The Temples of Western Tibet and their Artistic Symbolism

TSAPARANG

by
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This volume of the *Indo-Tibetica* is dedicated to the six temples of Tsaparang, the temples of Šāṃvara and of Vajrabhairava, the White Temple, the Red Temple, the Temple of the Prefect, and the Lo-thān 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 Šāṃvara; his mandala along with its dākinīs and asta-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 Mahāvirocana, and the transformation from the orgiastic Aksobhya cults to yab-yum mahāyoga deities, dichotomy of square and circle in the mandala, 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-millenium, Tibetology, Cultural Anthropology and Himalayan Studies.
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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 Śāṇvara 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:
"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, ḍāka_. The twentyfour deities in the Śamvara-maṇḍala are termed vīras (NSP text p. 27). Tucci calls them twentyfour vīras throughout this book.

A number of anuttara yoga deities are termed vīra. In Vaiśnāvism, 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 Vishnu, 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”. (Raö 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, ekāvīra refers to Cakrasamvara or Śāṃvara (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 Ekāvīra-Heruka-sādhana (ibid. 2.43/13.25), Ekāvīra-śoḍaśabhujā-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 ekāvīra refers to is not clear.

The alternate title of Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantrarāja is Ekālavaṇa-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 yogini-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 Śāṃvara, Hevajra, Buddhakapāla, Mahāmāya, Ārali (Wayman
1973: 235). At times Cakrasamvara is referred to as Heruka, but that does not mean that Heruka = Cakrasamvara or vice versa. It simply implies that Cakrasamvara belongs to the larger group of the hypostases of Heruka.

Tucci comments on p.22 that Heruka is called Śaṁvara 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 Śaṁvara has twelve arms (text p.26). The present maṇḍala of Tsaparang pertains to Śaṁvara. Thus on p.48 too the central deity has to be named Śaṁvara 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 saṁvara ‘vow’. Edgerton (1953 : 539) translates saṁvara ‘restraint, control, obligation, vow’. The Tibetan equivalent sdom-pa also covers the same semantic spectrum ‘restraint, obligation, vow’. Prātimokṣa-saṁvara are ‘the moral restraints imposed in the code called Prātimokṣa’.

The word dāka is equal to antaka in Padma-dāka = Padmāntaka. The Tamil word tākku means ‘1. strength, robustness: 2. petulancy, pride’ (Tamil Lexicon 3.1696). Do dāka and vīra converge? In Tibetan dāka is translated as mkhah-hgro ‘skygoer’ and its feminine form dākinī as mkhah-hgro-ma ‘the skygoing female’.

The importance of dāka and dākinī 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  yogini-tantra  Sambarodaya etc. (Toh.373)
upāya-tantra  praṇā-tantra  Kālacakrā etc. (Toh.362)
dāka-tantra  dākinī-tantra  Vajrahrday-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:

yoga-tantras  yogini-tantras
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 Avatāmsaka, 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. Sukhavatī the western paradise of Amitābha was devoid of women, while Abhirati the eastern paradise of Aksobhya had beauties (stri-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 Akṣobhya-yāyūha, should receive due consideration". (Dantinne 1987: 31).

Women play a role which is both unexpected and essential in the Akṣobhya-yāyūha: here Akṣobhya preaches the law to women; there is talk of jewels of women (stri-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 yogini 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 dāka 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 stri-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 Sukhāvatī 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 Sukhāvatī-vyuha and Akṣobhya-vyuha 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 Sukhāvatī-vyuha was translated into Chinese five times the Akṣobhya-vyuha 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 Nispanna-yogāvalī the maṇḍalas of Mañjuvajra (no.1), Vajradhara of the Sampūta-tantra (no.3), Hevajra (no.5), Heruka (no.8), Mahāmāya (no.9), nine-deity Buddhakapāla (no.10), Śaṅvara (no.12), twenty-five-deity Buddhakapāla Heruka (no.13), Yogāmba (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
Alpacanḍa Vajrapāṇi
Mahācanḍa Vajrapāṇi
Acala Vajrapāṇi

The Rin-hbyun, that is illustrations to the Sādhanamāla of the Panchen Lama Bstan-paḥi-ṇi-ma, illustrates ten forms of Vajrapāṇi:

662 Phyag-rdor n-tsā-rya = Ucārya Vajrapāṇi
663 Phyag-rdor gos-sñon-can = Nīlāmbaradhara Vajrapāṇi
664 Phyag-rdor sa-luf-gs = Vajrapāṇi of the Sa-skya-pa
665 Phyag-rdor gtum-chen bsrui-bahi mkhar-ras-chuṅ-lugs = Canjamaḥāroṣaṇa Vajrapāṇi of Mkhar-ras-chuṅ
666 Phyag-rdor gtum-po khra-thogs = Khra-thogs Caṇḍa Vajrapāṇi

The three mahācandā, caṇḍa and alpacanḍa form a gradation.

668 Phyag-rdor gos-sñon-can ḥgro-bzan-lugs = Nīlāmbara-
    dhara Vajrapāṇi of Jagadbhadra.
669 Phyag-rdor khan-brtsegs = Kūṭāgāra Vajrapāṇi
670 Phyag-rdor ḥbyun-po-ḥdul-byed = Bhūtaḍāmara Vajrapāṇi
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 *Skubrnyan gsum-brgyal* Three Hundred Icons, a pantheon by Lcan-skya Hutuktu Rol-paḥi-rdo-rje. They are as follows:

2372 Phyag-rdor gtum-chuṅ = Alpakaṇḍa Vajrapāṇi
2373 Phyag-rdor gos-snon-can = Niḷambaraṇadhara Vajrapāṇi
2374 Phyag-rdor drag-po-gsum-dril = Tri-rudra-damana Vajrapāṇi

The text 454 in the Kanjur, Niḷambaraṇadhara 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 ḡdril) 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 Saṁvara-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 manḍala 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 manḍala are round, while the solid material components of the architectonic temple are square. A manḍala 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 Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha, Amoghavajra (A.D.753) has translated maṇḍala by e  與 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 Kuśāvatī has seven enclosures, 'but made of four precious stones only: gold, silver, beryl and crystal. Dipavatī, 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 (sγo) 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 (ṛta-hbabs) which surmounts the door. The doors are joined by a belt which is itself divided into five parts. ... Above all, the balcony, called
mdah-yab or padma, because it is decorated with lotus flowers. Over the doors rises the arch, torana, made of eleven fringes (s nam-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 torana there must be a lotus, on which rests the wheel of the Law with its twelve spokes; on its right and left two gazelles kṛṣṇasāra, a symbol of the preaching of Sarnath.

"Above the wheel we see the umbrella (gdugs) a badge of royalty; on its sides ha-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 (d pag-bsam-šiṅ) are born out of the bhadrakalasa (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-hbyun (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 dpah-bo drug 'six kavaca-vīras' (nos.566-577) are:

566 Kavaca-Vajrasattva/Go-chaḥi Rdo-rje-sems-dpaḥ
567 Kavaca-Vairocana/Go-chaḥi Rnam-snaṅ
568 Kavaca-Padmanartesvara/Go-chaḥi Padma-gar-dbaṅ
569 Kavaca Kṛṣṇa Heruka/Go-chaḥi He-ru-ka nag-po
570 Kavaca-Vajrasūrya/Go-chaḥi Rdo-rje-ṇi-ma
571 Kavaca-Paramāśva/Go-chaḥi Rta-mchog
The six Kavaca-yoginiṣ/Go-chahi dpah-mo drug are:

572 Kavaca-Vajravārāhi/Go-chahi Rdo-rje-phag-mo
573 Kavaca-Yāmini/Go-chahi Gśin-rje-ma
574 Kavaca-Mohini/Go-chahi Rmoṅs-byed-ma
575 Kavaca-Santrāsinī/Go-chahi Skrag-byed-ma
576 Kavaca-SAñcālinī/Go-chahi Bskyed-byed-ma
577 Kavaca-Caṇḍikā/Go-chahi Tsanḍi-kā

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

Maṇḍalas 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 maṇḍalas 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:

Mother tantras

(i) Heruka i.e. Akṣobhya
(ii) Vairocana
(iii) Vajraprabha i.e. Ratnasambhava
(iv) Padmanarteśvara i.e. Amitābha
(v) Paramāśva i.e. Amoghasiddhi
(vi) Vajradhara

Father tantras

Akṣobhya
Vairocana
Ratna-kula (lacking)
Padma-kula
Karma-kula (lacking)
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, Śāṃvara 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 Śāṃvara. The statement on p.62 about the two cycles of Śāṃvara and of Guhyasamāja has to be corrected accordingly.

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

- Heruka corresponds to Aksobhya
- 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 Śāṃvara 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 Śat-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 hjigs gsum are Guhyasamāja, Śāṃvara 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 Yamântaka, 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 Bhurkuṁkūta. He is illustrated in the pantheon of the Mongolian Kanjur (Lokesh Chandra 1987:171), and in the Rin-hbyun (ibid.733-35). The Rin-hbyun is interesting for its mantra of this deity, which runs: \textit{om bhurkhum mahāprāṇaye bhurci bhurkhi vimanase ucchusma mahākrodha hūṁ phat}. It is the same for both its smoke-coloured and dark forms. As a king of anger/krodharāja, bhurkuṁkūta is equivalent to Bhrkuṭa, whose feminine form Bhrkuṭī is well known. The feminine form Khro-mo Sme-brtsegs (ibid.735) has the mantra \textit{arkham cirkham vimanase ucchusma mahākrodha hūṁ phat}. In the Nanthang deities of the Rin-hbyun, the Angry Sme-brtsegs is repeated (ibid.949) with the mantra \textit{om bhurkum mahāprāṇāya bhurci bhurki vimale ucchusma krodha hūṁ hūṁ phat phat svāhā}. The goddess Khro-mo Sme-brtsegs has the mantra \textit{om arkham cirkham vimanasi ucchusma mahākrodha hūṁ phat} (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 sama-yas of the Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha (STTS):

1.1 Vajradhātu-mahāmaṇḍala (Lokesh Chandra 1986: fig.1-37).
1.2 Guhya-dhāraṇī-maṇḍala (ibid.38-71).
1.3 Sūksma-ñāṇḍala (ibid.72-104).
1.4 Karma-pūjā-ñāṇḍala (ibid.105-137).
1.5 Catur-mudrā-ñāṇḍala (ibid.140-144).
1.6 Eka-mudrā-ñāṇḍala (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/Hṛhaps-ma [ṛtsa-baḥi] Sgrol ljaṅ
785 Pravirā? Tārā/Rab-tu-dphaḥ-baḥi Sgrol-ma
786 Candrakāntī? Gaurī Tārā/Ḍkar-mo zla-mdan-skyi Sgrol-ma
787 Kanakavarnā Tārā/Gser-mdog-can-gyi Sgrol-ma
788 Uṣṇīṣavijayā Tārā/Gtsug-tor-rnam-par-rgyal-baḥi Sgrol-ma
789 Hūṃsvara-nādinī Tārā/Hūṃ-sgra-sgrog-paḥi Sgrol-ma
790 Trailokya-vijayā Tārā/Ḥjig-rten-gsum-las-rnam-par-rgyal-baḥi Sgrol-ma
791 Vādi-pramardinī Tārā/Rgol-ba-ḥjoms-paḥi Sgrol-ma
792 Varadā? Tārā/Dbaḥ-mchog-ster-baḥi Sgrol-ma
793 Mārīcī/Ḥod-zer-can-ma
794 Khadiravaṇī Tārā/Seṅ-ldeṅ-nags-kyi Sgrol-ma
Another series is from the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Pantheon (Lokesh Chandra 1987: nos.2145-2165) where the names again differ:

2145 Turā-virā/Myur-ma-dpaḥ-mo
2146 Sarasvatī/Dbyan-can-ma
2147 Puṇyavaradā/Bsod-nams-mchog-ster-ma
2148 Uṣṇīsavijayā/Gtseg-tor-rnam-rgyal-ma (st.4)
2149 Vidyā/Rig-byed-ma
2150 Bhairavi/Hjigs-byed-ma
2151 Aparājītā/Gzhan-gyis-mi-thub
2152 Paramjāyā?/Gzhan-las-rgyal
2153 Khadiravani Tārā/Seṅ-lden-nags Sgrol-ma
2154 Trailokyavijayā/Hjig-rten-gsum-rgyal
2155 Nor-gter-ma
2156 Maṅgalārthakarī?/Bkra-sis-don-byed
2157 Ripucakra-vināśini/Dgra-dpuñ-hjoms-mdzad-ma (st.13)
2158 Bhṛkuṭi/Khro-gñer-can (st.14)
2159 Praśāntā?/Rab-zhi-ma
2160 Ujjvaladyutī?/Ḥbar-baḥi-ḥod-can-ma
Eight Tārās which protect from the eight fears (Sgrol-ma hjigs-pa-brgyad skyob-ma) are as follows in the Aṣṭasāhasrikā pantheon (Lokesh Chandra 1987: nos.2169-2179):

2169 Mana-simha-bhaya-trāna/Na-rgyal-señ-gehi-hjigs-skyoñ
2170 Moha-hasti-bhaya-tāriñi devi/Gti-mug-glañ-pohi-hjigs-sgrol lha-mo
2171 Dveñ-agni-prašamanīi/Zhe-sdañ-me-dpun-tshogs-rnams-rab-zhi-ma
2172 Īrşyā-sarpavis-āpaharanī/Phrag-dog-sprul-gyi-dug-rnams-yoñ-sel-ma
2173 Kudṛṣti-cora-upadrava-nivāraṇī/Lta-nañ-rkun-pohi-ñer-htshe-las-bzlog-ma
2174 Ghora-mātsarya-śrṅkhalā-mocanī/Mi-bzad-ser-snañi-lcags-sgrog-hgrol-mdzad-ma
2175 Rāg-augha-vegāvarta-śoṣanī/Hdod-chags-chu-bohi-rba-klon-skems-mdzad-ma
2176 Saṁsaya-piśāca-bhaya-trāna Tārā/The-tshom-śa-zahi-hjigs-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 linga of each cemetry.
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 latter (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), ekavīra 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 Bhaisajyaguru (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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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

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-bzañ-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-bzañ-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-bzañ-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-bzañ-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 Mñañ-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

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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 Śaṅvara/Bde-mchog on the summit of the hill, in the middle of the royal palace. The goddesses constituting the various followers of Śaṅvara 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 Seṅge-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 thangkas 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 thangkas 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-bzaṅ-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 ascesis and meditation, the torch of the same initiatic teaching. I have also already said how many among the temples built by him were actual manḍalas each consecrated to a special god and to his cycle. Also in Tsaparang the same criterion 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 Aksobhya in his multiple forms as Heruka, as Hevajra, as Guhyasamāja or as Cakrasamvara. 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 Śākyamuni, 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 Saññvara, 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 ŠAMVARA/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 mandala 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 mandala 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 Šāmvara/Bde-mchog". The frescoes show that the tradition is exact.

§2. The cycle of Šāmvara/Bde-mchog. Šāmvara/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: Cakraśambhara and Šambhara; so at least according to the reading of the manuscripts (1). The tantras which contain their

(1) Śricakrasambara 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 Cakrasamvara): thus also in no. 101 H.P. Shastri, transcribes sometimes Cakrasambara and sometimes Cakrasamvara.

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) Cakrasambara and the Śambara-Tantra. But that the two lines are fundamentally identical is shown by the mañḍalas symbolically expressing them. These mañḍalas 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; Cakrasambara or Cakrasamvara is usually translated (1): Ḫkhor-lo-sdom-pa. They then were reading: samvara, 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 Cakrasamvara (Ḫkhor-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


The Sanskrit titles preserved in the Tibetan collection waver between Śrīcakrasamvara, Cakrasambara, Šambara (in Šambara-maṇḍala-vidhi, Šambara-kalita etc.) (edition of Sde-dge) Śrīcakraśambara; see catalogue of the Bkah-hgyur 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 Śrīcakraśambara (transcribed however Śrīcakrasambhāra) 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. Ḫdus)”. The synonymity of samvara and samāja is attested by Nāropā in the Sekoddeśa-tīkā p. 33: sarva-dhātunāṁ samāhāro mālpakāḥ samājāḥ samvarāḥ
which keep us attached to life, or of "existence" because these texts reveal the law of karmic connection. Śāṃvara, then, i.e. union, or point of meeting, wants to point at the essence of the whole, that is to say the gnosia of the essential luminosity which is the ground of things. Or "wheel" are the four prime gnosia (1), and "union" is the gnosia of the absoluto (chos-kyi-dbyin= dharmadhātu). "Wheel" is symbol of the dakini (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: Śāṃvara, giving to sam the meaning of "beatitude" (3). They, then, took Śāṃvara as a composite name: "the supreme (vara) pleasure (ṣam), 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

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(1) On this see Indo-Tibetica III/1.55, 152.
(2) see Guhyavajra-tantrarāja-vṛtti, Bstan-hgyur, rgyud Ta 264.
(3) That is ṣam sukham, see the comment of Madhavacārya to Sūta-samhitā (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 *samâpatti*) of the two indissoluble coefficients of salvation; that is to say the gnosia 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 (*ākṣara-sukham jñānadhātu* in Vimalaprabhā VIII a) and, which is identical with the state of Buddha (*Buddhatvam paramākṣara-sukham*, 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 Dohākosa, 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 Śāmvara, 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 Šaṁvara 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, Šaṁvara-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 Šiva. 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 Šiva, according to some traditions, had the fifth head of Brahmā cut.

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

"(Heruka) with his two main arms embraces Vajravāraṇī 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 khatvānga marked with the vajra (symbol of illumination), a skull (thod-pa, kapāla) full of blood (symbol of the supreme beatitude, mahāsukha), the adamanatine noose (vajrapāsa) 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 (rūn-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 (viśavājra). 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 (śan-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

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 gnoses 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 (ālī) and by the consonantic series (kālī). Out of them is produced the purification of the thirst for action etc., the liberation from mental obscurations, 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 saṁsāra and that of annihilation, namely the nonexistence (of the individual) in Nirvāṇa, in a word the submission (abhibhava) of the whole phenomenal 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 ascesis 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 stringed 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-rdo-rje) 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 (tarjani-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; māraṇamāra 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 Śaṁvara. 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 Śaṁvara 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 Śaṁvara 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 Śaṁvara 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 pañcaśakrama 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 manḍalas. The texts contained in the Bkah-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 manḍala is not painted but is built with wood and stucco. When it was intact, it would have constituted a splendid example of a stable manḍala. In fact, normally the manḍalas, if not frescoed, were drawn every time by means of colored powders or on the floor

(1) For the Bkah-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 (vimāṇa) 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 Śāṇivara elaborated by the celebrated Siddha Lūi-pā and glossed by Tsori-kha-pa (1). This

(1) According to no. 7 in the bibliographic list the whole literature of Cakrasamvara and of the Śāṇivaratantra 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, Śāṇivarodaya, Yoginī-saṅcāra, Abhidhānottara, Sampuṭa; c) the parallel Tantras (phyogs mthun) as Herukābhhyudaya, 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 Ghaṇṭā-pā, or from that of Kṛṣṇācārya. Without entering into details, it is right to say that Rin-chen-bzaṅ-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, Nāgarjuna, 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 Šamvara and have therefore to be evoked 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 Lüi-pâ/Tson-kha-pa according to a scheme that allows us to recognise easily the single divine manifestations constituting the rich maṇḍala of Šamvara.
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, äliśha posture. His consort is Vajravārāhī, red, two hands: vajra and kapāla.

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

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

4. Pad-ma-gaṛ-gyi-dbaṅ-phyug/Padmanartesvara, red, one head, right hand: red lotus, left hand: bell at the height of the breast, äliśha posture.

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

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

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

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

9. Zhe-sdaṅ-rdo-rje/Dveśavajra, black, one head, right hand: vajra near breast, left hand: bell on side, äliśha posture.

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

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


13. Dbaṅ-phyug-rdo-rje/Iśvaravajra, white, one head, right hand: vajra on breast, left hand: bell on side, äliśha posture.
14. Ltun-byed-ma, yellow, one head, 4 hands: right hands: knife, disc, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga, ālīḍha posture.

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

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

17. Gar-gyi-dbaṅ-phyug-ma/Narteśvari, green, one head, 4 hands: right hands: knife, sword, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga, ālīḍha posture.

18. Padmaḥi-dra-ba-can/*Padmañāla, 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-gdoṅ-ma/Kākāsyā, black, one head, two hands: right hand: club (rdo-rje-tho-ba), magical dagger (phur-bu).

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

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

24. Phag-gdoṅ-ma/Sūkarāsyā, yellow, one head, two hands as in no. 19.
25. Gśin-rje-brtan-ma/Yamadādhī or ⁴drṭhā, 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-mkhaṭ-hgro-ma/Yamadamśtri, red on right and green on left, one head, two hands as in no. 19.

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

5. MCHOD-PAHI-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.

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-waī-ma/Vīṇā, blue, four hands: right hands: vīṇā, 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.

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

41. Gar-ma/Nṛtyā, 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, ādamaru, left hands: kapāla, khaṭvāṅga.


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

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

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

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


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

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

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

84. Dbaṅ-phyug-chen-po/Īśana, white, four hands: two joined in adoration, right hand: trident, left hand: kapāla, mount: ox.

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

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


[Sanskrit equivalents of 84, 86, 87 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.
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. Ḫjog-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. Mthaḥ-yas/Ananta, multicoloured, both hands in adoration.
72. Rigs-idan/Kulika, white, both hands in adoration.
73. Duṅ-skyon/Śaṅkhapāla, yellow, both hands in adoration.
74. Heruka, blue, four heads: blue, green, red, yellow, twelve hands: two embrace the sakti holding vajra and bell, right hands: ḍamaru, hatchet, knife, trident, left hands: khatvāṅga, kapāla, noose, head of Brahmā, the right leg in ālīḍha, left in pratyaśālīḍha trampling on Kālabhairava and on Kāli, sakti: Rdo-rje-phag-mo/Vajravarāhī, two faces, two hands in tarjani mudrā and with a kapāla.

75. Īkākini, 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 sakti (yab-yum)

(A) SPHERE OF THE SPIRIT (THUGS-KYI ḢKHIR-LO) OR OF ETHER (NAM-MKHAH)

79. At Pulīra 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 sakti holding vajra and bell, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, sakti: Rab-gtum-ma/Pracaṇḍā, with two hands embracing the god, the right hand in tarjani-mudrā and knife, the left hand: kapāla, hair.
80. At Jalandhara: (top of the head) Mahākaṁkāla, blue, one head, four hands: two hands embrace the sakti holding vajra and bell, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭväṅga, sakti: Gtum-mig-ma/Pracandākṣi (the Sanskrit names are from the Niṣpanna-yogāvali pp. 26,27).

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

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

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

84. At Rāmesvara: (space between the eyebrows) Hod-dpag-med/Amitābha, blue, two hands embrace the sakti holding vajra and bell, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭväṅga, sakti: Kharvari.

85. At Devīkotā: (two eyes) Rdo-rje-hod/Vajraprabha, blue, two hands embrace the sakti holding vajra and bell, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭväṅga, sakti: Laṅkāhi-dbaṅ-phyug-ma/Laṅkeshvari.


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

87. At Kāmarūpa: (two armpits) Myu-gu-can/Aṅkuraka, blue, two hands embrace the sakti holding vajra and bell, right hand: ḍamaru, left hand: khaṭväṅga, sakti: Sa-sruṇs-ma/Airāvatī.

89. At Tiśakune: (navel) Dpaḥ-bo-chen-po/Mahāvīra, red, right hand: đamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, ṣakti: Rluṅ-gi-ṣugs-can-ma/Vāyuvegā.


91. At Kaliṅga: (mouth) Rab-tu-bzaṅ-po/Subhadra, red, right hand: đamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, ṣakti: Sno-bsaṅs-lha-mo/Śyāmādevī.


94. At Himalaya: (pupils of the eyes) Mig-mi-bzaṅ/Virūpākṣa, red, right hand: đamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, ṣakti: Byagdoṁ-ma/Khagānanā.

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

95. At Pretapurī: (sexual organs) Stobs-po-chen/Mahābala, red, right hand: đamaru, left hand: khaṭvāṅga, ṣakti: Ḥkhor-loḥi-ṣugs-can-ma/Cakravegā.


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


§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/Drāg-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 Klön-rdo in his Bstan-srûn dam-can rgya-mtsho spī mîn-gi grâns (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 twenty-four places of the vajrakāya already presided, according to the theories of the Śāativātantra, by the twenty-four viras. 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 twenty-four viras 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 Hāthayoga. 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 twenty-four gods enthroned in the twenty-four places of the earth, as also in twenty-four parts of
the human body, delimit the superflaces 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 twenty-four 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 Śaṁvara. This arid scheme that I have taken from the ritualistics of the Śaṁvara-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 twenty-four vīras is not isolated. It is perhaps to be put together with the twenty-four 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, Madhyalīlā, chapter 20). They too, except Nārāyaṇa who dwells in the heavenly Vaikutthana, have their separate heavens in the eight cardinal directions around the supreme heaven (Parama-vyoma) but they come down in the world to preside over certain special places. They are also seated in the various parts of the body.
Mandala of the physical plane (kāya)

Mandala of the verbal plane (vāc)

Mandala of the spiritual plane (citta)
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 ecstasy 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 mandalas the
enigmatic representation. The masters who elaborated these
methods of mystical realizations were undoubtedly very able
knowers of the human psyche. Starting from interior experi-
ences, 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 con-
centration 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 mandala 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 Śaṅvara, according to the system of Lui-pā, interpreted and commented by Tsoṅ-kha-pa, out of which I have taken the iconographic scheme that will serve us to identify the paintings of Tsaparang.
§7. The mandala of Šāṃvara as represented at Tsaparang. We start then to study the mandala 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 saktis, 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 sakti 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 khro-mo or čākinīs 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: Yamadākinī/Gśin-rje-mkhaḥ-hgro-ma, Yamadūtī/Gśin-rje-phoṅa-mo, Yamadādhī/Gśin-rje-brtan-ma, the last, having however a human face could be Narteśvarī/Gar-gyi-dbañ-phyug-ma rather than Ulūkāsyā/Ḥug-gdoṅ. Nevertheless the number of arms does not correspond to the one indicated in the manual of Lui-pā/Tson-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-pahi sgrub-thabs, 2) Beom-ldan-ḥdas dpal Ḥkhor-lo-sdom-pahi 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 Šāṁvaratantra 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 Śaṅvara, 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 Tson-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, Yoganīs 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) Śīrīsa (Acacia sirissa), cūṭa or āmra (Mangifera indica), aśvattha (Ficus religiosa), harikela, vaṭa (Ficus bengalensis), karaṇja (Pongamia glabra), latāpar-kāṭi, pārthīva 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 mandala of Śamvara. 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-chehi-ran-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 (dbaṅ-chen) black, the Gandhamādana (spos-dan-ladan) yellow, the Himālaya (gaṅs-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 Tson-kha-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/Dipā
Bdug-(spas)-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, Naivedyā/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-lha-mo count just eight and not five goddesses.

Plate X represents instead Puṣpā/Me-tog-ma (visible only partially) and Pādyā/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 ārghya (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, Saṅcālinī/Skyod-byed-ma and then Mohini/ Rmoṅs-byed-ma, only partially visible, and Yāmini/Gśin-rje-ma. These deities represent the cycle of the mothers (mātrikā, 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 rakṣā 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 ōveśa 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 đamaru, a head, in the three to the left the bell, the skull, and the khatvāṅga. 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-snaṅ 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-dbaṅ-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 phat 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 đamaru, and in those of the left, above the bell, below the khatvāṅga with skull. They are seated on solar seats, surrounded by solar light, and each is united with his own śakti: Gśin-rjema etc.

These six heroes (dpah-bo, viṇa) 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 (ālidha)
From the navel of the mudrā (1), at the centre of the maṇḍala, from the syllable om bām of red colour, it is imagined that emanates Vajravarāhi, 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 hrim mom white, on the neck (of the mudrā) Rmoṅs-byed-ma, white.

From the syllables hreṁ hreṁ 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 phat phat 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 Śāṃvara, 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 Śāṃvara 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-sdan, a peculiar form of Akṣobhya; the two at his right are Rin-ḥbyuṅ namely Rin-(chen)-ḥbyuṅ-(ldan)/Ratnasambhava and Rnam-snaṅ: namely Rnam-par-snaṅ-mdzad/Vairocana. The others on the
left are Hod-pa-med/ i.e. Hod-dpag-med/Amitabha 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/l.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 Guhyasamâja.

This fivefold series has as its centre Akṣobhya and the whole is considered as the emanation from the germinal light (hod gsal) symbolically expressed in the figure of Mahâvajradhara, the supreme possessor of Vajra, namely of the unfailing essence that beyond the flowing of appearances represents the eternal source of cosmic life. As such the pentad of the Guhyasamâja represents the fivefold centre of the manḍala 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 manḍala.

The presence of the five central deities of the manḍala of the Guhyasamâja 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 Śri-guhyasamāja- 
maṇḍala-devakāya-stotra by Asthiravajra, translated by Śraddhā- 
karavarman and Rin-chen-bzaṅ-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 Śāmvarā, to 
whom the chapel is essentially dedicated? Evidently not. A con-
tamination of the two Tantras is not impossible a priori, because, 
although the liturgies they explain are different, both neverthe-
less 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 sus-
tain and transport our psychophysic forces towards them. There 
is also a point in common, which is represented by Aksobhya, 
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 Aksobhya, or with 
his essential form Mahāvajradhara; while in those of the Śām-
vāra 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 mys-
tical experience symbolized. In fact, in the liturgical treatises we 
find that Aksobhya and Heruka are perfectly assimilated (1),

(1) Bibliographic list no. 7, p.11a, (Heruka ni skabs ḭdir 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 (abhedya) 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 adamantine 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 Samvara, 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-gšegs-pa thams-cad-kyi de-kho-na-nid ni dpal heruka ste (Abhidhānottaratantra, p. 11, chapter 40).

(2) Bstan-hgyur, rgyud Ta, p. 105 Vajraḍāka-vivrṭi.

(3) See Vajramandal-ālaṅkāra-paṅjikā, Bstan-hgyur 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 mandala. 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" (*rakṣā-caakra, sruñ-bahi-hkhor-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-hdus*. 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, Vajrakāla/Rdo-rje-hdus, Vajrabhairava/Rdo-rje-hjigs-byed, Vajrapātāla/Rdo-rje-sa-hog, Vajroṣṇiṣa/Rdo-rje-gtṣug-tor, Hūmkāra/Hūm-mdzad, Vajrasūrya/Rdo-rje-ṇi-ma, Vajranitya/Rdo-rje-ṛtag-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 gsu'ns-pahi tshogs du-mahi sgrub-thabs-kyi rim-pa phyogs gcig-tu bkod-pa pham bdehi ʰdod dug-ster-ba yoṅs-ʰduḥi ʰkhrí-ɕiṅ_ of Blo-bzaṅ-skal-bzaṅ-rgya-mtsho, the Seventh Dalai Lama (p. 22) a chapter dedicated to the _Bcom-'ldan-hdas ḥkhor-lo-sdom-pahi bsruṅ-ḥkhor_, that is to the rite of protection in the liturgy of the Blessed Cakrasamvara has the description of a cycle which is totally identical with the one represented on the walls of this temple of Śaṁvara/Bde-mchog. This cycle is but the “circle of protection” concluding the liturgical ceremonies not of the Guhyasamāja, but of the Cakrasamvara, 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 Vajrahūṃkāra, 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 dākinīs._ 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 grue-
some 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, reveal-
ing their names. They are ten Mkhah-hgro-ma or dākinīs, and
precisely:
on the left wall:
Samaya-dāka/Dam-tshig-gi mkhah-hgro (pl. XX);
Kāya-dāka/Sku-yi mkhah-hgro (pl.XXI);
Citta-dāka/Thugs-kyi mkhah-hgro (which could not be
photographed);
Vāg-dāka/Gsuni-gi mkhah-ḥgro (pl. XXII);
Mahāsukha-dāka/Bde-chen mkhah-hgro (pl. XXIII);
on the right wall:
Ratna-dāka/Rin-chen-mkhah-ḥgro (pl. XXIV);
Buddha-dāka/Saṅs-rgyas-mkhah-ḥgro (pl. XXV);
Vajra-dāka/Rdo-rje-mkhah-ḥgro (pl. XXVI);
Padma-dāka/Pad-ma-mkhah-ḥgro (pl. XXVII);
Viṣva-dāka/Sna-tshogs-mkhah-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 Šaṁ-vara/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 Tson-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 Bkah-gdams-pa and therefore one could suppose that the kings too would have followed this direction. But the school of the Bkah-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 Byan-chub-ḥod, famous in the history of Buddhism through the Bkah-gdams-pa tradition of which he is the hero, is not unknown even to the Rñii-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 ʤākinī they wanted to represent on the walls of our temple, I can, however, say that the ʤākinīs/mkha’-ḥgro-ma are recorded in various liturgical texts of the cycle of Šānvara. The ʤākinī 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

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(1) Thus, for instance, in the Rin-chen gter-mdzod vol. Ti is preserved a Lha-btsun Byan-chub-hod-kyi Mon-bu pu-tra min s rin-ḥi sgrub-thabs kha-bkol-mahi gzhun lde-ba.

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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Saṅs-rgyas-mkhaḥ-hgro-ma} & = \text{Buddhaḍākinī} \\
\text{Rdo-rje-mkhaḥ-hgro-ma} & = \text{Vajraḍākinī} \\
\text{Rin-chen-mkhaḥ-hgro-ma} & = \text{Ratnaḍākinī} \\
\text{Padma-mkhaḥ-hgro-ma} & = \text{Padmaḍākinī} \\
\text{Sna-tshogs-mkhaḥ-hgro-ma} & = \text{Las-kyi-mkhaḥ-hgro-ma} \\
& = \text{Karmaḍākinī}.
\end{align*}
\]

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-sdan/dveṣa hatred, ṇa-rgyal/māna pride, ḡdod-chags/rāga passion, phrag-dog/irsyā 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 Ḫbrug-pa text, a liturgy of the cycle of Šaṁvara, Dpal ḡkhor-lo-bde-mchog mṅon-dkyil, in which is described the way to consubstantiate with the maṇḍala of Šaṁvara composed of 13 deities. Around the maṇḍala spoken about in this text are represented four ḍākinīs, namely: gtū-mug/moha (= avidyā), phrag-dog, ḡdod-chags, ṇa-rgyal. In it the fifth zhe-sdaṅ 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-sdaṅ) is the quintessential form of Aksobhya in the school of the Guhyasamājā 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 Rñiṅ-ma-pa, such as the Chos-ñiid mkhaḥi kloṅ-mdzod-las mkhah-ḥgro ḡdus-paḥi skor-las dur geod dīnos-grub baṅ-mdzod, five offerings are dedicated to the five ḍākinī, namely, the five consti-
tuents of a human being according to the traditional classification of Buddhism; matter (rūpa), conscience (vijñāna), sensation (vedanā), idea (samjñā), 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dākinis</th>
<th>Elements of human personality sacrificed to them</th>
<th>Corresponding gnostic wisdoms</th>
<th>Stains eliminated by them in the micro-cosm</th>
<th>Psychic centres</th>
<th>Buddha</th>
<th>Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhadākinī</td>
<td>rūpa</td>
<td>dharmadhātu</td>
<td>avidvā summit of Vairocana head</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aksobhya</td>
<td>white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vajradākinī</td>
<td>vijñāna</td>
<td>ādārśa</td>
<td>dvesa heart</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ratnasambhava</td>
<td>blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratnadākinī</td>
<td>vedanā</td>
<td>samatā</td>
<td>māna navel</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amitābha</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Padmadākinī</td>
<td>samjñā</td>
<td>pratyavekṣā</td>
<td>rāga neck</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karmaṇadākinī</td>
<td>samskāra</td>
<td>kriyānusthāna</td>
<td>irdavya genitals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amoghasiddhi</td>
<td>green</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three other dhākinīs also form a well-defined group, namely:

- Thugs-kyi mkhaḥ-hgro-ma/Cittadākini
- Sku-yi mkhaḥ-hgro-ma/Kāyaḍākini
- Gsuṅ-gi mkhaḥ-hgro-ma/Vāgḍākini

that is the dhākinīs 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-hgro/Samayaḍākini means the force of the symbol (sarnaya) 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-hgro that is Mahāsukhaḍākini, 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 dhākinīs 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: Śamvara/Bde-mchog;
four faces, twelves 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 (ḥkhor-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 Abhidhānottaratantra 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 Canda-mahāroṣaṇa (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 Padmapani: 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 Vajrapāni: 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-khaṅ” 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 mandala 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 mandala of Vajrabhairava with all his acolytes, his secondary manifestations, and his guardians. Vajrabhairava, who is Gšin-rje-hjigs-byed-chen-po/Yamāntaka Mahāvajrabhairava, is one of the more venerated deities in Lamaism, and especially in the schools of the Sa-skya-pa 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 gšin-rje-gšed-nag-poṣi 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

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(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 Mahāyānīc 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 Atīśa, 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-mahi sgrub-thabs and the Ro-laṅs brgyad sgrub-thabs by Lalitavajra, the Dpah-bohi-geg-pahi sgrub-thabs by Śrīdhara/Dpal-ḥdzin, the sādhana of Čuṅ-rye pho-brgyad mo-brgyad (known in Tibet as the sādhana of the seventeen gods) by Amoghavajra the Elder; the sādhana of Dpah-bo geig-pa by Śrībhadra and that by Jñānakara, the sādhana of Ḥjam-dpal-ye-ses, the sādhana of Two-armed Bhairava by Ḥjam-dpal-dbyans, the ritual (vidhi) of Zhi-bahi-ye-ses, 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-hgrags, the second to the lotsava of Skyo Hod-hbyun, 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-hjigs-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-pa, 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-hgrags.
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 Vajra-pani 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, vṛttānta) summed up by Bhāro the Nepalese, to whom insertion in the Bkaḥ-hgyur 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, Śaṃmukha, Śaḍānana) 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 thirty-four 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 Sivaite 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 hathayoga): vein ḍā and vein piṅgalā, right and left, series of consonants (kālī) and series of vowels (ālī). 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 (ḥod-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.

(2) See no. 10.
§17. The mandala 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, thirty-four 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-Ghersi 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 (dharma-cakra); 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 bhiti-pāla. This weapon is "a kind of short spear which has some peacock feathers on the point": Bhi-ti-pa-la ni mdun thun-gi rnam-pa-can rtse-mo-la chags-pahi rma-byahi sgro-mdoni-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 (ḥod-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 (ekāvīra, dpah-bo geig-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 sāktis 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 ekāvīra, namely, of the “solitary hero”.

(1) Namely the ekāvīra of these schools corresponds to the akulāvīra of the Śivaite sects, that is Śiva conceived as the ineffable absolute before the play of his sāktis is released by him. They are being in itself for itself, archetypes of māyā or phenomenic contingency, although transcending this māyā, see Kaula-jñāna-nirñāya 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 Tsoṅ-kha-pa and his disciples. One of them, Mkhas-grub-rje, wrote a systematic work about Vajrabhairava of an evidently polemical 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 Vajravetāli/Rdo-rje-ro-lāns-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 šakti. The other two on the right have the disc and the sword; those on the left firmly hold the gem and the lotus. The šakti embracing the god is equal to him in every respect.

To the south Ser-sna-gšin-rje-gšed/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 šakti is similar to him in every respect.

To the west Hdod-chags-gšin-rje-gšed/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 šakti is similar.

To the north Phra-dog-rdo-rje-gšin-rje-gšed/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-gšin-rje-gšed/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-gšin-rje-gšed/Danda-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-gšin-rje-gšed/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-gšin-rje-gšed/Khadga-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 sakti 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 ljaṅ-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 Phag-mo/Vārāhi, 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 manḍala 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-don (for gdoṅ-can/Kākāsyā “the god with the head of crow”; (plate LXI) Ye-šes-kyi-mgon brgyan-can; (plate LXII) Myur-mdzad; Mgon-po phyin-kha; (plate LXIII) Remati; (plate LXIV) Dpal Mgon phyag-bzhi; Rta-mgrin; Phyag-na-rdo-rje; (plates LVIII-LIX) šar-du Gśin-rje dkar-po; byaṅ-gi Gśin-rje sṅon-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; Šakarali; Phyag-saṅs; Rol-pa-tshar-dgu-ma; Pho-ṇa-mo nag-mo; Bsod-ma; Dus-mtshan-ma; Dus-zhags-ma.

(Plate LVI) Spaṅ-ras-gzigs; Dmag-zor-rgyal-ma; (plate (LVII) Ye-šes-kyi-mkhaḥ-hgro-ma; Mgon-po gzag-ldan; Gśin-rje-gsed.

(Plate XXXIX) Gśin-rje; Me-lha; Rgya-byin; Tshaṅs-pa.
(Plate XL) Srin-po; Gśin-rje; Me-lha.
(Plate XLI) Dbaṅ-ldan; Gnod-sbyin; Rluṅ-lha; Chu-lha.
(Plate XLII) Rgya-byin; ņe-dbaṅ; Gśin-rje; Chu-lha.
(Plate XLIII) Srin-po; Rluṅ-lha; Me-lha.
(Plate XLIV) Lus-ṇan; Tshogs-bdag; Dbaṅ-ldan.
Comparing this list to what we may deduce 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 mandala 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-skyoñ/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 Kloň-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 accolytes, 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 Kloň-rdol already quoted: the eight protectors of the directions (*phyogs-skyoñ/dikpāla*), the eight mahādevas (*lha-chen brgyad*), the eight worldly mahādevas (*hjig-rten-pahi lha-chen brgyad*).

To the same protective cycle of the Bstan-sruñ-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 Kloň-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.

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We see in the mural paintings another deity never lacking in the cycle of the Bstan-sruñ-ma, namely (plate LXIV) Mgon-po/Mahākāla of four arms. His iconography is similar to the one described in the text of Kloñ-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-rog-gdoñ-can/Kākāśya (plate LX) with the knife in the right and a skull in the left. Thus two dākinīs 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 (gsan-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 Yogini/Rnal-ḥbyor-ma, changed then to Čaṇḍāli 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-vaṅga 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 Rñiñ-ma-pa, for example Bkah-sruñ-ma chen-pa sgrub-pahi phrin-las, p. 2 in Rin-chen-gter-mdzod vol. ņi.
(2) Dpal-ldan ran-hbyun rgyal-moḥi skor-las ma-mo srog-sgrub-gi gzuṅs, p. 3 ibid.
Remati 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 Kumāratantra 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 Kumāratantra 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 Rimati "(Mythologie des Buddhismus, p.66) and believes that the name Rimati is the translation of the Sanskrit Pārvatī, the goddess of the mountain. This is erroneous, first because the name of the goddess is Remati and not Rimati; then because by no means could be explained the unusual formation with the suffix -ti.

(2) The Kumāratantra 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 Kumāratantra, attributed to Rāvaṇa and therefore often called Rāvaṇa-Kumāratantra, 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".

(3) But the Suśruta-samhitā knows only Revatī. In the Kumāratantra ŚuṣkaRevatī is called in Chinese, 嘴缚帝, 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 Cāmūṇḍā. Perhaps this parallel is not out of place, because examples of assimilation of Revatī with Cāmūṇḍā 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 Cāmūṇḍā is already found in the Kathāsaritsāgara 53.

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 Kloṅ-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-bzan-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 Kāli, 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 ante-rior 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 Kāli, called also

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(1) In his treatise Hdod-kham-dbaṅ-phyug-ma dmag-zor-rgyal-mohi sgrub-thabs gtor cho-ga.

(2) According to Hdod-kham-dbaṅ-phyug-ma dmag-zor-rgyal-mohi 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-Idan Dmag-zor-ma (1). This multiplicity of aspects of the same religious intuition is very well expressed by Blo-bzaṅ-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. Remati is thus assimilated to Umā (p. 5), to the queen of the Nāgas Gtsug-naḥi bu-mo Nor-ḥdzin-ma, of the yakṣas Gaṇ-bzaṅ-bu-mo Gzi-legs-ma, of the demons (bdud) Ḥgog-yag-sras-mo Dri-Idan-ma, of the Rākṣasa and so on. In India she appears as Ma-mo (Mātrkā) Vaśaṁ-kuruma (sic); among the Turkish populations of Central Asia (Hor) as “the Turkish”, the principal of the nine sisters Gñan (Hor-mo gñan-γyi spun dguḥi gtso); among the Chinese as “the Chinese”; the blue, with the auspicious neck (Sñon-mo Mgrin-bzaṅ-ma); among the Mon as Spyi-rin-lan-bran-ma; among the Tibetans as Dpal-Idan 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, maleficient 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-bzaṅ-chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan has included in his liturgical manual a hymn


(3) About the Gñan see Laufer, Sühngedichte der Bonpo s.v., and Ku-lhbum bsdus-paḥi sniṅ-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 Remati of the Gñan,
Dmag-zor sentinel of the teaching,
facing Rdo-rje-hchañ,
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) ཨ་བོད་ཐོན་པ་ཤེས་པ། ། ཨ་བོད་ཐོན་པ་ཤེས་པ། ། ཨ་བོད་ཐོན་པ་ཤེས་པ། ། ཨ་བོད་ཐོན་པ་ཤེས་པ། ། ཨ་བོད་ཐོན་པ་ཤེས་པ། ། ཨ་བོད་ཐོན་པ་ཤེས་པ། ། ཨ་བོད་ཐོན་པ་ཤེས་པ། ། ཨ་བོད་ཐོན་པ་ཤེས་པ། ། ཨ་བོད་ཐོན་པ་ཤེས་པ། ། ཨ་བོད་ཐོན་པ་ཤེས་པ། ། ཨ་བོད་ཐོན་པ་ཤེས་པ། །
the red mountain of the north, high and awesome, where tortuously 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;

(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 Rematì.
§20. Other divinities of the cycle of Bstan-srūn-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-ḥgyur, pi no. 61 p. 169 and no. 63 p. 174): (gšin-rjeḥi) pho-ṇa-mo (messengers of Yama), Dus-mtshan (Kālarātṛī), Zhags-pa-mo/Pāśā, and (gšin-rjeḥi) ḍhebs. Dam-srī is a kind of deity believed to cause death of the herd and of the domestic animals (1). Ye-ses-mkhaḥ-hgro-ma/Jnānadākinī (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-srūn-ma, as it is clearly said by Kloṅ-ṛdoł 7b-8a (plate XLVI) in his already quoted little book on the cycle of the Bstan-srūn-ma.

As for the divinity reproduced on plate LXV and invoked as Khro-rgyal Smre-ṛtsegs, 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-ṛtsegs 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

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(1) On this cycle I know the following small treatise: Dam-srī gston ḍrve sogs lун-bstan-cin hdu-bahi thabs šin-tu-zab-pa contained in the vol. tsi of the Rin-chen-gter-mdzod.

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 Sādhanaṇas, 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-pahi sgrub-thabs ñams grib kun sel rgyal-chan-po, Sme-ba-rtsegs is called by his more common name htshol.

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


(4) Khro-boḥi sme-ba-brtsegs-pahi 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 ḡbul-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 mourning 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 Vajrapāni 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

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(1) Sme-brtsegs ņams grib kun-sel-gyi dbaṅ cho-ga zla ṣel bdud-rtsihi 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 mandala 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.


(2) About Dgra-lha see for example Srog-bdag yam-sud dmar-pohi thugs sprul bstan-sruñ ḡkhu dgra-lha-bi sgrub-thabs gtor-chog-gi rim-pa cha-lag thañ-ma.


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 Remati and Dmag-zor-ma is somehow indicated by the fact that in the liturgical text quoted Remati is mentioned riding by his side.

Vaiśravaṇa/Rnam-sras, Virūpākṣa/Mig-mi-bzan, Virūḍhaka/Hphags-skyes-po, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra/Yul-ḥkhor-sruṇ 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 Kūśmāṇḍa 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 Vajrapāṇi at the centre (1).

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

(1) See Vajravarman in his Sundarālaṅkāra, Bstan-hgyur, rgyud khu Cordier LXII folio 122.
lotus), about whom see Dpal gśin-rje-dgra-nga-gi sgrub-pahi-thabs rin-po-che hūar-ba by Tson-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 India 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 manḍala. 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 maṇḍalas 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 actual 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-mkhaṅ-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-mahi 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, actually 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-šes-mkhaḥ-hgro-ma, Lalitavajra, the medium of revelation on earth, Amoghavajra, Jñānākaragupta, Padmavajra, Dipamkararaksita, Rdo-rje-grags-pa, the lotsava of Rva, Chos-rab of Rva, Ye-šes-seṅ-ge of Rva, Ḥbum-seṅ-ge of Rva, Roṅ-pa Śes-rab-seṅ-ge, Bla-ma-ye-šes-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 Portuguese 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 Hayagriva.

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

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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 Bkah-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

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(1) Sp-ub-pah-thabs rgya-mtsho'i cho-ga rjes-gnam dan-beas-pa Ḥdod-dguhi dpal gter.
function of Chos-skyon/dharmapāla and as guardian of the
doors (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-štōn-spyan-štōn, namely Avalokiteśvara with a thousand arms and a thousand eyes.

On the left wall there follow, all seated in vajraparyaṅka, six images of stucco within the usual frame symbolising the celestial palace (vimāna, gzhal-yas-khaṅ). 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 manḍala is all painted, in our case the central deity to whom the manḍala 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-khari 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 vajraparyanka 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 manḍalas, both as painted on cloth and as provisionally traced or drawn on the floor of the temples. But the manḍalas, 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 manḍala 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 dīkṣā/Phyogs-skyon 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-Idan, together with his retinue, Dbañ-Idan-khor (for ḍkhor)-byas (for bcas) plates LXXXII-LXXXIII; Viṣṇu with his retinue, Khyab-hjug-khor-byas (sic), plate LXXXIV; Brahman with his sakti, Tsans-pa chuṅ-ma daṅ-cas(bcas), plates LXXXV-VI; Īśvara with his train, Dbañ-phyug khor(ḥkhor)-byas(daṅ bcas), plates LXXXVII-LXXXVIII; Gaṇapati with his train, Tshogs-bdag khor-byas, plates LXXXIX, XC; Brahmanī/Tshaṅs-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 Šānvara/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 maṇḍala. The description of his iconographic type contained in the Sundarālāṅkāra (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 (bhadralkalpa) in which Śākyamuni obtained his illumination and in which we ourselves are living. The deity on the right side of the god is Vajrapāni 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 flatten the figures. It is enough in fact to compare, in this very temple, the series of statues representing Vairocana with that of Tson-kha-pa surely later, in order to perceive the profound difference in modelling. Indian tradition seems also present and alive in the archs and in the decorations of the thrones. They are garuda, 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-rtен. 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 bhūmisparśa-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

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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 (vajraparyāṇa): 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 Āmitābha-Amitāyus. And actually the monk accompanying me in my visits to Tsaparang defined straight away the statue as the figure of Āmitābha. In this case the tree is no longer the tree of illumination but the kalpadruma, the tree granting every desire in the Sukhāvatī paradise where Amitābha reigns. The two Bodhisattvas siding him would then be Padmapañi 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 Tson-khā-pa (gtso-hkhor 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-pratīṣṭhā, 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 adamantine spheres, namely with the indiscriminate ground of being. These Lamas are then called bla-ma rdo-rje-khchan “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 Tson-kha-pa on the left wall of the cella and therefore it is not improbable that it should represent Rin-chen-bzaṅ-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:

Maṅ srāṅ maṅ btsan'; Bkra śis bskyid lde ŋi ma; Dpal ḥkhor btsaṅ, Brag rdzi legs; Mgu ca legs; Tshe snol pha lde; Tshe snol lam lde; Kha thog nam rdig btsan; Khri sgra dmun btsan; Khra ba na; Thor laṅ btsan; Spran btsan lde; Ma ne btsan; Mes ḥag tshom; Guṅ srāṅ gaṅ btsaṅ.

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 btsan lde all pertain to the mythic group of the eight or ten
Ide (1). Mañ-sroñ-man-btsan and Gun-sroñ-guñ-btsan are the descendants of Sroñ-btsan-sgam-po; Mes-hag-tshom is Khri lde brtsug 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 ī ni 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

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(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 Ide, Se snol lam Ide, Sprin btsan Ide; and thus also *Dpag-bsam ljon-bzan*, 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 mandalas, 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, sidd-
dhas in their characteristic attitudes and perhaps also a prince
of Guge: because so appears to be, by analogy with the fres-
ccoes of the “White Temple” the figure reproduced on plate
CXVI. On the wings in Lantsha characters, the sacred mantra
om mani padme hum.

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 vaj-
rāsana. 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 re-
present the thirtyfive “Buddhas of the confession of sins
(ltuṅ-bsags)” (1).

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

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/Suvarṇabhadravimala or Chos-sgrags-rgya-mtsho/Dharmakīrtisāgara and the other either Sgra-dbyāns-rgyal-po/Svaraghoṣarāja or Mṇon-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-gsos) 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/Suvarṇabhadravimala 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-pa bcu-grnis), 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 beu-gnis, 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 Anuttaratantra 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 so 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 Nairanjana, 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 Shakyamuni with Udraka or Rudraka of Rama (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-bhadra-vargiya who were his faithful companions during the six years of maceration and fasting, an experience which the Saint of the Sakyas wanted to go through. Therefore, it is precisely the long period of ascesis 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, Shakyamuni 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 (dhoti) of small proportions. The scene reminds of the one reproduced on some Tibetan thankas 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 (pāṃśu-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 thanka of the school of Guge in my collection reproduces the life of the Buddha by following the same iconographic scheme and taking

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) *dkah-thub* namely “the ascesis on the banks of the river Nairañjanā”.

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 Nairañjanā 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 (bhūmispāra-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 Kālika 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 Kālika, 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-reins mnon-par-rdzogs-pas sans-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 (sāmādhi-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 thāṅka, 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 Trupuṣa 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 pīṇḍapātra in his right hand, indicates his resolution to deliver the famous first sermon. He starts walking towards Sarnath and en route meets the ājivaka Upagaṇa, here represented with the ascetic stick (Lalitavistara p. 404 merely ājivaka): 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 Śākyas 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-bhadra-vargīya. 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 thānka, 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 kyi*M *ra*b-kyun “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 Kuṭāgāra. 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 *bhūmisparśa-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: rdzuhphrul ya-ma zuñ bstan-nas chos-la bkod “the Buddha converts by showing a double miracle (yamaka-prātiḥārya)”. 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-phyin-po ni rir chos bkhor “the preaching of the law on the Grdhrakūṭa”. 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 Grdhrakūṭa and in it he revealed the Prajñāpāramitā. Finally, the third one did occur at Vaissālī when he revealed the most secret doctrines and his listeners were the Bodhisattvas (1).

Soon after this scene of preaching on the Grdhrakūṭa, 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: Hod-mahi-thsal. Hod-mahi-tshal is Tibetan corresponding to Veṇuvana Kalandakani-vāpa near Rājagrha, where in fact various other sūtras of Mahāyāna would have been revealed.

(1) See, for example, Rgyud-sde spyi rnam-par-bzhag brgyas-par bzhad-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 Śrāvasti, 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 thaumaturgial power of the Saint of the Śākyas.
Above, following a rather common iconographic tradition, the whole panel is dominated by the figure of Vajrapāni, 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: groi-khyer-du bsod-sņoms-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-pośi-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

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(1) See Waldschmidt E., Wundertätige Mönche in der ost-turkestanischen Hinayāna-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 Vaiśāli 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 Vaiśāli was shown a stūpa which should have been constructed on the place where the miracle occurred. On the thānka too the same scene is reproduced together with the following inscription: Yan-pa-can-du ru (sic) spreḥus sbraḥ-rtsi ḡphul-ba; ḡchiḥi-duš byas-pas lhar skyes, namely, "in Vaiśāli 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 ecstatic 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 reposited in a stūpa. But this tradition of the eight monuments as big reliquaries wherein the remnants of the Saint of the Śākyas 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 Śrāvasti’. On plate CXXXVI those of ‘nirvāṇa’,
of the 'collected lotuses', of 'Vaiśali', and of 'many doors'. The same series, although with a somewhat different order, appears in the thanka.

§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 per-
petuated 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 com-
mmercial 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
\(\text{dun rin} \) which the band is blowing into. Other still extract melo-
dies from flutes \(\text{rka} \text{n gli} \text{n} \) 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 gompa, 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 kingdon of death, are suddenly made alive by these paintings. They throw a ray of light on the life that once throbbed 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 CXLI). 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 šakti. 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 rmam-par-bzhag brgyas-par bṣad-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/Saraccandrā, 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 vajraparyāṇa 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-paryāṇa posture.

6. Ḫjig-rgten-gsum-las  rnam-par-rgyal-ma/Trailokyavijayā, red, one head, in vajra-paryāṇa posture, four arms:
   right  left
   vajra  mudrā of menacing
   sword  noose
7. Gzhan-hjoms-ma/Para-pramardani, 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
defeat the tempo of dance twig of aśoka

10. Mya-nān-thams-cad-sel-bar-byed-ma/Śoka-vinodani, red, one head, four arms:
    right left
    pramuditā mudrā
sword twig of aśoka

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

12. Bkra-sis-thams-cad-sbyin-ma/闵gala-dāyinī, yellow, one head, in vajra-paryāṅka posture, eight arms:
    right left
    trident gem
    hook hook
    vajra baton
    sword vase

13. Yoṅs-su-smin-par-byed-ma/Paripācanī, red, one head, in āliḍha posture, four arms:
    right left
    sword disc
    arrow bow
14. Ḥgugs-paḥi khro-mo, black, three heads: black, white, red, in állīḍha posture, six arms:
   - right
   - sword
   - hook
   - baton
   - left
   - cranium
   - noose
   - human head

15. Zhi-ba-chen-mo/Mahāśānti, white, one head, in vajra-paryaṇka posture, six arms:
   - right
   - rosary
   - mudrā of giving
   - baton
   - left
   - lotus
   - sword
   - book

16. Chags-pa-hjoṁs-ma/Rāga-niśūdani, red, one head, in vajra-paryaṇka posture, two arms: trident at the level of the heart in the right, and mudrā on the heart (*sűṅ-po dan-beas-paḥi phyag-rgya*) in the left.

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

18. Rnam-rgyal-ma/Vijaya, white, one head, in vajra-paryaṇka posture, four arms:
   - right
   - mudrā of giving
   - left
   - pramuditā mudrā
   - mudrā on the heart

19. Bdag-bsnāl-thams-cad-sreg-ma/Duḥkha-dahani, white, one head, in vajra-paryaṇka posture, two arms holding a vase of fire at the height of the breast.

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

21. Yoṁs-su-rdzogs-par-byed-ma/Paripūraṇī, white, one head, in vajra-paryaṇka 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: ḡjigs kun skyob/sarva-bhaya-trāṇa. It seems that from this epithet is derived, for successive dissimilation, the other eightfold scheme that was reproduced in the temple of Tsapa-rang. 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 ḡjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma: Tārā protecting from the fear of doubt.
2. Ḥod-chags ḡjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma: Tārā protecting from the fear of passion.
3. Ser-sna ḡjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma: Tārā protecting from the fear of avarice.
4. Phra-dog ḡjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma: Tārā protecting from the fear of envy.
5. Ltas-ṇan ḡjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma: Tārā protecting from the fear of the false religious doctrines.

(1) ḡjigs-pa bṛgyad skyob khyod phyag-hīshal. In the Sadhanamālā p. 207 is inserted an Āryāṣṭa-mahābhaya-tārā-sādhana (in the Bkāḥ-ḥgyur there is a ḡḥphags-ma sgrol-ma ḡjigs-pa bṛgyad-las skyob-paḥi mdo).
6. Zhe-sdan hjigs-skyob Sgrol-ma: Tārā protecting from the fear of anger.

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

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

I have translated the word *hjigs* 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 fol-
lowing 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 conven-
tional truth, and the one on the left is the symbol of the trans-
cendent 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 Vajrapāni*. After Tārā follow various hypostases of Vajrapāni, to whom Buddhism entrusted the actual office of *defensor fidei* defender of the faith. Vajrapāni 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 Vajrapāni (Plate CXLII first figure, CXLIV, CXLV, CXLVI)

Phyag-na-rdo-rje, Ḥgro-bzaṅs/Jagadbhadra Vajrapāni
Phyag-dor (=Phyag-na-rdo-rje), Khyuṅ-hdra, that is Vajrapāni similar to Garuḍa
Phyag-na-rdo-rje tum (for gtum)-chuṅ/Alpacaṇḍa Vajrapāni
Phyag-na-rdo-rje tum (for gtum)-chen namely Vajrapāni Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa
Phyag-na-rdo-rje atsala that is Vajrapāni 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*, *sruṅ-ba*); Gtum-chuṅ 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-ldeṅ-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-rajā-cuṇḍa-sādhana, Bstan-hgyur ņu 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.

Hbyun-po-hdul-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-mṭhar-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.
CHAPTER VI

THE LO-THAN D贡-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 Sutlej, 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-than lha-khaṇ 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-bzaṅ-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 than 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 acolytes
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-ṇan-med-mchog-dpal/Āsokottamaśrī,

On the left wall:
1. Gser-bzaṅs-dri-med/Suvarṇa-bhadra-vimala,
2. Rin-chens-zla-ba/Ratnacandra,
3. Mtshan-legs/Sūnāman,
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. Tson-kha-pa.

On the right wall beginning from above:
1. Tson-kha-pa,
2. Tshe-dpag-med/Amitāyus,
3. The figure has disappeared completely,

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-chens-bzaṅ-po had converted to Buddhism (1). Then follow, Dpal-lldan 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 Smari-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-śavijayā (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 Candogra, Gahvara etc. are the very names of such places and therefore cannot be translated as being epithets: cimetièr terribie et effrayant, (un aśvattha) touffu, etc. To the text edited by Finot can be added an excerpt from the Vajrapradīpa-ṭippani, 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.

Eight cemeteries according to the Vajra-pradipa-ṭippani of Suratavajra (1)

अथ शमशानानि कथयते ययानुयुक्तयोगत:। पूर्वेण चाष्टास्य नाम मद्रामशास्यं। शिरीषकृते गोधर्मशु पवित्तिक: सिद्ध। सन्ध्रो दिक्षपति: गौर:। सन्ध्रास्य:। शुक्रेश्वरतासणानीन:।। वासुकिर्माणास्य:। पीत:। गंगिको मेधो विश्वराण:। सुमेष्ट्र:। पर्वतश्रु भूमिन्य:। सिद्धार्थ्यो नाम चैत्यं:। शेत:॥

रूपिणि कर्पुशीपः नाम मद्रामशास्यं। आमुश्वासे महिममुखो
मद्रामिक: कुष्ठ:। यमो दिक्कपालो महिमवश्चः। कुष्ठ:। पद्मो नाम:।
सिद्ध। अर्जनको मेधो विश्वराण:। मणिय:। पर्वतो गौर:।। विश्वम-िर्भज्ञो नाम चैत्य:। कुष्ठ:॥

परिश्रेये त्रावलकुतं नाम मद्रामशास्यं। अशोकव्विले मकराननो
मद्रामिक:। शेत:। उवऽ दिक्कपति:। सिद्ध। कर्कोटको नागो रत्न:।
घोरे मेघो विश्वराण:। कैलास:। पर्वत:। सिद्ध।। संज्ञार्थज्ञो नाम चैत्य:।

सिद्ध:॥

उत्सर्गेन गोकुलो नाम मद्रामशास्यं।। अशोकव्विले मनुष्यमुखो मद्रामिको गौर:।। कुबेरे दिक्कपति:। गौर:। नरवान:।। तन्नको नाम:।
कुष्ठ:। धुर्गिर्यो मेघ:। विश्वराण:।। मन्दर:। पर्वत:। श्याम:।। चित्तव्रजो नाम चैत्यो गौर:॥

प्रेमान्यो लक्ष्मीव्रि नाम मद्रामशास्यं।। अग्रव्वले गोधर्मो मद्रामिक:। सिद्ध।। मन्देश्वरो दिक्कपति:। सिद्धो गोवर्कु:।। शुष्ठालो नाम:।
पीत:।। चाष्टास्य मेघो विश्वराण:।। मन्देश्वर:। पर्वत:।। कुष्ठ:।। अग्रव्रजो (2)
नाम चैत्य:। शेत:॥

(1) From a manuscript of the Durbar Library of Kathmandu.
(2) Mss.: चित्.
In Sanskrit Asṭa-śmaśāna-nāma; in Tibetan Dur-khrod brgyad-kyi bṣad-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)
Gtum-drag (1) white in colour, he has the head of an elephant. Near the tree: Dbaṅ-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-sruṇ (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 Tshaṅ-tshiṅ-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-ṇan (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 Hjog-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) Taksaka.

(12) Ghana.
To the west is the cemetery ́Hbar-bas-́hkhrigs-pahi-ken-rus (1). In it is the tree Mya-́nan-med/Ásoka on which is its lord ́Hbar-bas-́hkhrigs-ken-rus having the head of a sea-monster and yellow in colour. Near the tree is the lord of the corresponding region Varuña, 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 Hjigs-sde/Bhīṣaṇa. In it is the tree barura/bibhītaka (a variety of myrobolan) on which is its lord Hjigs-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 ́hkhrigs-pa/ávarttaka 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 karañja; 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-karaṇka that is just found again in the small treatise by Lūi-pā, published by Finot; in the Sanskrit list of Suratavajra, karaṇka 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 ḡkhypa/ghūṛṇita of red colour.

In the region of the south-west (Bden-bral, Nirṛti) is the cemetery Ḥjiggs-pahi-mun-pa/Ghorāndhakāra. In it is the tree udumbara on which is its lord Ḥjiggs-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 Mthah-yas/Ananta, of blue colour. Above is the cloud sgra-sgros/garjita of white-yellow colour.

In the region of the wind (north-west) is the cemetery Kili-kilar-sgrogs-pa/Kilikilārava in which is the tree srid-sgrub/arjuna; above it is its lord Kili-kilar-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 ḡbebs-pa/varṣaṇa 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-skyoṅ/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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cardinal Point</th>
<th>Inferno</th>
<th>Tree</th>
<th>Nāga</th>
<th>Mountain</th>
<th>Caitya</th>
<th>Cloud</th>
<th>Protector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>Gandogra</td>
<td>śīrśa or aruṇa</td>
<td>Vāsuki</td>
<td>Sumeru</td>
<td>Sitavajra</td>
<td>Garjīca</td>
<td>Indra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>Karāṇkabhiṣaṇa</td>
<td>ānura</td>
<td>Padma</td>
<td>Malayag</td>
<td>Piṣunavajra</td>
<td>Āvattaka</td>
<td>Yama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>Jvalākula</td>
<td>aśoka</td>
<td>Karkota</td>
<td>Kailāsa</td>
<td>Samjñāvajra</td>
<td>Ghora</td>
<td>Varuṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>Gaṇvara</td>
<td>aśvatthā</td>
<td>Takṣaka</td>
<td>Mandara</td>
<td>Cittavajra</td>
<td>G-duration</td>
<td>Kubera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Lakṣmīvāna</td>
<td>karan̄ja</td>
<td>Mahāpadma</td>
<td>Gandhamādana</td>
<td>Vāgavajra (1)</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Rakta Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Antahāsa</td>
<td>vaṭa</td>
<td>Śaṅkhapāla</td>
<td>Mahendra</td>
<td>Kāyavajra</td>
<td>Candra</td>
<td>Isāna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Ghorāndhakāra</td>
<td>latā parkāṭi or udumbara</td>
<td>Ananta</td>
<td>Hema</td>
<td>Ratnavajra</td>
<td>Purāṇa</td>
<td>Nirūti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Kilikilārava</td>
<td>pārthiva (arjuna)</td>
<td>Kulika</td>
<td>Śrīparvata</td>
<td>Dharmavajra</td>
<td>Varsana</td>
<td>Vāyu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Mss. Cittavajra
Besides, the Bstan-hgyur 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inferno</th>
<th>Tree</th>
<th>Protector</th>
<th>Nāga</th>
<th>Cloud</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E .. Aṭṭahāsa</td>
<td>Nāgapuspa</td>
<td>Dban-po</td>
<td>Pad-ma-chen</td>
<td>Ghora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Isāna</td>
<td>Mahāpadma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S .. Caritra</td>
<td>Āmra</td>
<td>Gśin-rje</td>
<td>Rigs-Idan</td>
<td>Canda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yama</td>
<td>Kulika</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W .. Kolagiri</td>
<td>Aśvattha</td>
<td>Chu-bdag</td>
<td>Stobs-kyi-rgyu</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varuṇa</td>
<td>Karkotaka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N .. Jayanti</td>
<td>Punnagara (2)</td>
<td>Lus-nan</td>
<td>Dun-skyon</td>
<td>Avarita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kubera</td>
<td>Sānkhapāla</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE .. Ujjayana</td>
<td>Nyagrodha</td>
<td>Drag-po</td>
<td>Hjog-po</td>
<td>Gajjita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rudra</td>
<td>Takṣaka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE .. Prayāga</td>
<td>Karnaṇja</td>
<td>Me</td>
<td>Padma</td>
<td>Gharmata (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agni</td>
<td>Padma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW .. Rna-ḥchus-sa-ma</td>
<td>Latādzata</td>
<td>Srin-po</td>
<td>Mṭhah-vas</td>
<td>Ḣbha-pa (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Latā jāti, 4)</td>
<td>Nirṛti</td>
<td>Ananta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW .. Lha-mōhi-mkhar (Devikoṭa)</td>
<td>Udumbara</td>
<td>Rlun</td>
<td>Nor-gyas</td>
<td>Pūraṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vāyu</td>
<td>Vāsuki</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Udḍiyāna, Rna-ḥchus-sa-ma is perhaps Karnaṇa.

(1) Compare also Śrīheruka-bhūta-nāma-maṇḍalopāyikā, Bstan-hgyur na folio 317.
(2) Namely punnāga.
(3) Probably corruption of ghūṛṇita.
(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-hchan), 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/Dvesavajra. The image of Dvesavajra (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-bzan-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-Ghersi 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/Mthah-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.


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. Šabdavajrī/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 Pāṇḍaravāsini, 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 (rohi snod).


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. Maṃjuśrī, as above.

21. Nīvaranāvīṣkambhin/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. Ses-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-śiṅ); in the left as above.


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. Ḫdod-rgyal/Takkirāja, 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-sṅon-can/Niladāṇḍa, 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 Aksobhya 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 Aksobhya 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 sādhaka.

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 loudy 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-dpañ/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 sakti, 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 vajraparyāṇa; diadem of skulls.

2. Hûm-mdzad/Hûmkāra, 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 Hjigs-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, ďamaru; with his last two arms embraces the sakti, similar to him, while the stretched right leg steps on Indra.

4. Rdo-rje-ñi-ma/Vajrasûrya, yellow. Three faces: yellow, black, green. Six arms; on the right: kapāla, noose, bell; those on the left as above. Thus, also the sakti: 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.


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.


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.


11. Gtsug-tor-ḥkhor-los-hgyur-bdUsnisacakavartin, 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-hog/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-bzaṅ-ris/Vemacitrin.
BIBLIOGRAPHIC LIST
OF SOME TIBETAN MYSTIC AND LITURGICAL WORKS
ON THE CYCLE OF ŠĀMVARA

TSÖN-KHA-PA


SECOND DALAI LAMA DGE-HDUN-RGYA-MTSHO
(No. 889)


(1) The numbers refer to the catalogue of my collection of Tibetan texts.


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