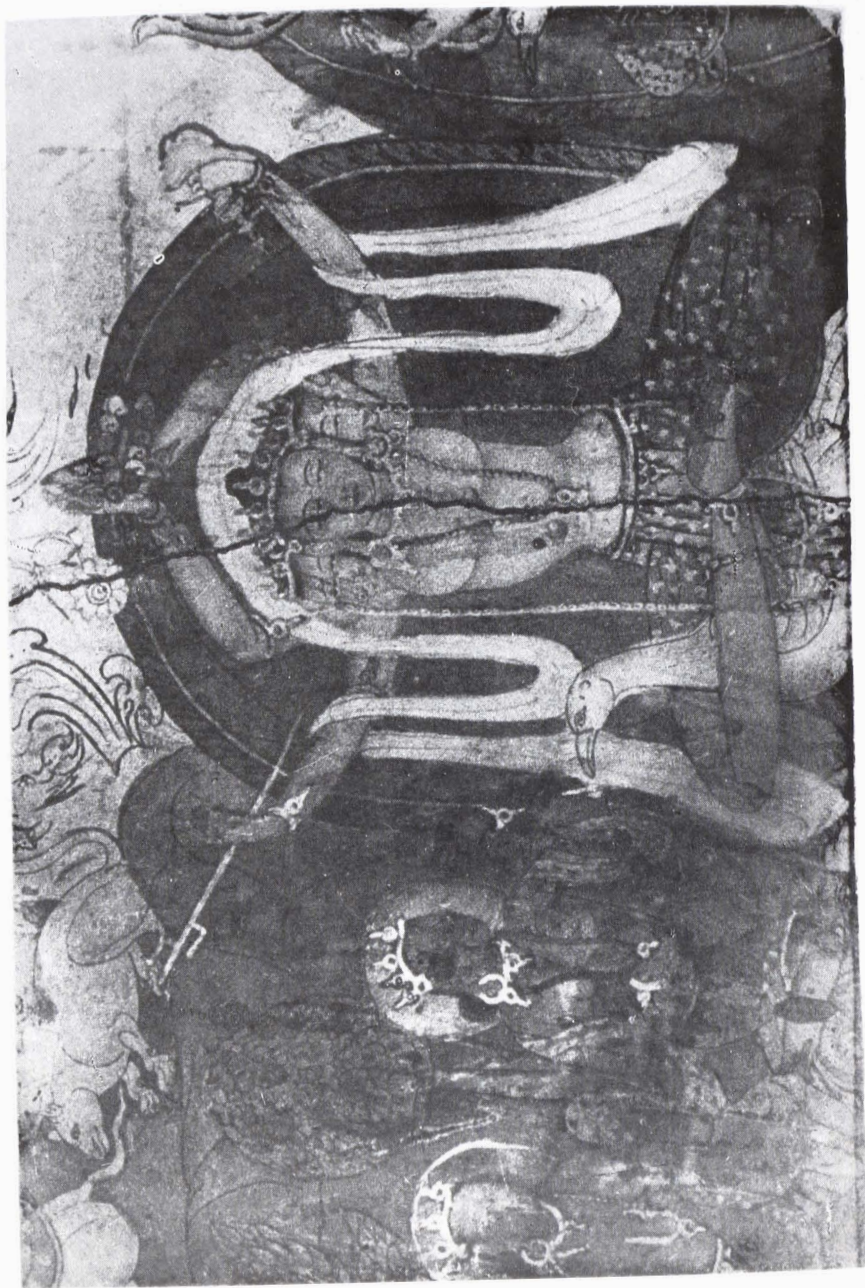
83. Iśāna with his retinue, p. 120



84. Viṣṇu with his retinue, p. 120



85. Consort of Brahmā, p. 120



86. Brahmā, p. 120



87. Retinue of Isvara, p. 120



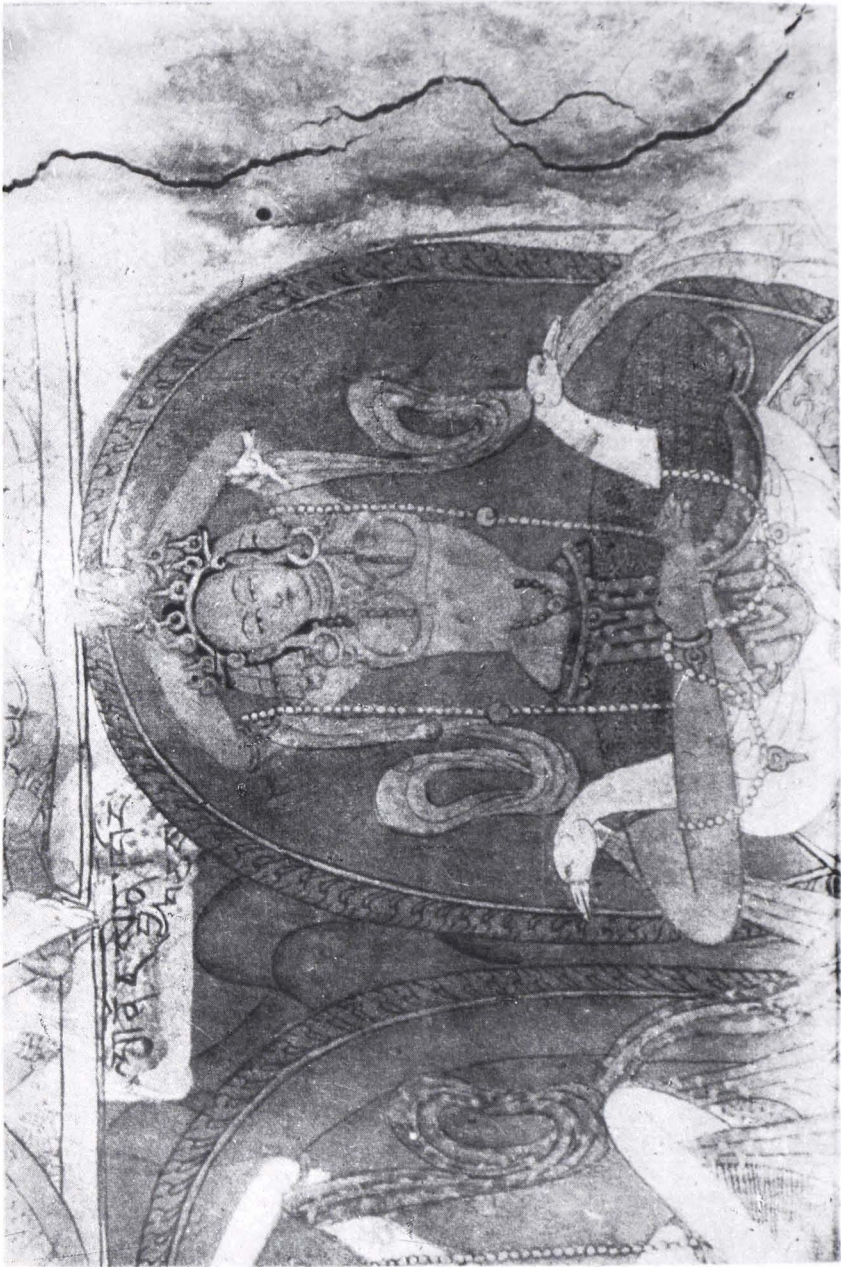
88. Íśvara with his retinue, p. 120



89. Ganapati, p. 120



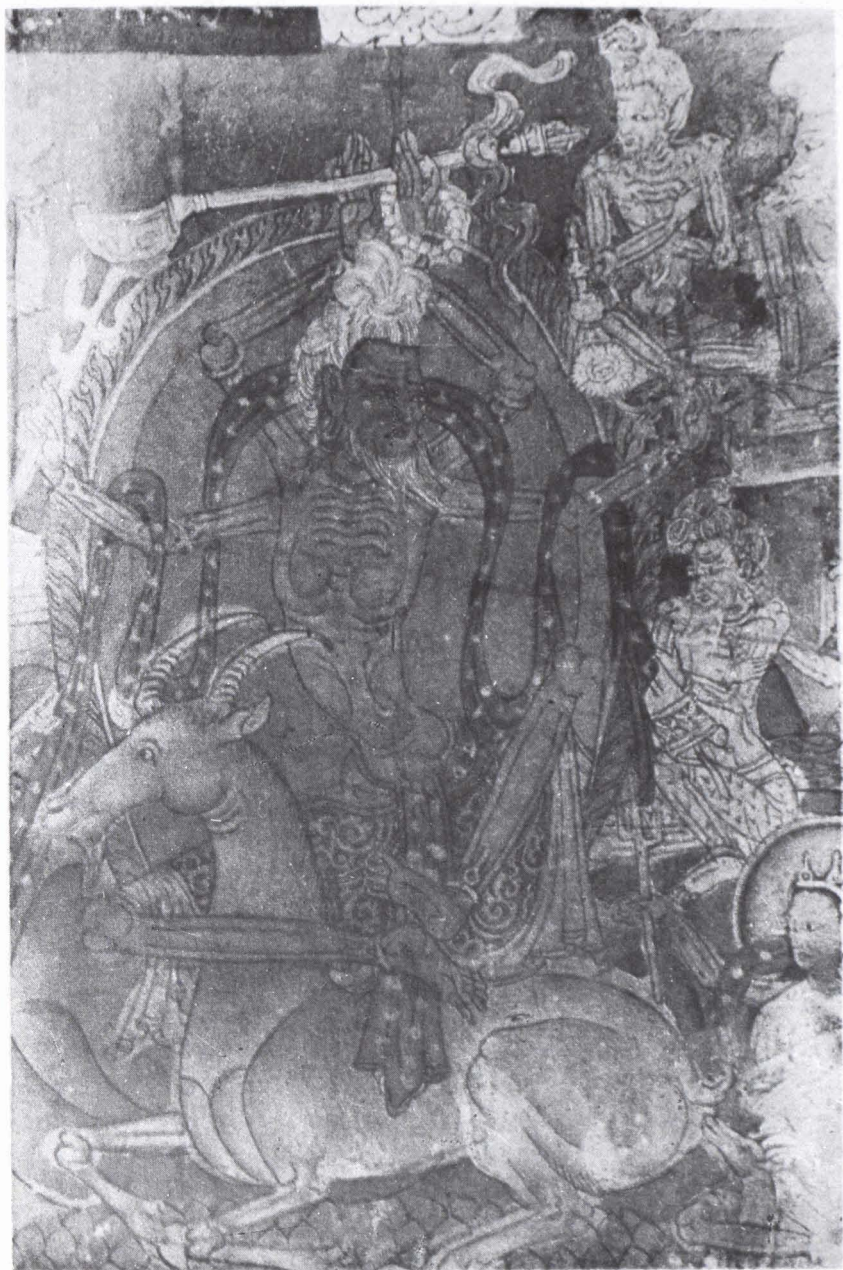
90. Retinue of Gaṇapati, p. 120



91. Brahmanī, p. 120



92. Yakṣa and retinue, p. 120



93. Agni with his retinue, p. 120



94. Retinue to the right of Agni, p. 120



95. Retinue to the left of Agni, p. 120



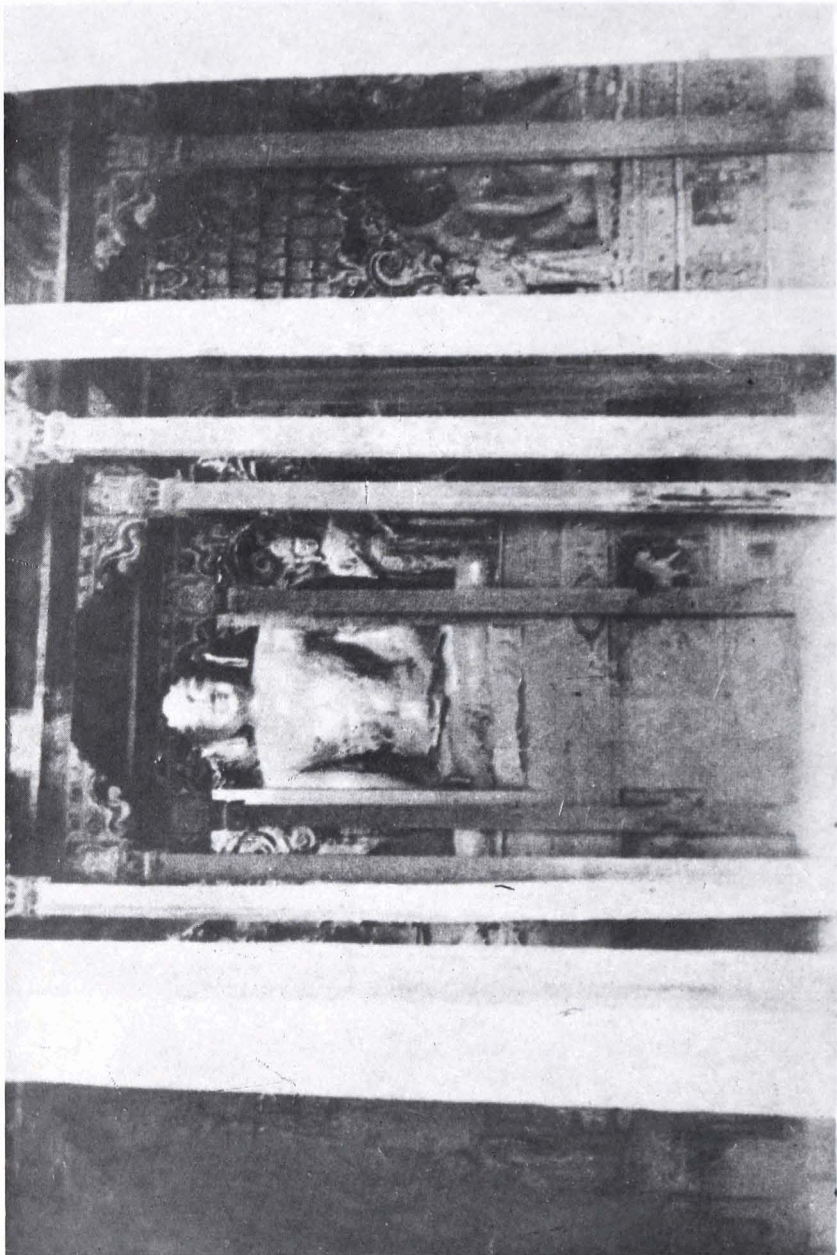


97. Identification not clear, p. 122-124

97. Gotami 1979: 2.175.

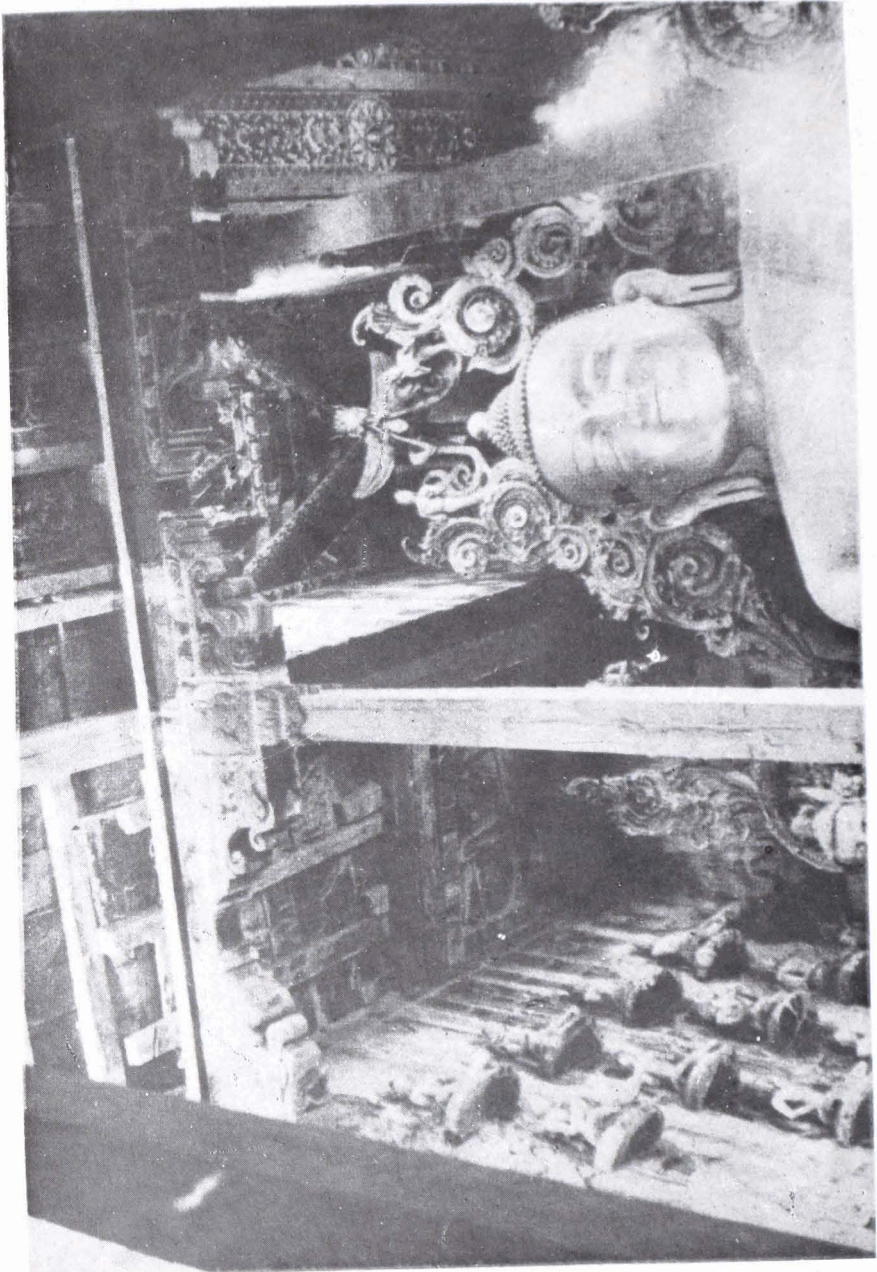


98. Tson-kha-pa with his two disciples, p. 125

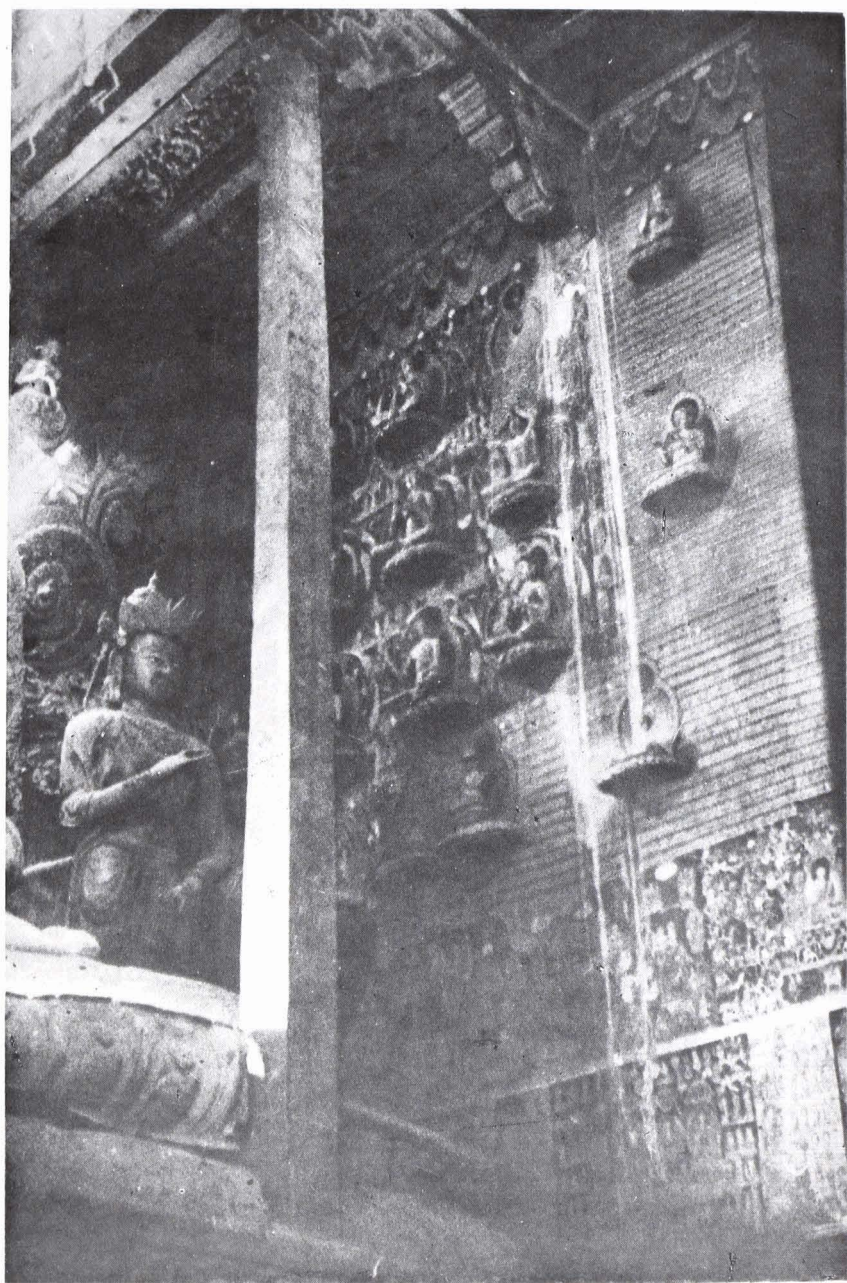


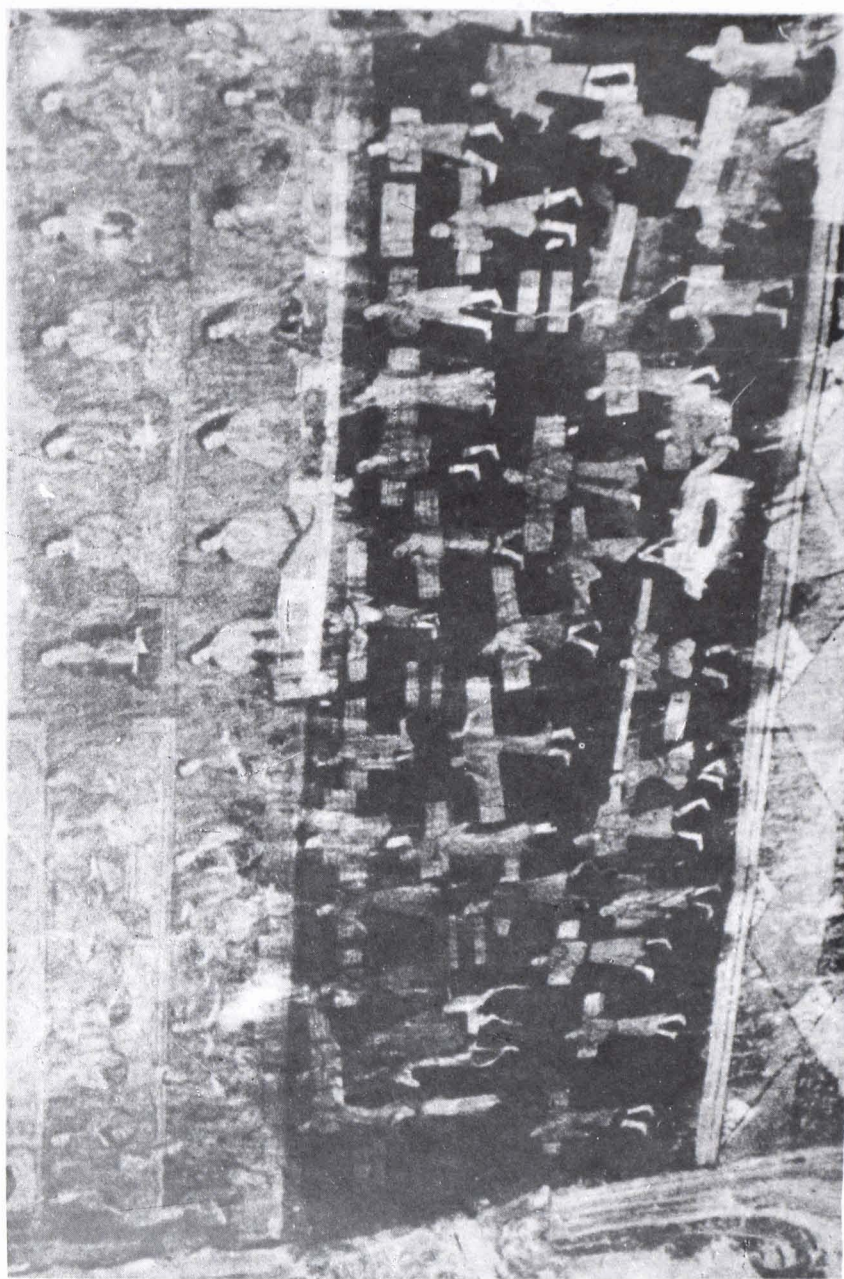
99. Śākyamuni, p. 125



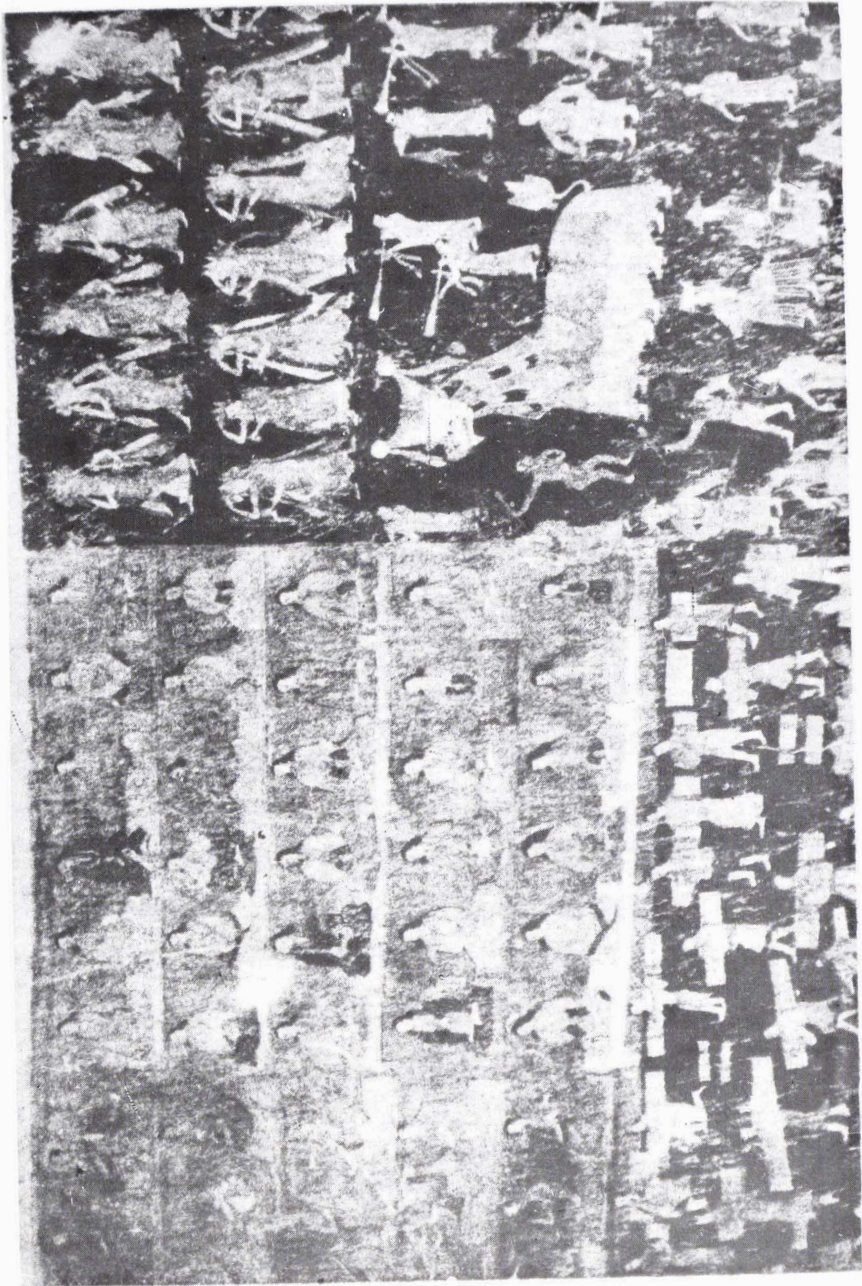


101. Śakyamuni, p. 125

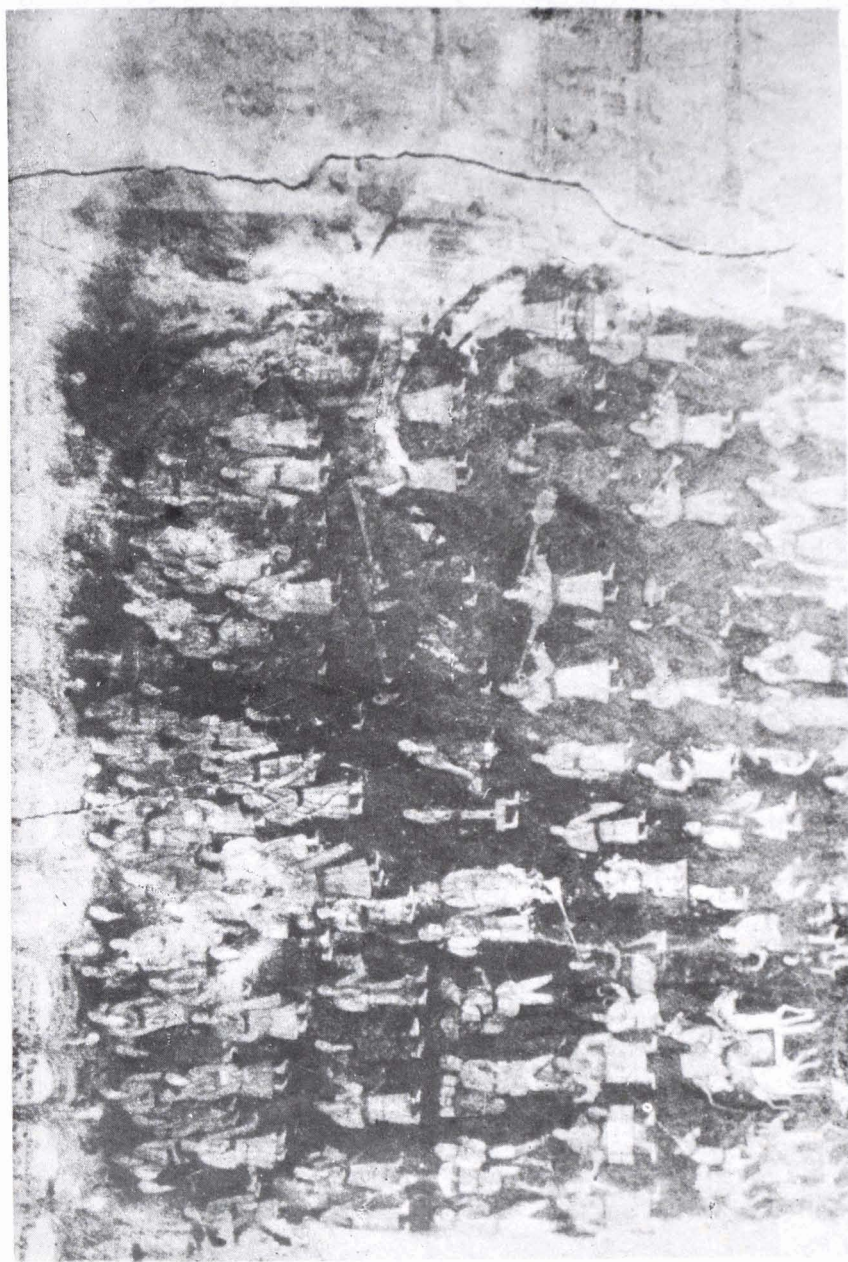




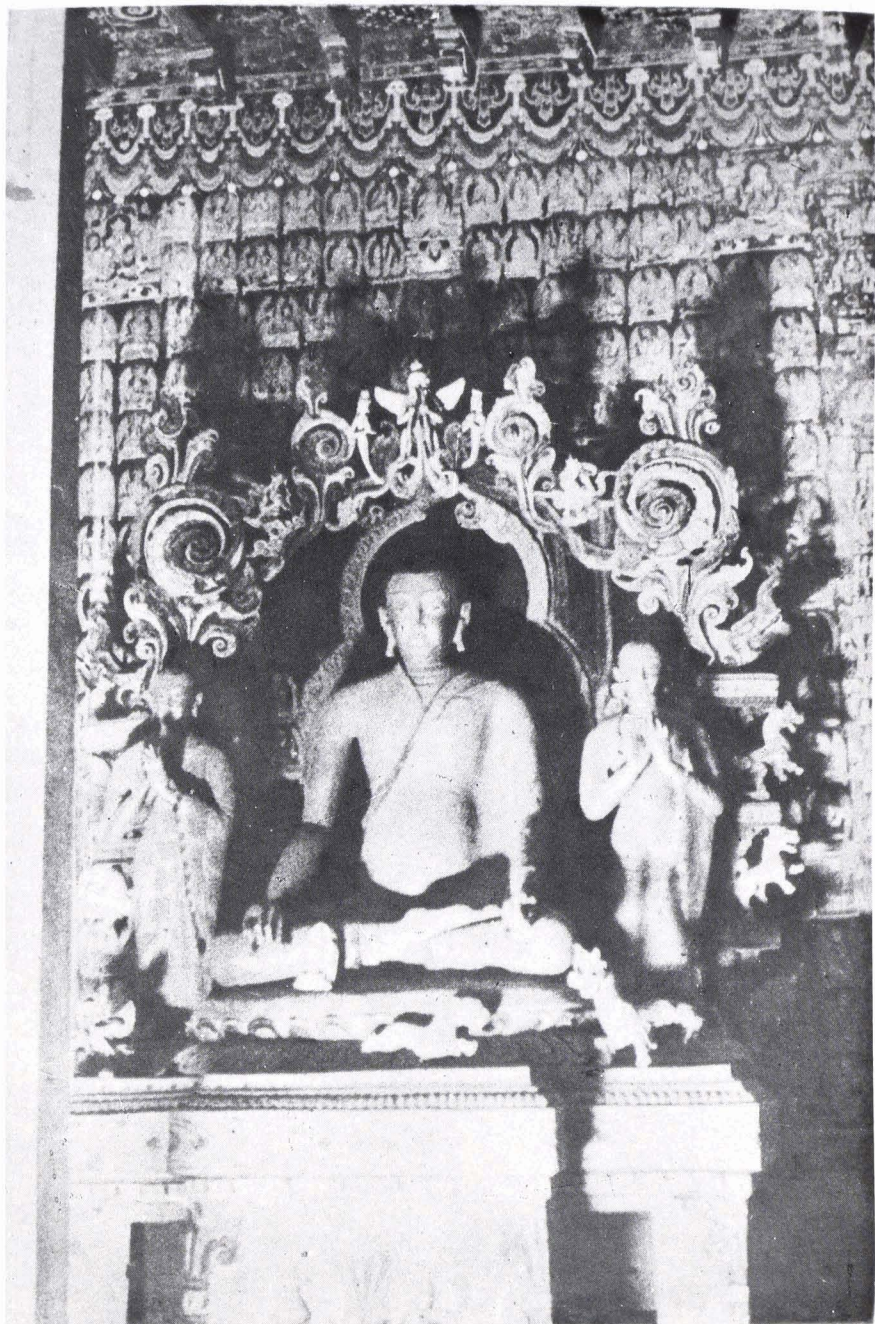
103. Foundation of the temple, p. 126



104. Foundation of the temple, p. 126



105. Foundation of the temple, p. 126



106. Rin-chen-bzañ-po (?) as a Vajradhara, p. 126

106. Gotami 1979: 2.181.

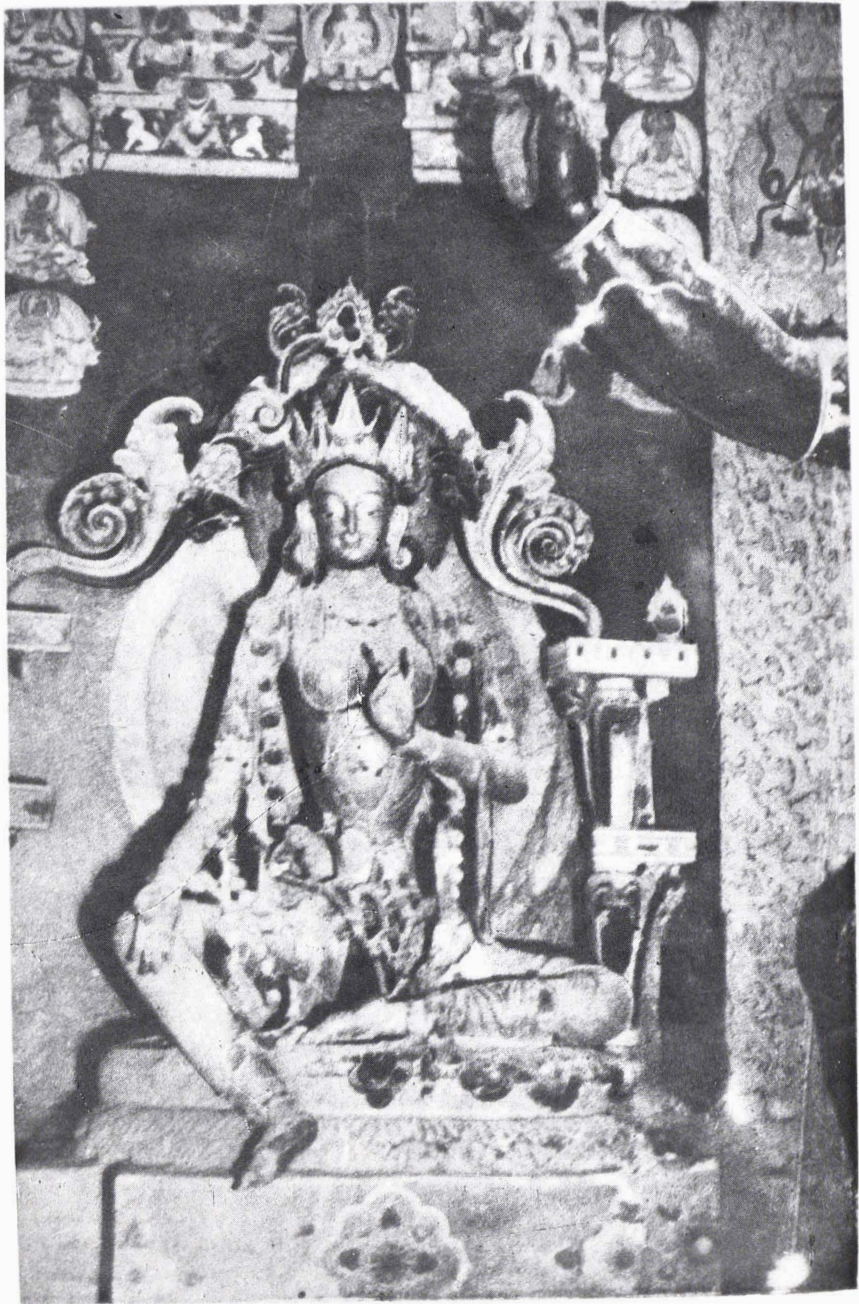




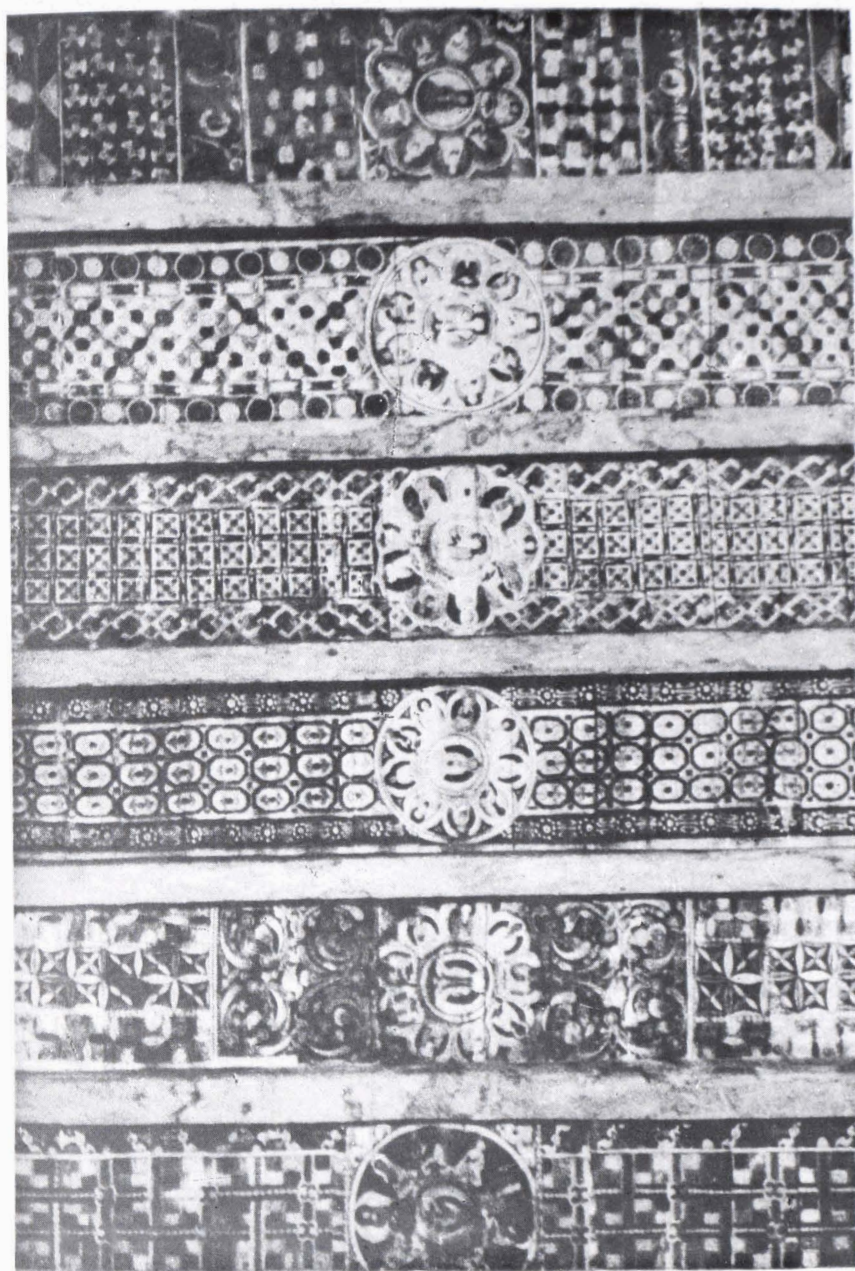
108. Kings of Guge, p. 127



109. Vairocana (?), p. 128

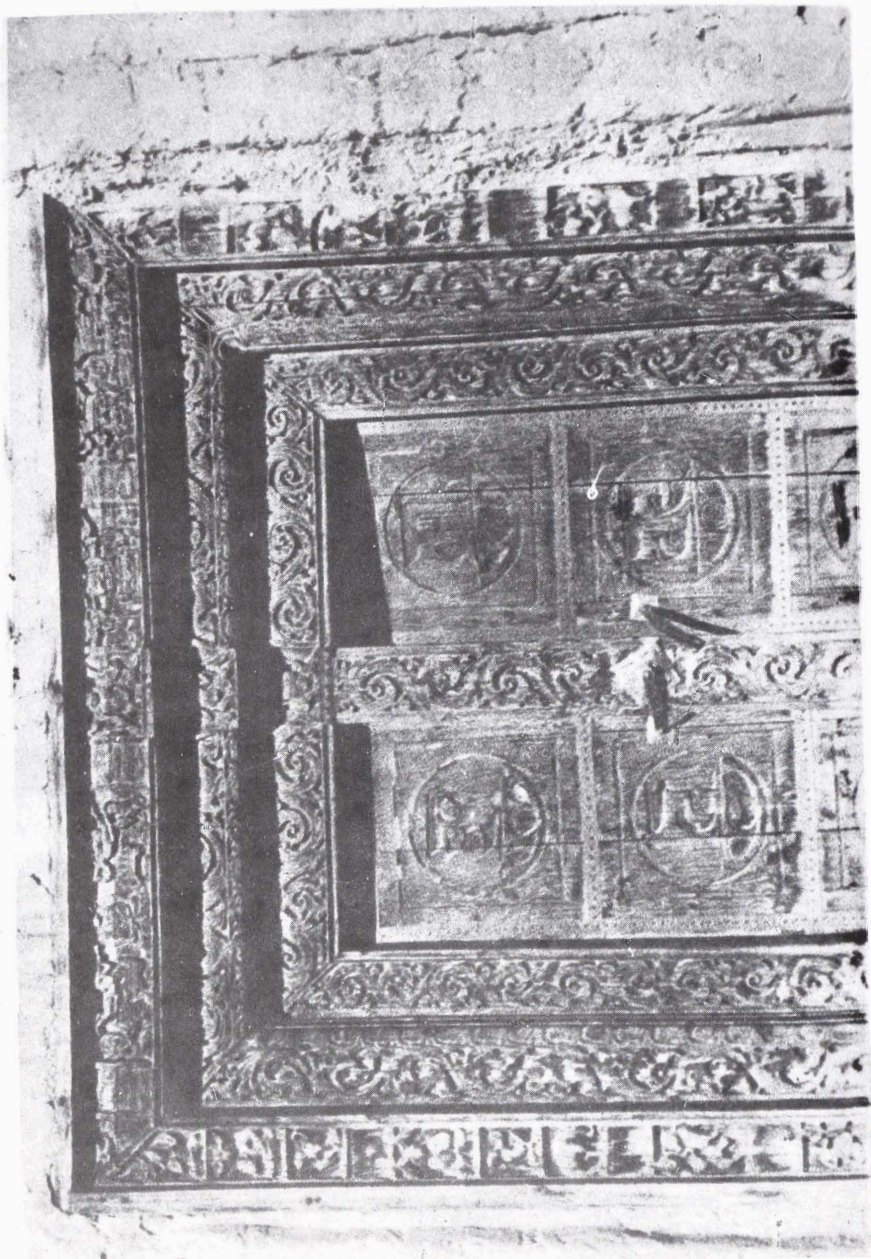


110. White Tārā, p. 128



111. Ceiling of the temple, p. 128

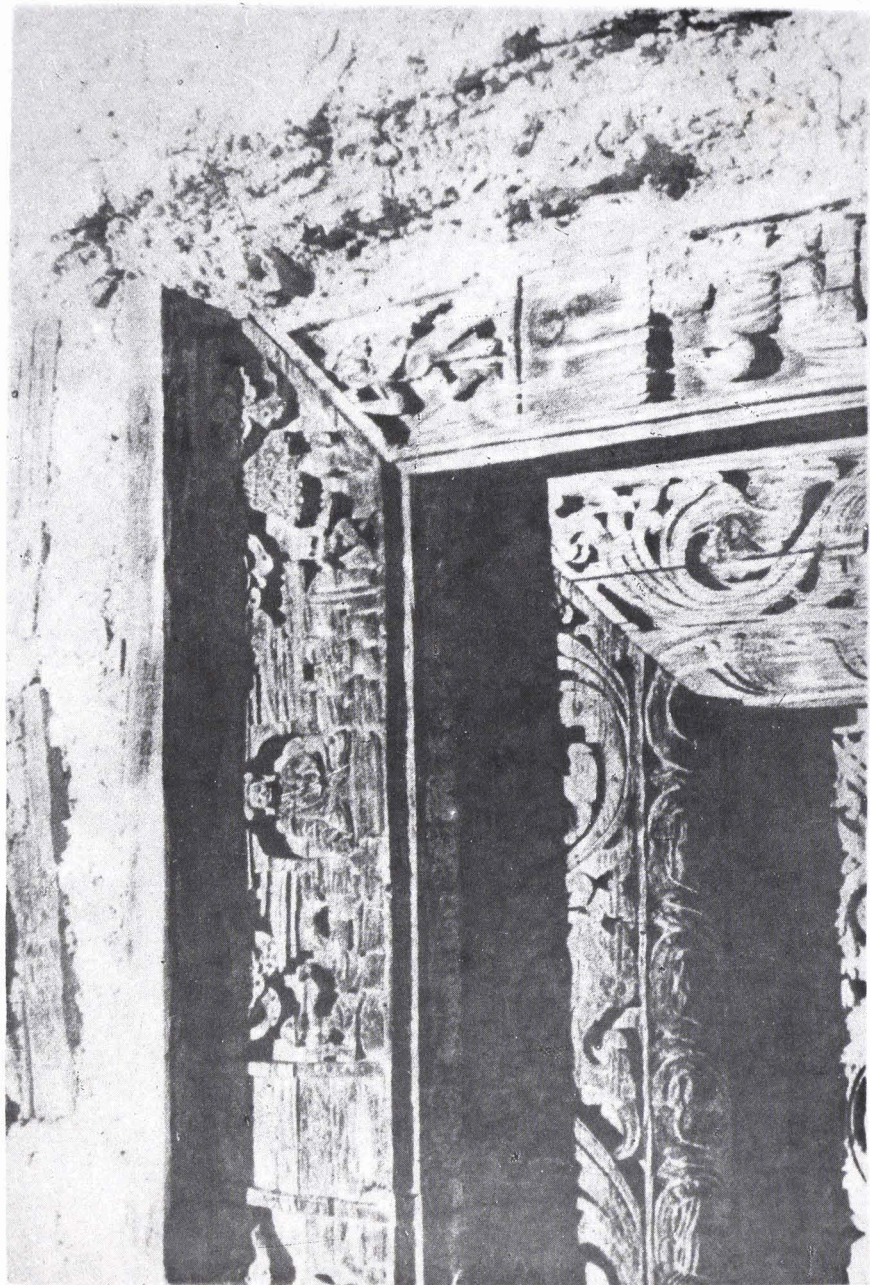
THE RED TEMPLE



112. Red Temple, Door, p. 130



113. Details of the door, p. 130



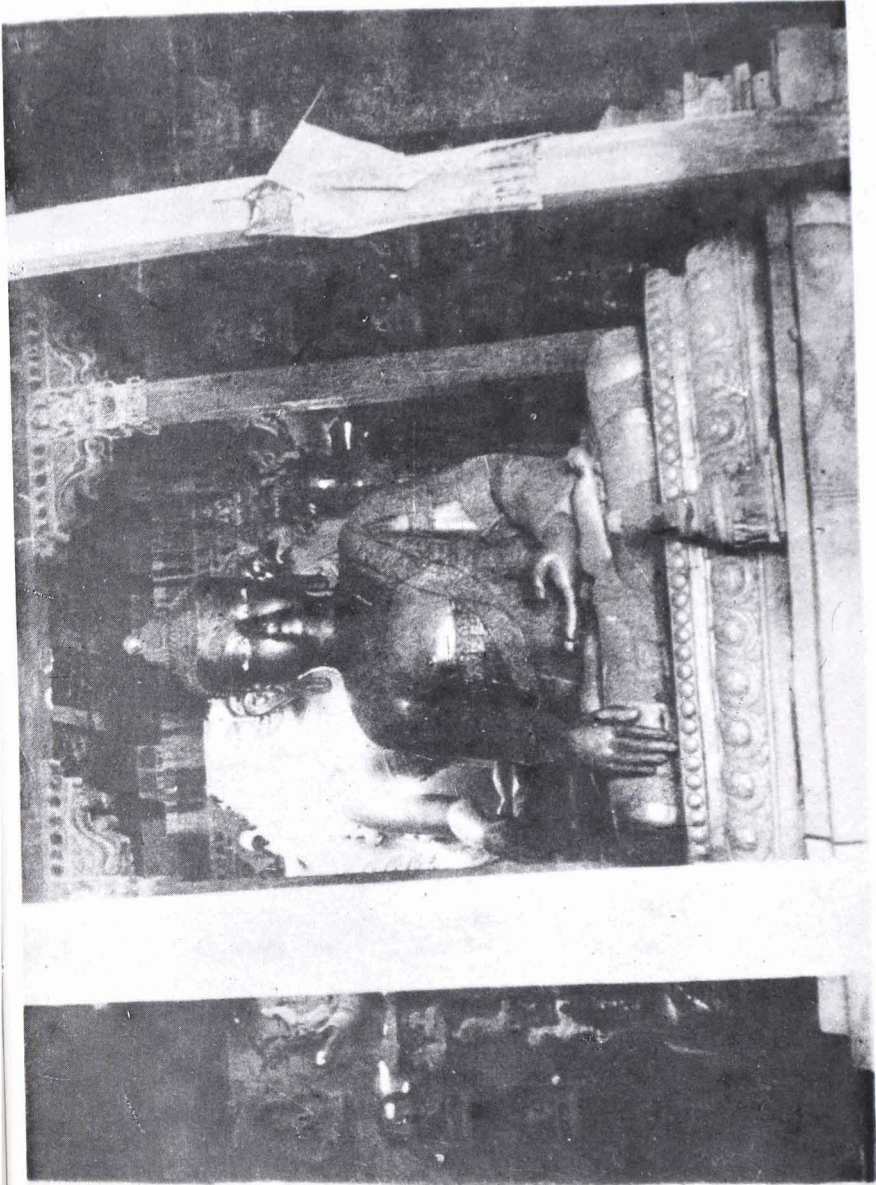
114. Details of the door, p. 131



115. Siddhas on the door, p. 131



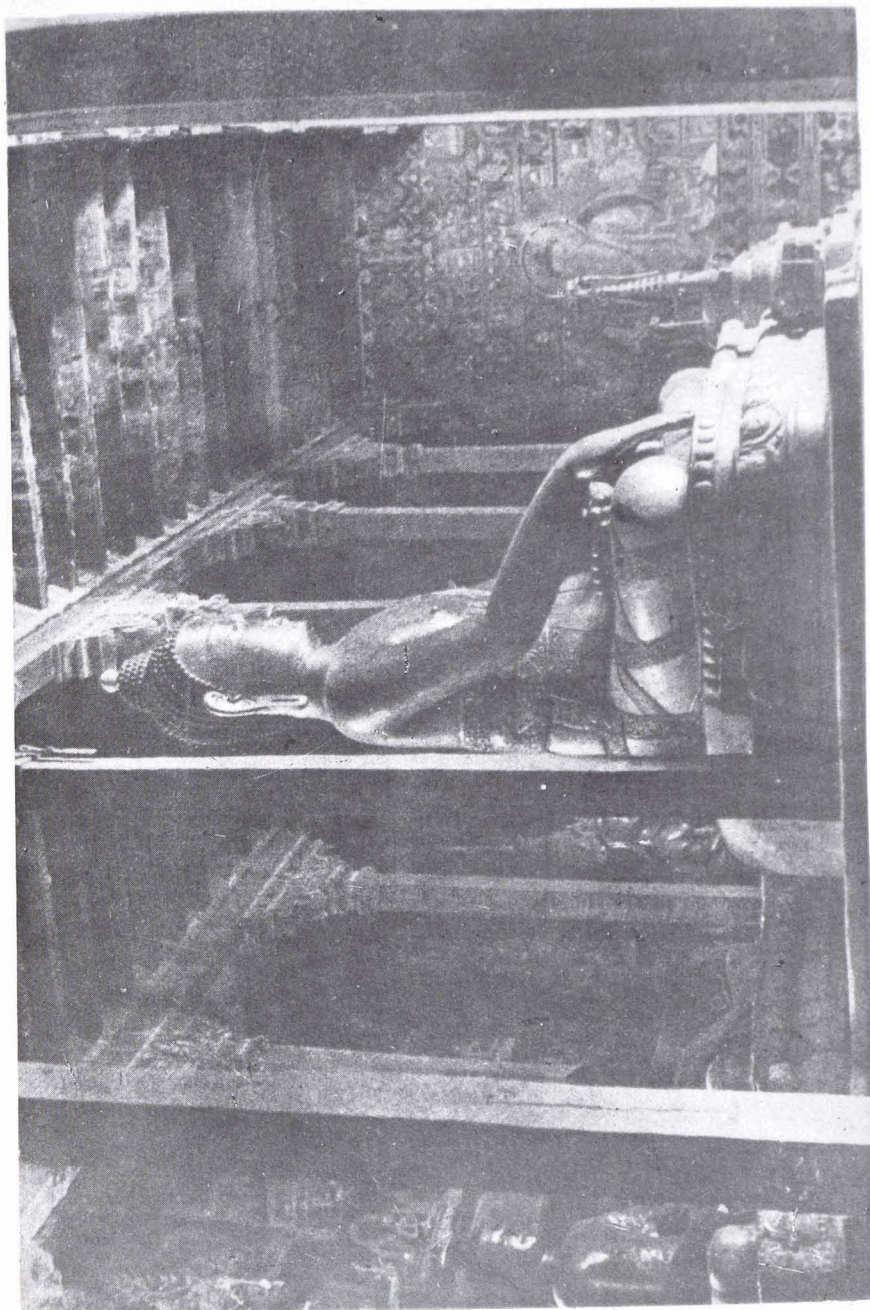
116. Prince of Guge, p. 131

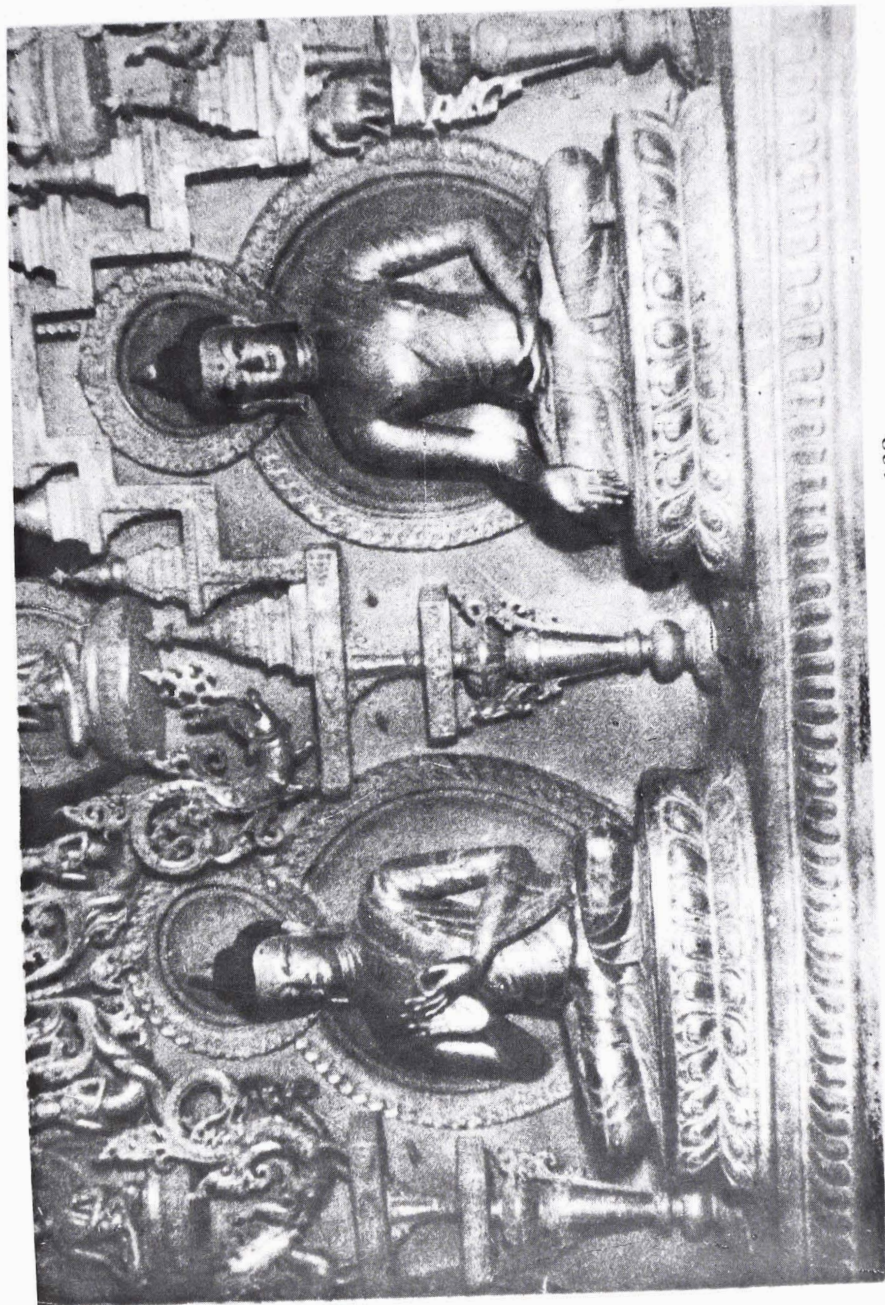


117. Buddha, p. 131

117. Gotami 1979: 2.159,160 (main image of the temple).





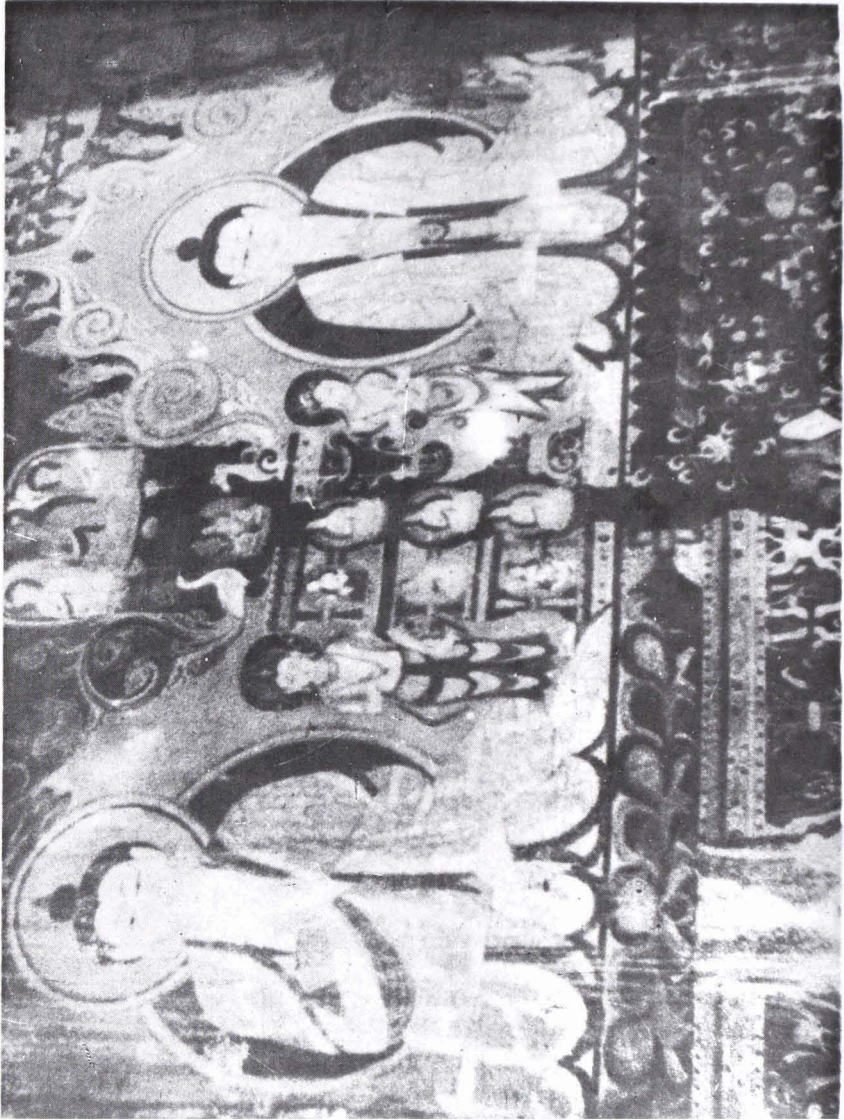


120. Eight Bhaisajyaguru, p. 132

120. Gotami 1979: 2.153-158 (illustrates all the eight Bhaisajyaguru).







123. Other Bhaisajyaguru, p. 132

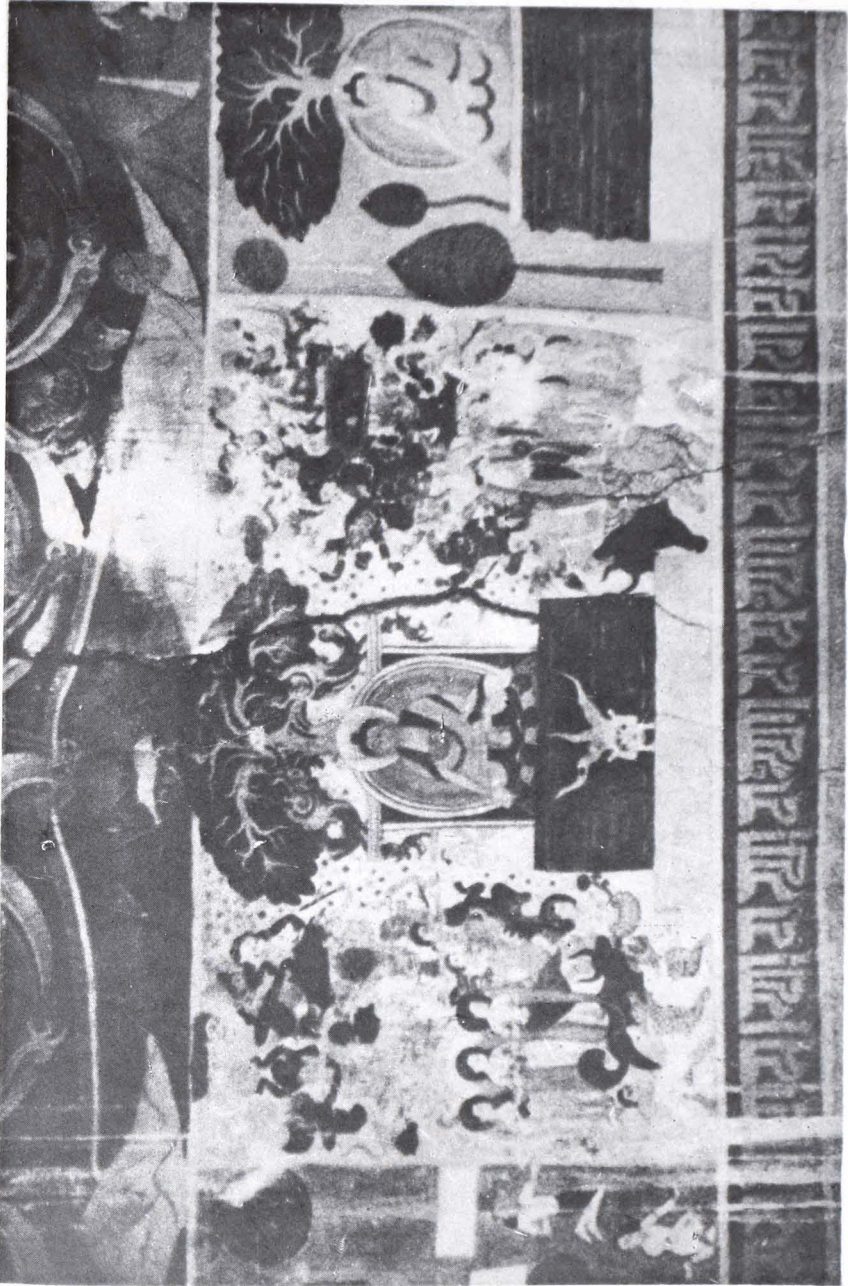




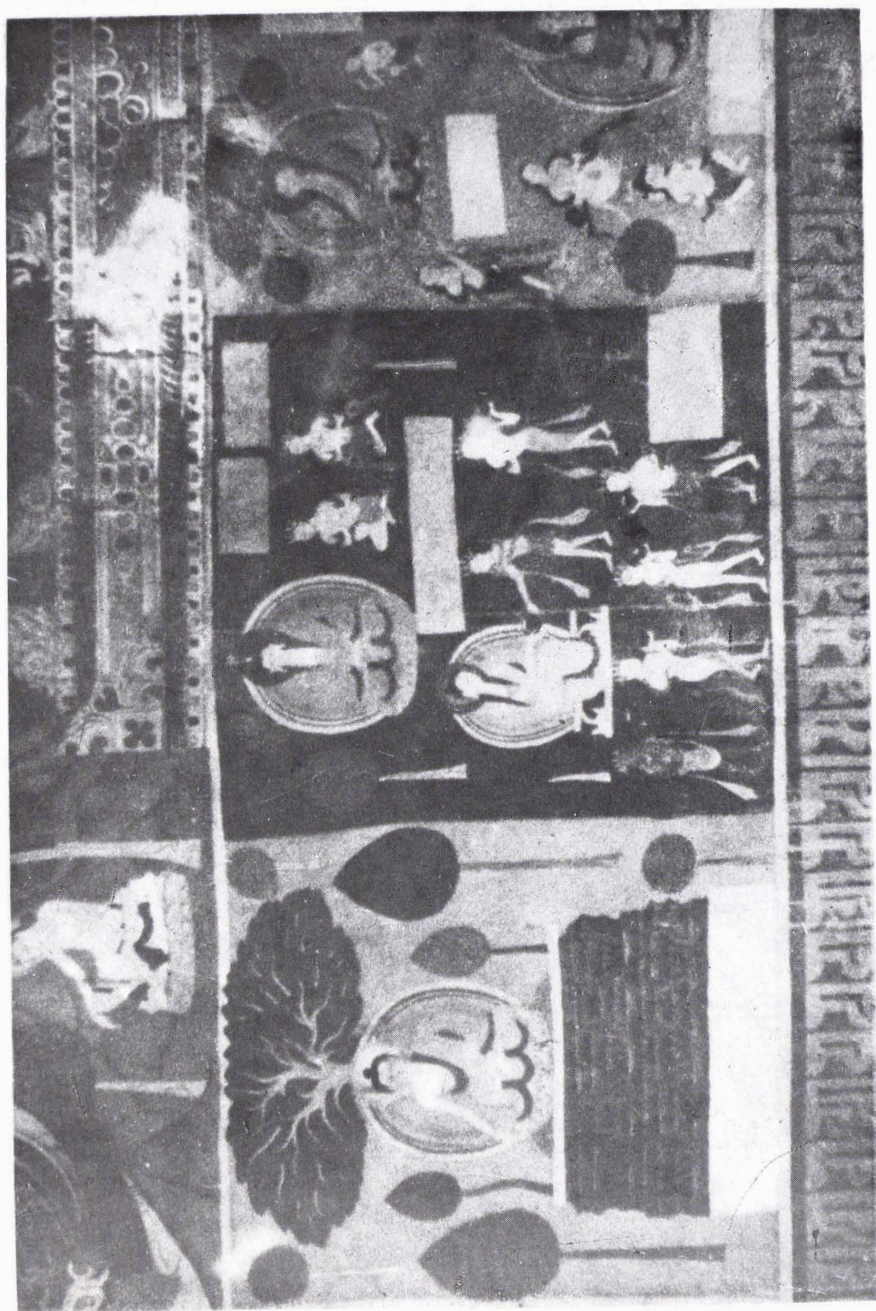
125. Legend of Sakyamuni, p. 136



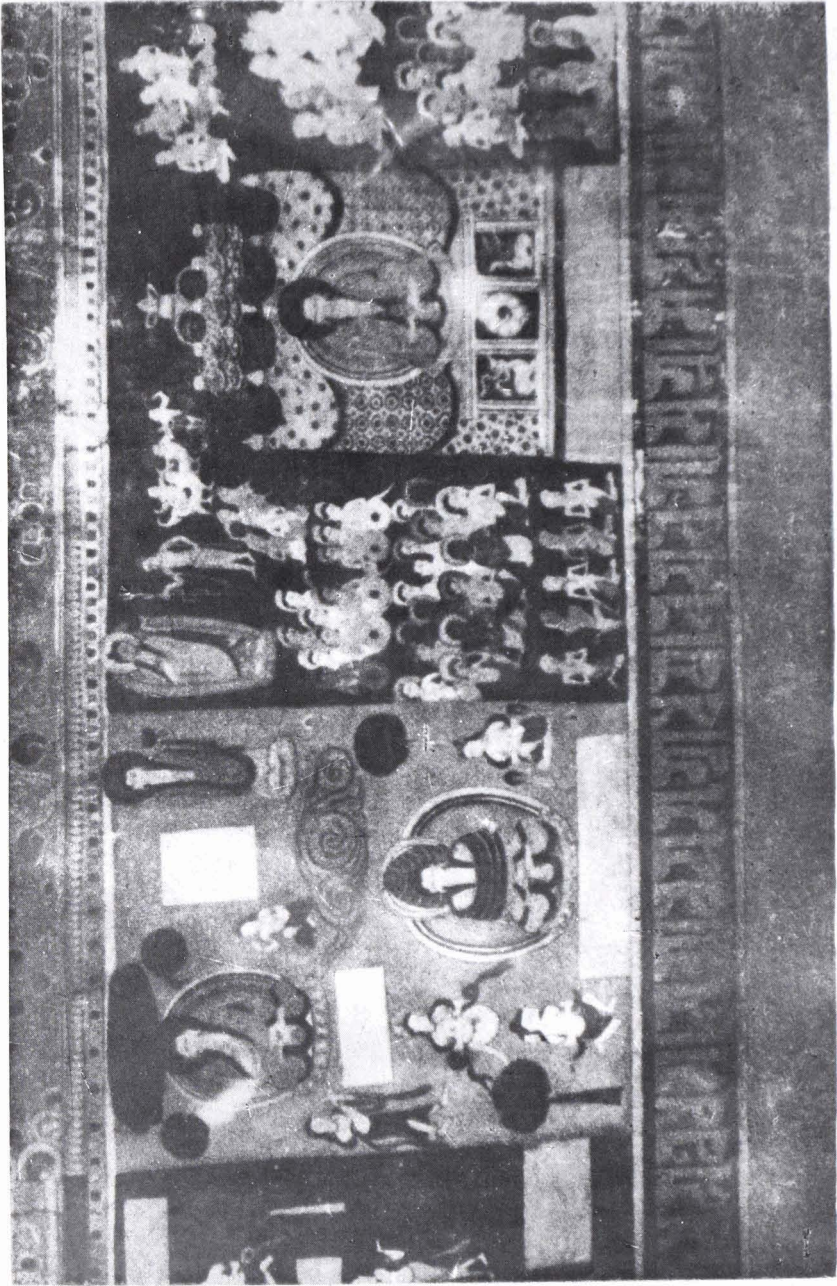
126. Legend of Śākyamuni, p. 139



127. Śākyamuni's enlightenment, p. 140



128. Śākyamuni calling the Earth to witness, p. 140



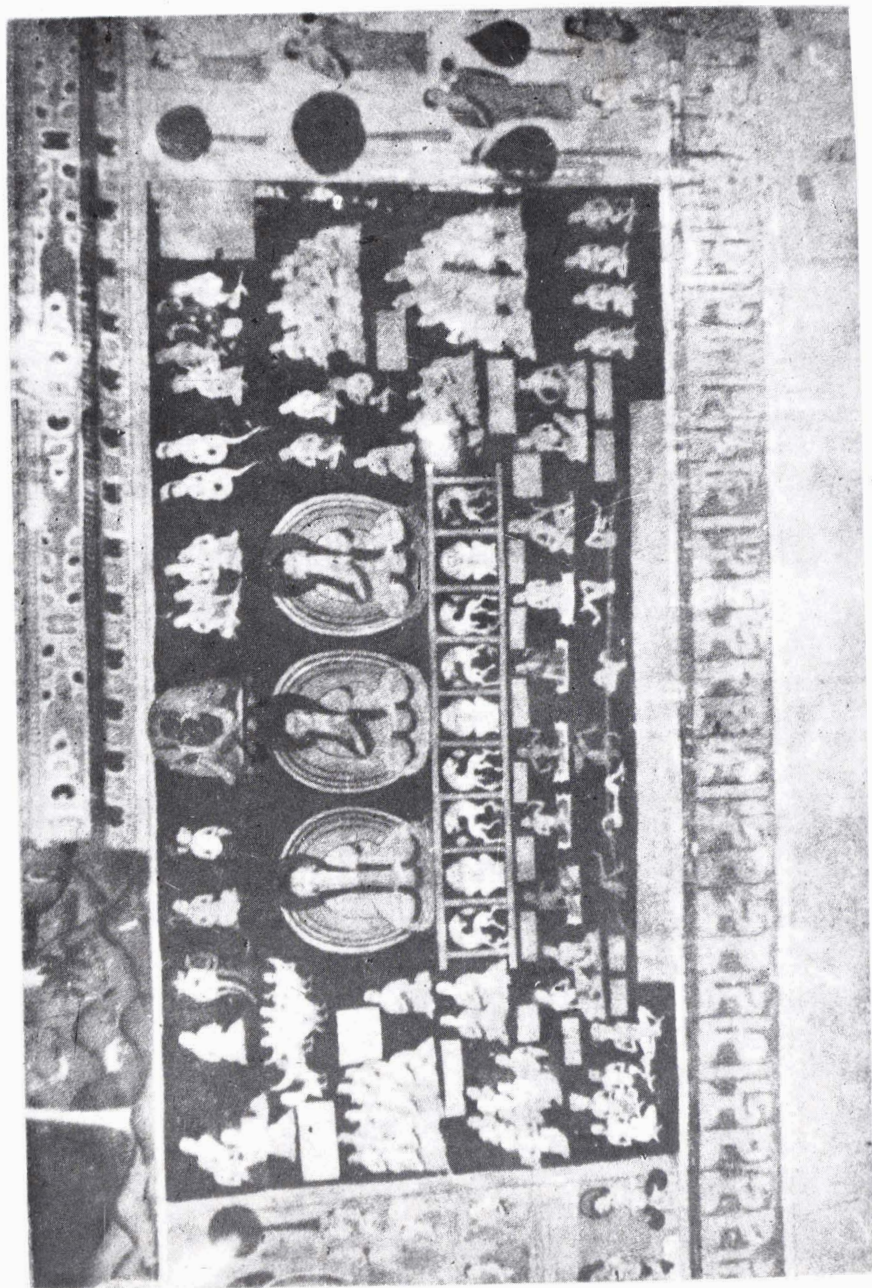
129. Legend of Śākyamuni, p. 141



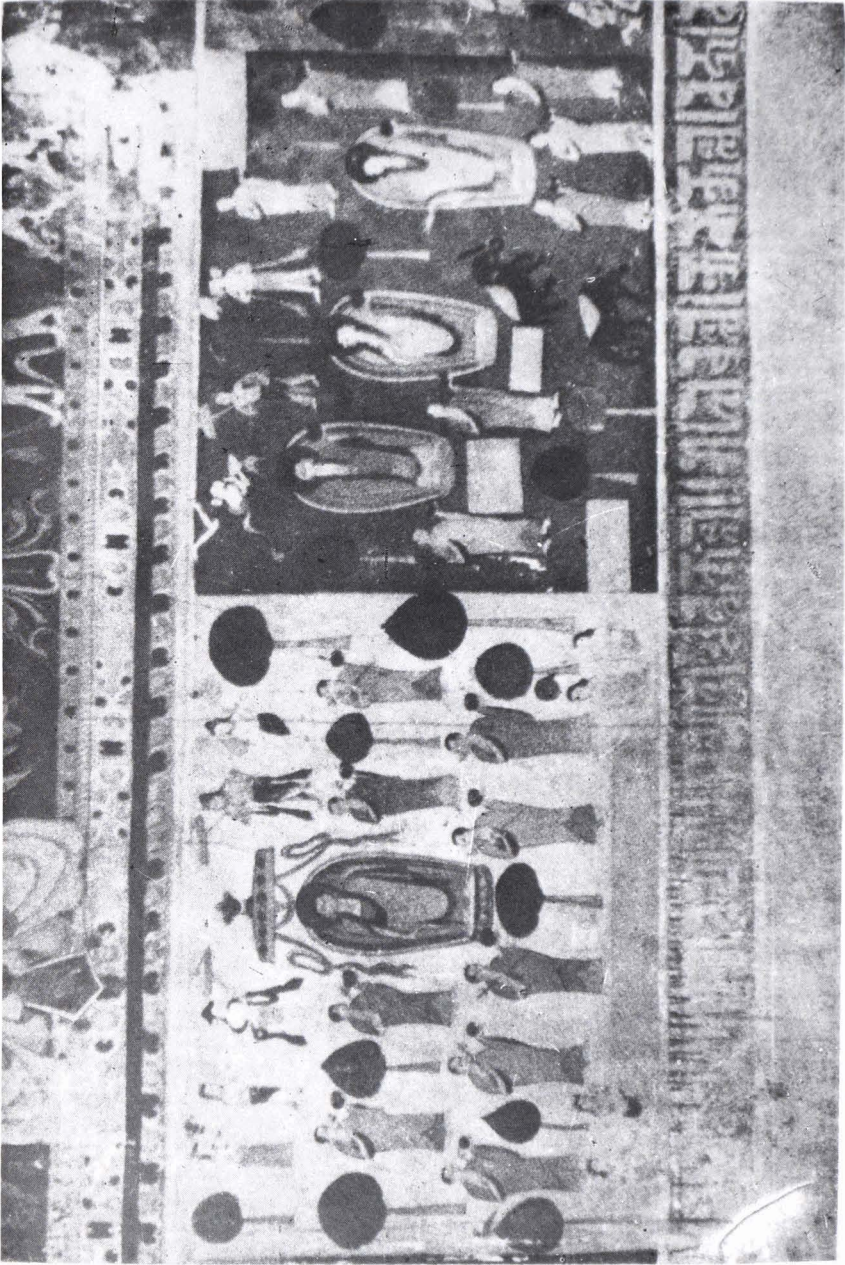
130. Buddha meeting Yaśas on the banks of river. Vāraṇā, p./143



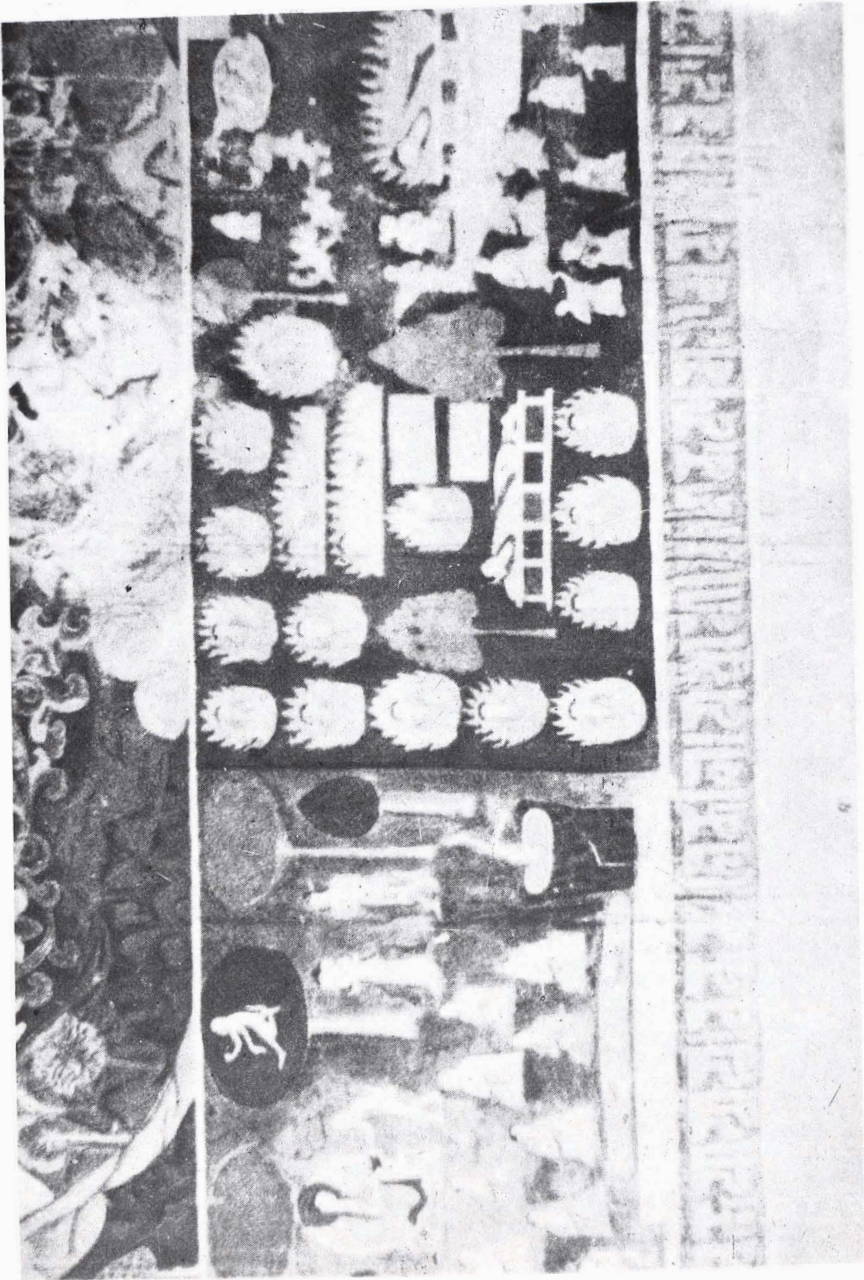
131. Buddha converts by showing a miracle, p. 145



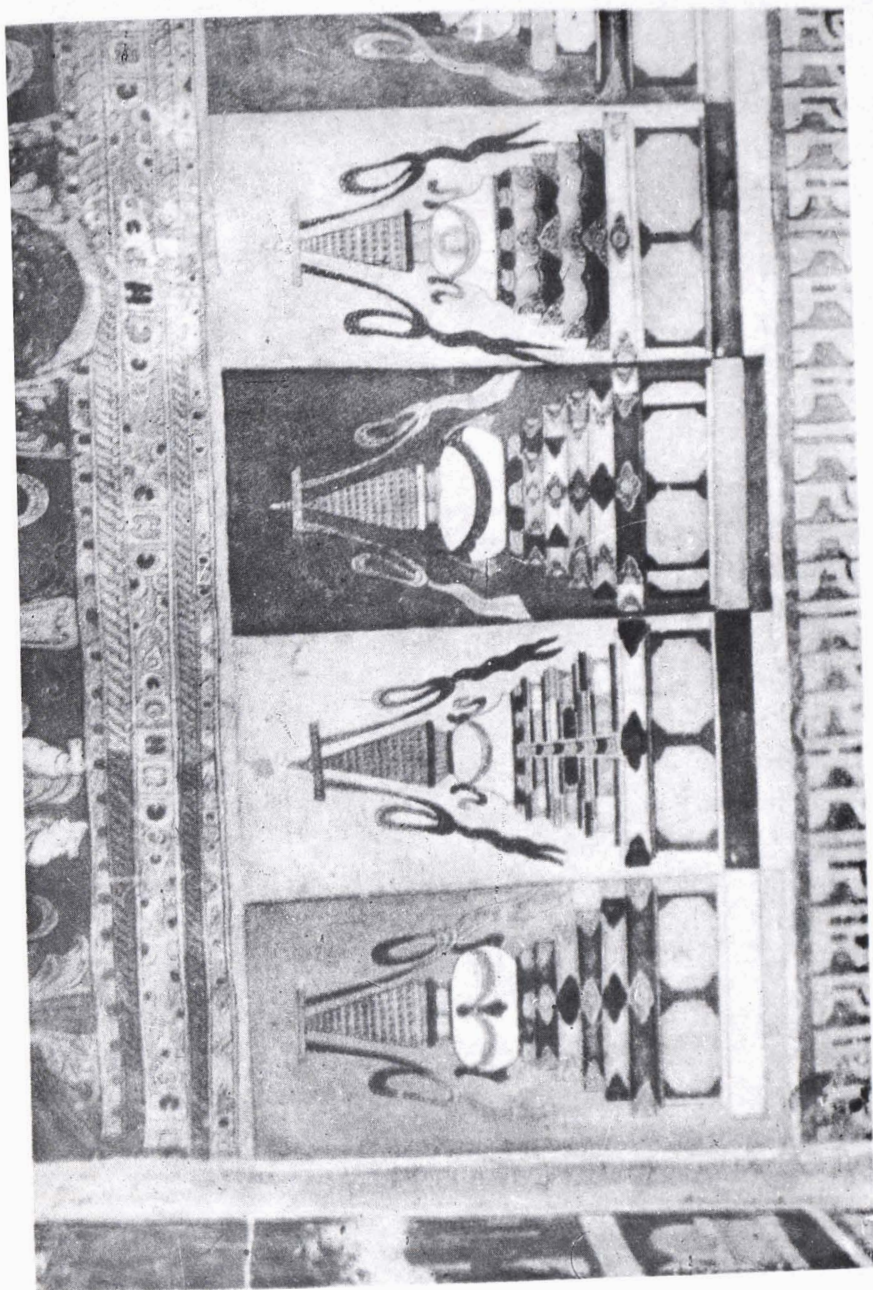
132. Miracle of Śrāvastī, p. 145, 147



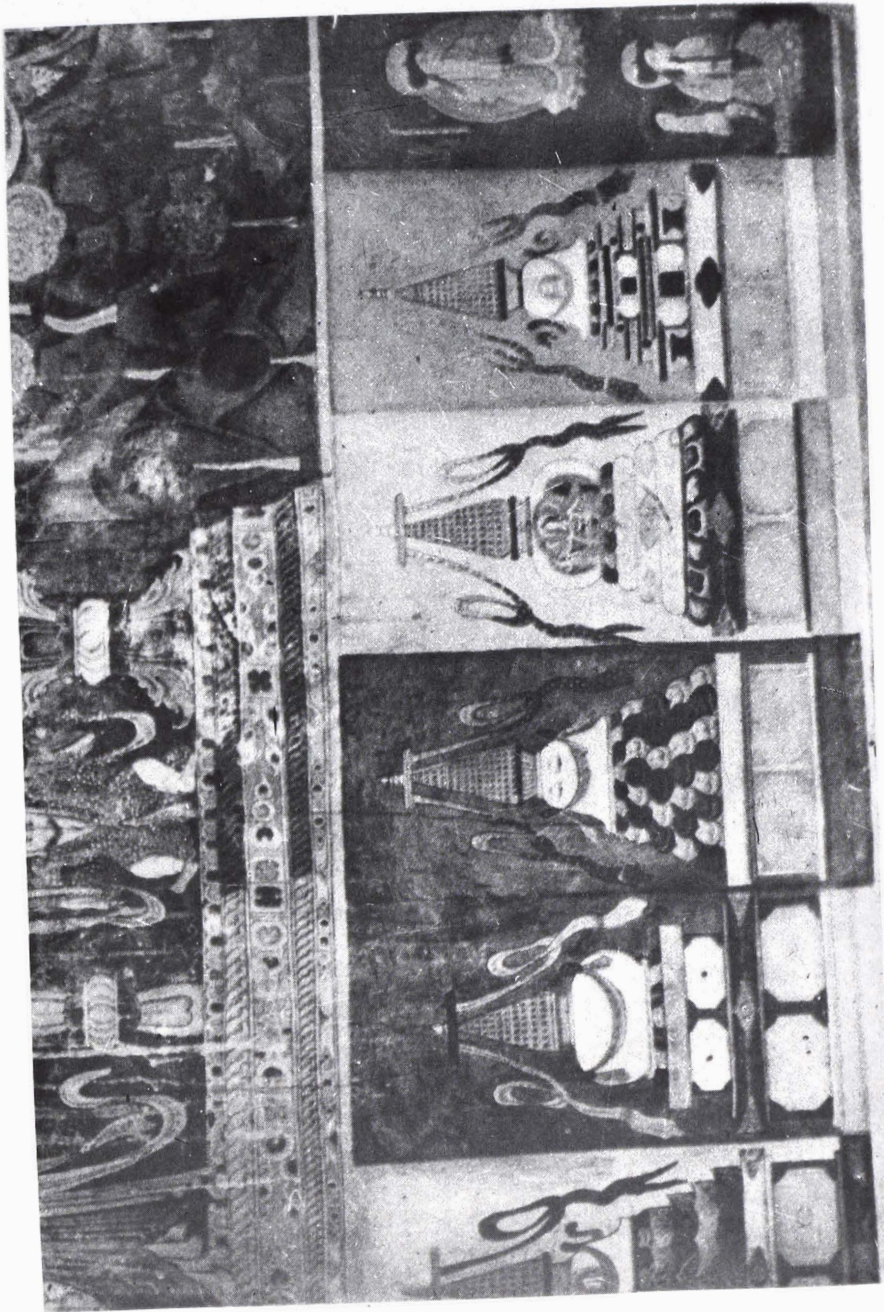
133. Buddha proceeds to the city to beg alms. Elephant Dhana-pāla flees, p. 147, 148



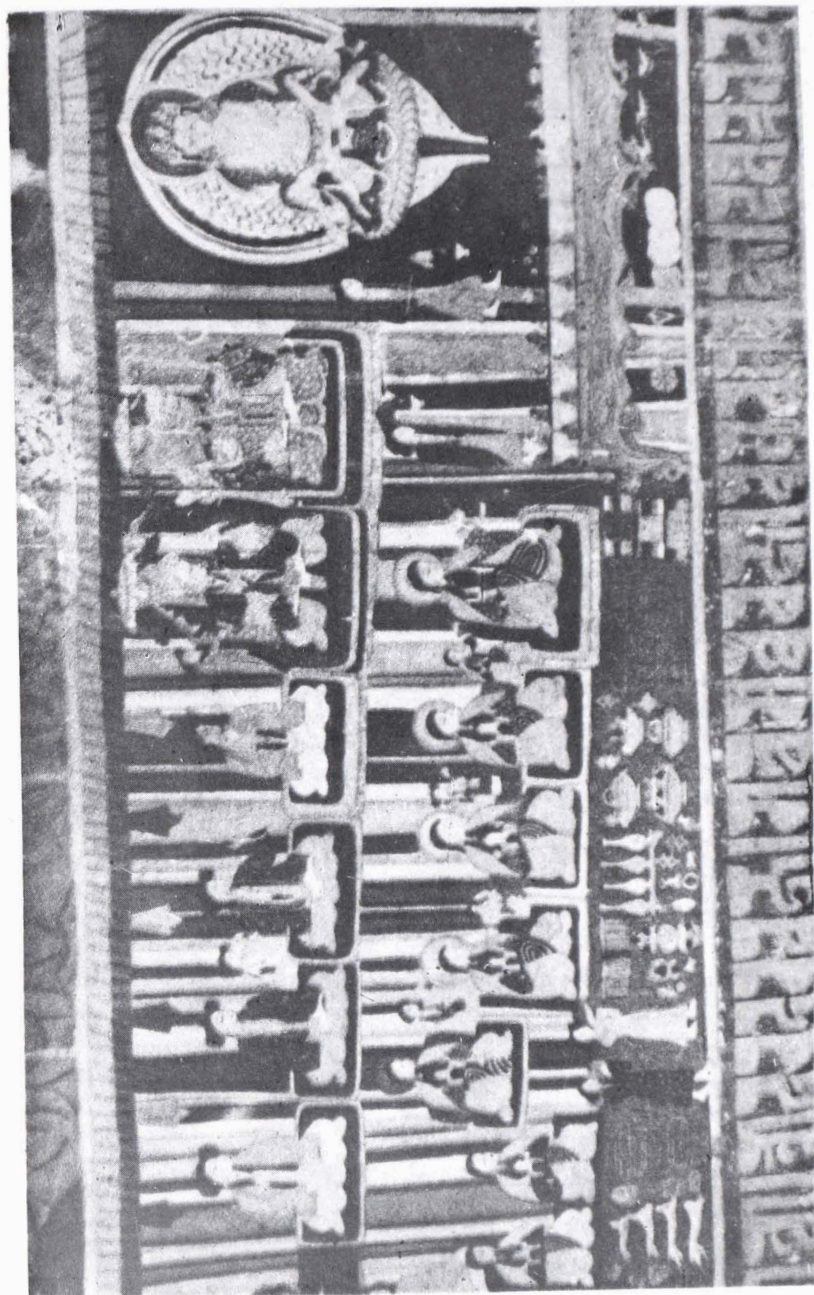
134. Monkey offers a vase to Śākyamuni, Nirvāṇa, p. 149-150



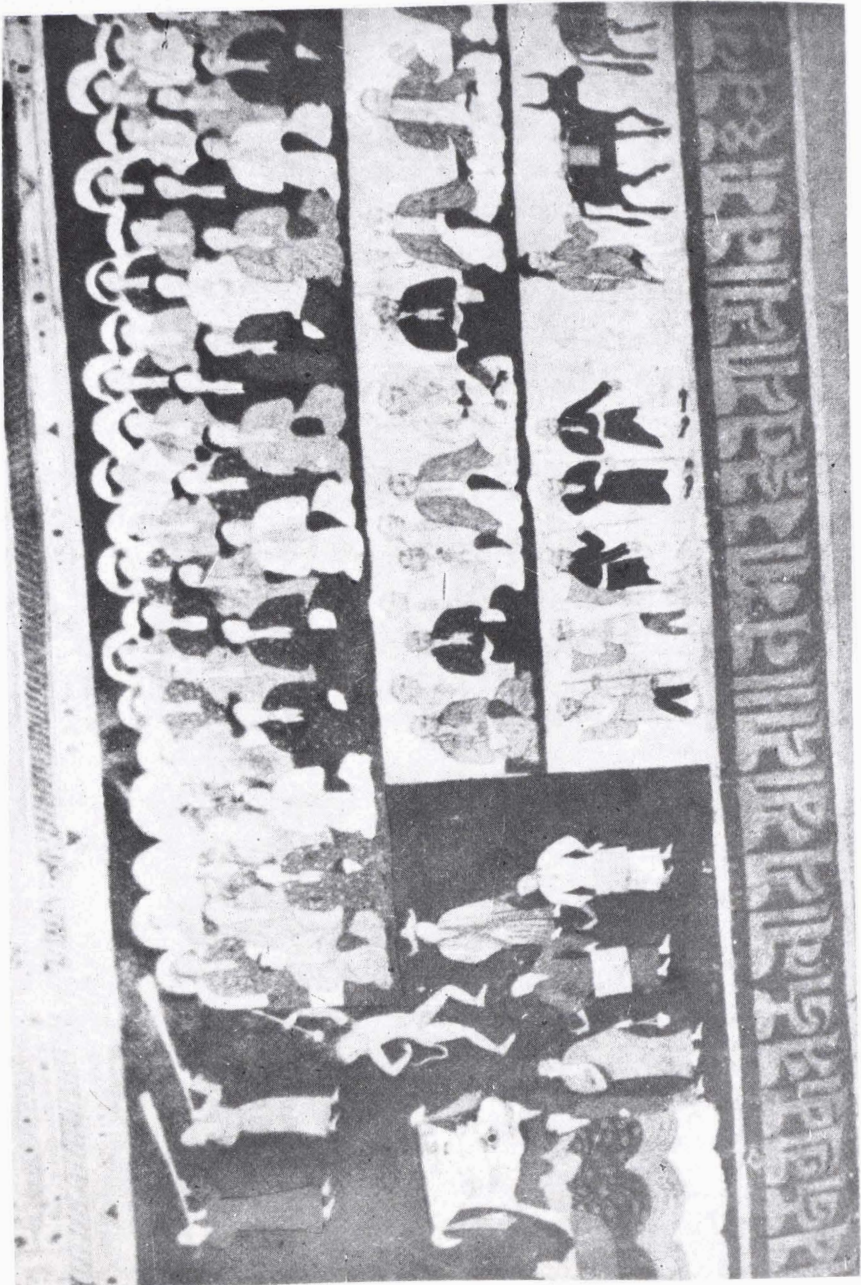
135. Eight stūpas, p.150



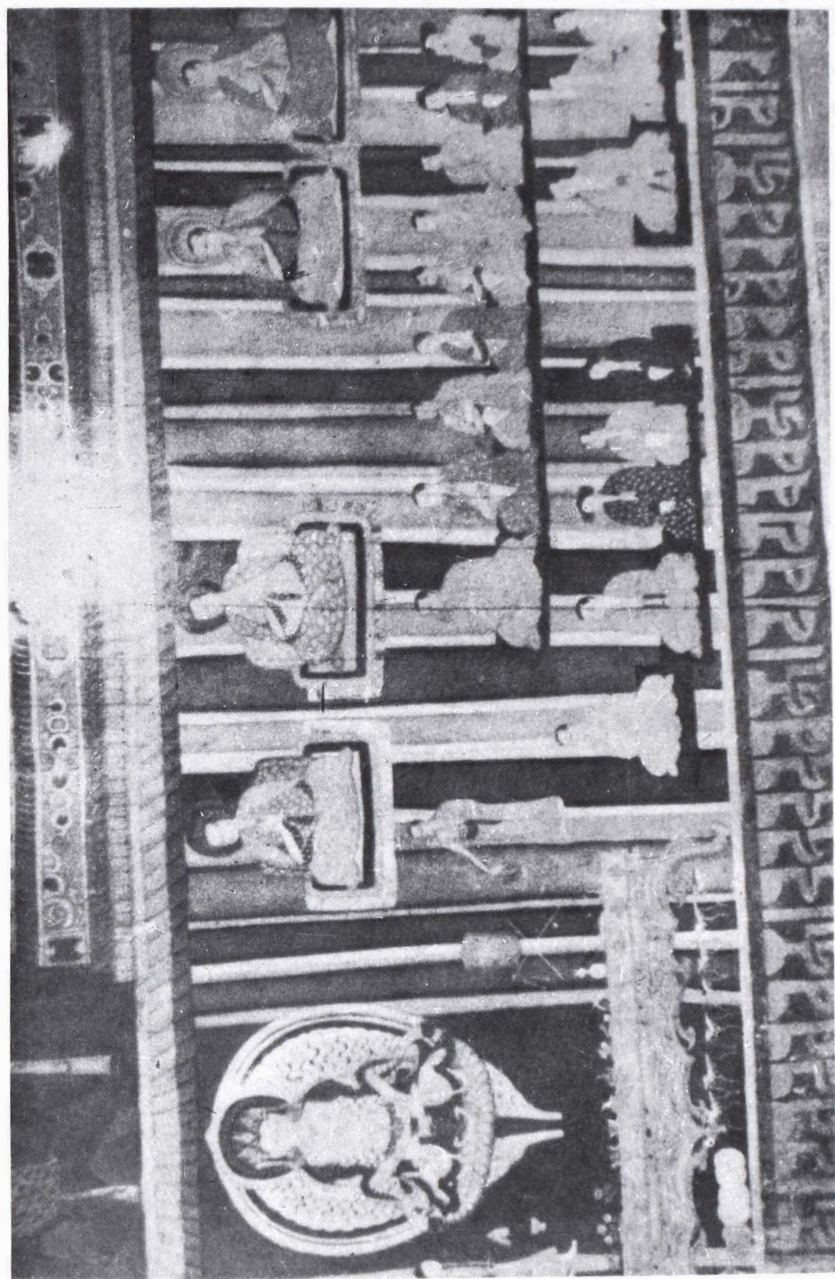
136. Eight stūpas, p. 151



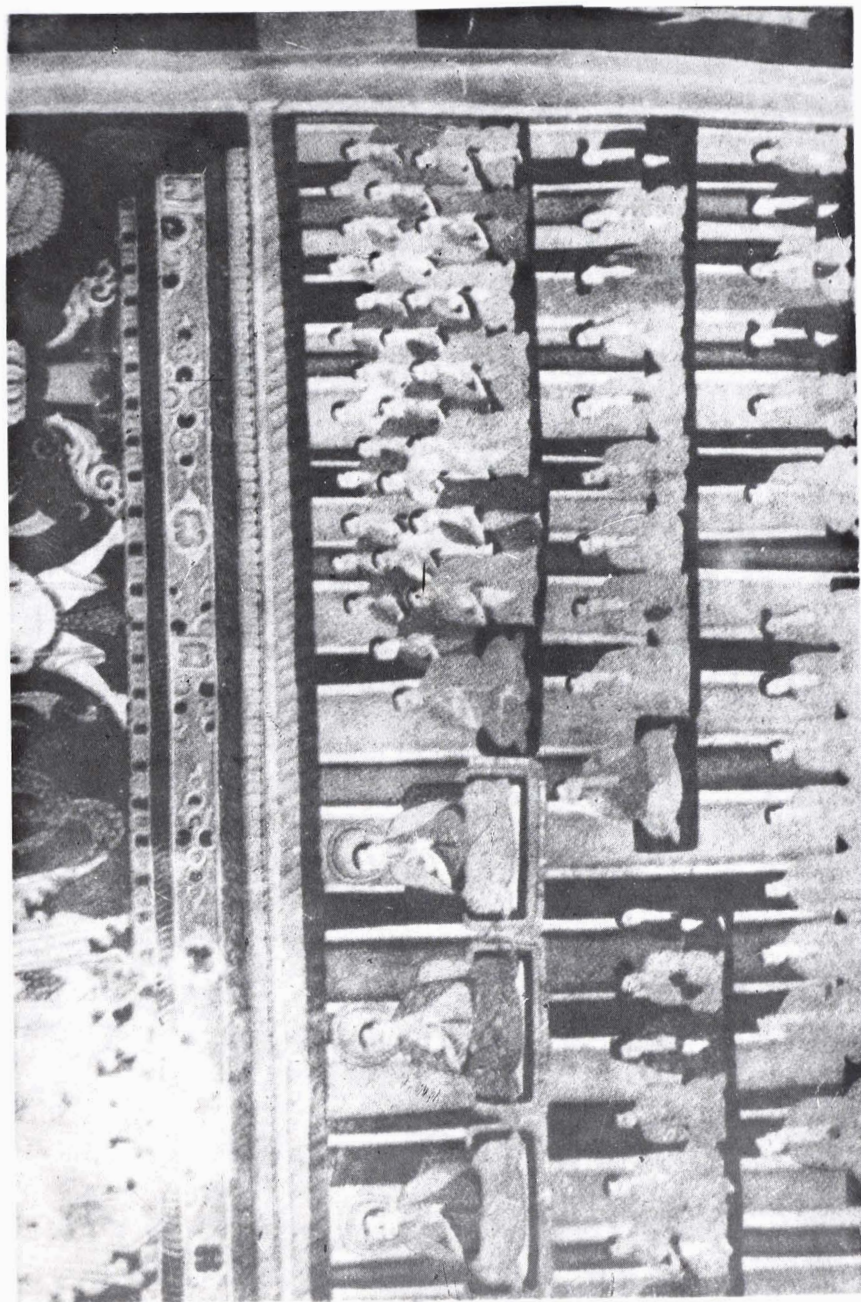
137. Foundation of the temple, p. 151



138. Foundation scene of the temple, p. 151-152

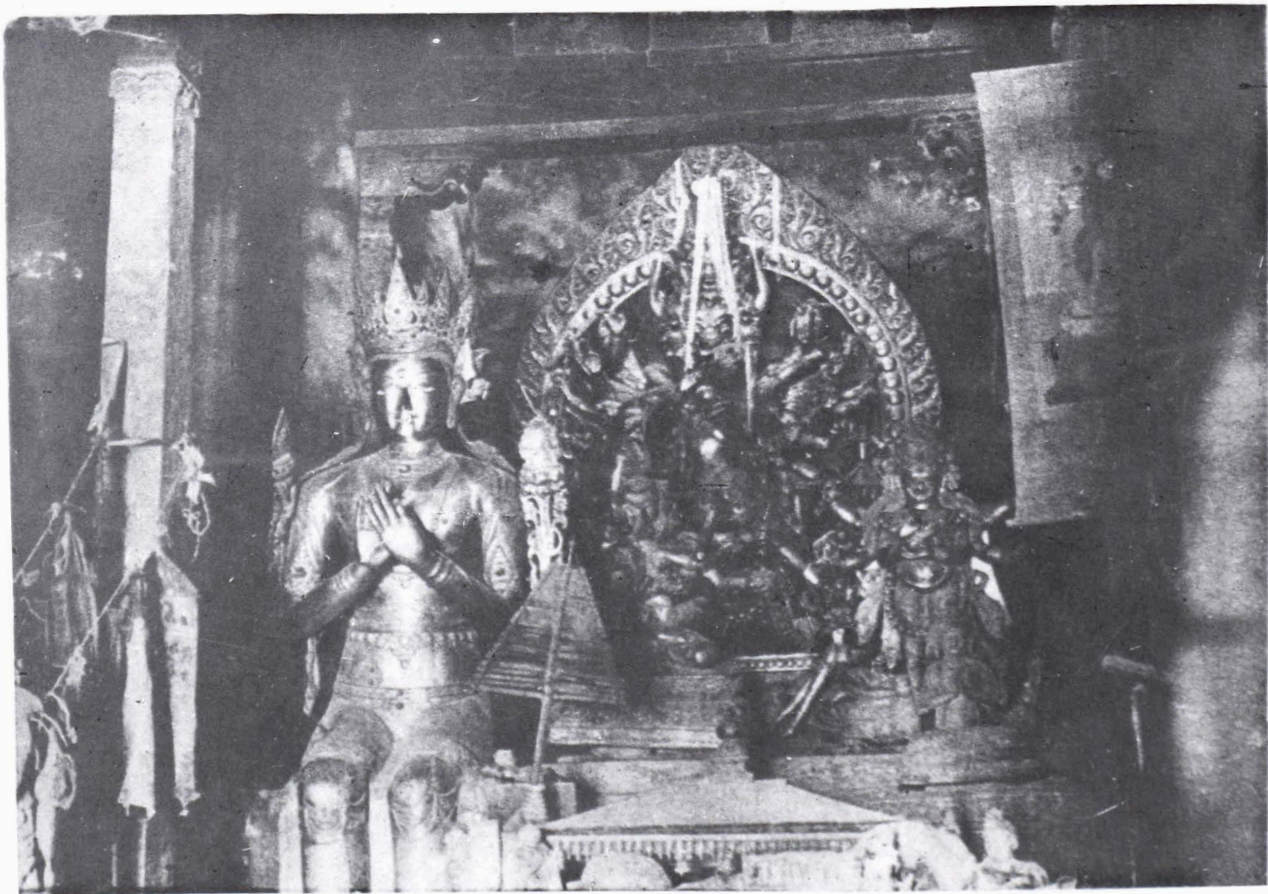


139. Lamas performing the consecration of the temple, p. 151



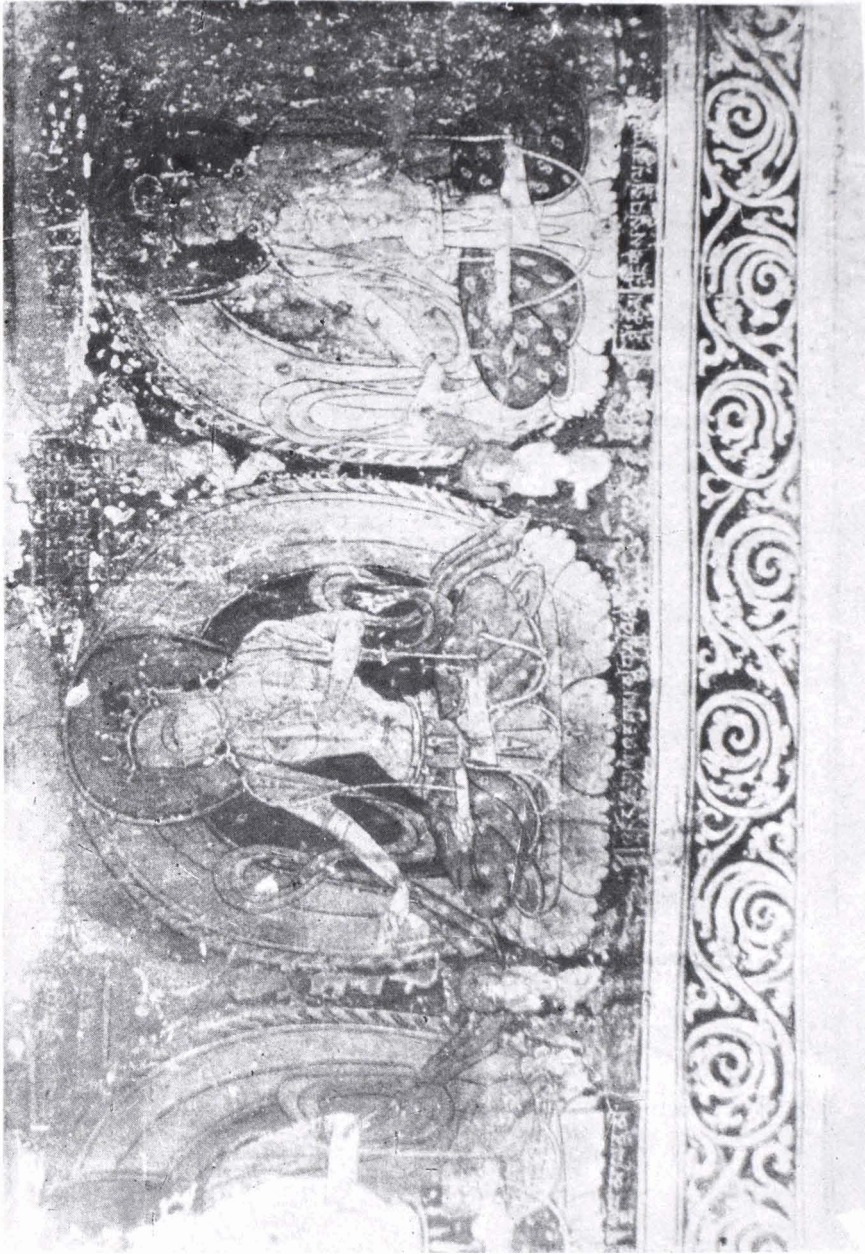
140. Consecration ceremony (contd.), p. 151

THE TEMPLE OF THE PREFECT





142. Vajrapāni (164), Various forms of Tārā, p 156



143. Various forms of Tārā, p 156





145. Various forms of Vajrapāṇi, p. 164-165



146. Various forms of Vajrapāṇi, p. 164



147. Vighnāntaka, Takirāja, Acala, p. 165



148. Bodhisattvas, p. 166.



149. Bodhisattvas, p. 166



150. Bodhisattvas, p. 166

THE LO-THAN DGON-PA



151. Abhijñārāja, p. 168



152. Maṇḍala of Uṣṇīṣavijayā, p. 169

