

ULRICH VON SCHROEDER

བོད་ལྗོངས་ཀྱི་ནང་པ་སངས་རྒྱས་པའི་སྐུ་ལྔ་ལྔ་བརྒྱ་དང་བརྒྱ་དེ།

108 BUDDHIST STATUES IN TIBET

西藏寺廟珍藏佛教造像108尊



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*This book is dedicated to the custodians
of the sacred objects preserved in the monasteries of Tibet
in appreciation of their unbroken devotion to the Buddhist doctrine*

། ལྷོ་བ་འདི་མེ་མོང་ལྷོང་ས་ཀྱི་དམེན་སྡེ་རྣམས་སུ་བཞུགས་བཞེན་པའི་ནང་རྟེན་
རྣམས་ལ་དང་པའི་སློལ་སྤྱོད་མི་ཆད་པར་འདིར་སྤོང་མཛད་མཁན་རྣམས་
ལ་བཀའ་བློན་མཛལ་བའི་ཆེད་དུ་བདག་གིས་སྟོང་ནས་སློབ་ལུན་བྱུང།།



Jo bo Buddha statue of the Jo khang temple in Lhasa.
Traditionally believed to have been brought to Tibet
in the 7th century by the Chinese princess Wencheng

ULRICH VON SCHROEDER

108 BUDDHIST STATUES IN TIBET

EVOLUTION OF TIBETAN SCULPTURES



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Front cover: Buddha Śākyamuni (Plate 6)

Back cover: Tārā (Plate 22B)

Frontispiece: Jo bo Buddha of the Jo khang temple in Lhasa

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Notes on Romanization

Transliteration of Sanskrit Words

The Sanskrit words are transliterated into Roman script with diacritical marks.

Transliteration of Tibetan Words

The transliteration of Tibetan words into Roman script used for this publication follows the method proposed by Turrell Wylie.¹ Phonetic rendering of words is restricted to a few frequently reoccurring names.

ཀ	ka	ཁ	kha	ག	ga	ང	nga
ཅ	ca	ཆ	cha	ཇ	ja	ཉ	nya
ཏ	ta	ཐ	tha	ད	da	ན	na
པ	pa	ཕ	pha	བ	ba	མ	ma
ཅ	tsa	ཆ	tsha	ཇ	dza	མ	wa
ཉ	zha	ཐ	za	འ	'a	ཡ	ya
ར	ra	ལ	la	ཤ	sha	ས	sa
ཧ	ha					ཨ	a
ཨ	i	ཨ	u	ཨ	e	ཨ	o

To facilitate the finding of words in dictionaries, the method used by René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, known as “internal lexicographic capitalization”, has been chosen for the transliteration, with usually only the first syllable subjected to such capitalization.²

1. T. V. Wylie. 1959. “A Standard System of Tibetan Transcription”, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 22, pp. 261–267.
2. R. de Nebesky-Wojkowitz. 1956. *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*.

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Introduction

This book is an attempt to describe the development of Tibetan Buddhism through the visual aspects of Buddhist sculptures. Buddhism is one of the major world religions that together with Hinduism and Jainism originated in India. Prince Siddhārtha, subsequently venerated as Buddha Śākyamuni, established it more than 2500 years ago. Especially in Asia, different forms of Buddhism have been practiced for a long time and its followers number worldwide more than 300 million people. The different Buddhist traditions can be divided into two principal schools of thought. The orthodox forms of Buddhism, also known as Southern Buddhism, are still predominant in Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. The later forms are known as Northern Buddhism and are practiced predominantly in Tibet, other Himalayan regions, China, Mongolia, Korea, and Japan. A growing number of people all over the world are attracted to Buddhism. But it is doubtless the Tibetan Vajrayāna tradition that has fascinated the largest number among the new converts. It is certainly not a surprise that also a growing number of Chinese are fascinated with Tibetan Buddhism. This is a reoccurring phenomenon already known from the Yuan (1279–1368), Ming (1368–1644), and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties where a “patron and priest” relationship had existed between the spiritual leaders of Tibet (acting as spiritual mentors) and the secular Chinese emperors (acting as patrons).

The worldwide rising interest in Tibetan Buddhism is reflected by a growing number of books dealing with the various aspects of Tibetan culture and religion. Unfortunately, most publications have the shortcoming that they are almost exclusively illustrated with objects scattered worldwide in private and public collections. There are reasons behind this enormous exodus of Tibetan religious objects, the most prominent being that they were taken abroad in the aftermath of the “cultural revolution” between 1966 and 1969 when many Tibetan monasteries were destroyed. However, despite the enormous loss caused by destruction and theft, there still exist in Tibet important collections of religious artefacts numbering together more than two hundred thousand ancient sculptures and paintings. Under these circumstances it is difficult to understand why so few of the recently published books illustrate sculptures and paintings photographed in Tibet. A notable exemption is the two-volume chronicle *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet* by this author published in 2001.³ In these two monumental books more than 1100 important Buddhist sculptures are illustrated that belong to Tibetan monasteries.

A number of people have expressed their regret that there doesn't exist a more affordable condensed edition serving as a general introduction to Indo-Tibetan Buddhist sculptures. With this much-awaited book, *108 Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, a larger number of interested people will finally have a chance to get acquainted with some of the masterpieces kept in Tibetan monasteries. To enable Chinese-speaking people to get familiar with some of the most important sculptures in the Buddhist monasteries of the Tibetan Autonomous Region of the P.R.C., a Chinese edition is also published. As a tribute to the Tibetan-speaking people, both editions contain a list of illustrations in Tibetan *dBu can* script.

3. U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet. Volume One: India & Nepal; Volume Two: Tibet & China*. (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications, Ltd. [www.visualdharma.com]).

Mostly unknown to the outside world, the temples and storerooms of Tibet's monasteries shelter a great number of ancient Buddhist objects. Most noticeable among them are the sculptures and paintings manufactured by Tibetan artists. But the treasures also include countless ancient statues surviving from the former Buddhist cultures surrounding Tibet. These statues include rare examples originating from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Burma, and China. These images have withstood sometimes more than 1000 years of warfare and other calamities.

The main purpose of this book is to publish a representative selection of Buddhist statues belonging to Tibetan monasteries. The access to the temples and storage rooms of institutions such as the Po ta la palace and especially the Jo khang/Lhasa gTsug lag khang are restricted. Without my publications few people would be aware of the existence of these treasures. A long-term benefit of working with objects belonging to Tibetan monasteries is the fact that they will remain in the same locations for the foreseeable future. This will enable future generations of scholars to do additional research with the same objects. This is quite different from objects in private collections that are usually resold after some years.

As I know myself by firsthand experience, taking photographs of objects inside Tibetan monasteries is very difficult if not outright impossible. In most monasteries access is restricted as a result of security measures imposed to prevent theft. Therefore, to facilitate access for other scholars to a number of photographs of Buddhist statues in Tibet, a DVD is attached to each copy of this book. This DVD contains digital photographs of the 108 illustrated statues and of the 419 most important Buddhist sculptures in the collection of the Jo khang/Lhasa gTsug lag khang. Some 311 of these statues were previously published in *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*. The remaining 108 sculptures are illustrated in *Jokhang – Tibet's Most Sacred Temple*, edited by Gyurme Dorje (Thames & Hudson, 2009). These 527 digital photographs can be downloaded free of charge by anyone, regardless whether for personal use or for publication. It is the hope of the author that other scholars will take use of this opportunity to publish some of these wonderful Buddhist sculptures. The Jo khang statues especially have not received the attention they deserve by scholars. The Jo bo Buddha statue traditionally believed to have been brought to Tibet in the 7th century by the Chinese princess Wencheng (Tib.: Wun shing Kong jo) is the most important among the unbelievable treasures of the Jo khang chapels (cf. frontispiece).

I. Development of Tibetan Buddhist Art

Cultural Definition of Tibet

One of the reasons why so many people are fascinated with Tibet is its inaccessibility. The highest country in the world, Tibet is enclosed on three sides by massive mountain ranges, and its inhabited areas have an average elevation of 4000 metres or more above sea level. Its natural border in the south is formed by the mighty Himalayas, in the west by the Karakorum, and in the north by the Kun Lun ranges. In the east there are gaps where this vast plateau is drained by great river systems. Almost the entire northern part of Tibet consists of the great “northern plain” (Byang thang), a vast barren wilderness fit only for subsistence-level nomads. The suitable arable land lies in the south and east near the large rivers and their subsidiaries and it is in these areas that the majority of the Tibetan population has settled.

Tibet is one of the Autonomous Regions of the People’s Republic of China. The area inhabited by Tibetans is divided into five major areas consisting of Western Tibet (mNga’ ris), Southern Tibet (gTsang), Central Tibet (dBus), Eastern Tibet (Khams), and North-Eastern Tibet (Amdo). These different areas, separated by great distances and somewhat isolated from each other, have not always formed a politically or culturally homogeneous entity. Trade and war determined the external relationships of these geographical regions with their various neighbours. Western Tibet (mNga’ ris) was mainly involved with the adjoining areas of the western Himalayas in North-Western India and the Tarim Basin in the north; Southern Tibet (gTsang) with Nepal; Central Tibet (dBus) with North-Eastern India; Eastern Tibet (Khams) with the Chinese province of Sichuan; and North-Eastern Tibet (Amdo) with the Chinese province of Gansu. These different adjacent cultures all left more or less distinctive imprints on the multitude of Tibet’s cultural entities. Western Tibet, once dominated by the kingdom of Zhang zhung, was politically more or less independent from Southern and Central Tibet, except during the Tibetan imperial period (c. 600–842). Western Tibet was dominated during the “second propagation” of Buddhism in Tibet (*Phyi dar*) by local kings. From the 13th through the 16th century, rival religious schools such as the *Sa skya*, the *’Bri gung bKa’ brgyud* and *Phag gru bKa’ brgyud* exercised influence over Western Tibet in their struggle for dominance over larger areas of Tibet. It was the *dGe lugs pa* school under the rule of Blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682), the Fifth Dalai Lama, who eventually brought all parts of Tibet, including Western Tibet, under his control. Southern Tibet (gTsang) and Central Tibet (dBus), which were more closely related to each other, received their primary cultural and artistic stimulation from North-Eastern India, Nepal, and only to a lesser extent also from Kashmir. Eastern Tibet (Khams) and North-Eastern Tibet (Amdo) were culturally connected with Central Tibet, but from the 17th century became increasingly dependent on Qing-dynasty China (1644–1911).

Depending on the approach taken, Tibetan culture can be defined according to linguistic, topographical, political, ethnic, or religious terms. However, only in a few publications about Tibet is an attempt made to define what the term “Tibetan” encompasses. This attribution is applied by many scholars indiscriminately to any religious objects associated with the Tibetan form of Buddhism, regardless of whether they were actually made in India, Nepal, Tibet, China, or Mongolia. In this publication only those objects are labelled as “Tibetan” that were manufactured in areas where Tibetan Buddhism was practiced by people speaking Tibetan dialects. This encompasses an area much larger than the present Tibet Autonomous Region of the People’s Republic of China. It extends in the north and east deep into the Chinese provinces of Qinghai

and Sichuan. Tibetan speaking areas outside the boundaries of the present-day Tibet Autonomous Region also include parts of Bhutan and Sikkim in the south, in addition to areas of northern Nepal, such as Solu-Khumbu, Mustang, Dolpo, and Mulu, etc. Other territories where Tibetan speakers practice Tibetan forms of Buddhism are located in the Indian western Himalayas and include Baltistan, Nubra, Ladakh, Zangskar, Lahul, Spiti, and parts of Gu ge.

Introduction of Buddhism in Tibet

It is generally accepted that Buddhism was introduced into Tibet during the 7th century. At that time the Tibetan aristocracy had relied on the idea of divine ancestry and the sacrosanct status of its rulers. Emphasized was the worship of the tombs of Tibetan kings with the assistance of priests and shamans. The indigenous religion of the ordinary Tibetans followed ancient customs that included the worship and appeasement of spirits inhabiting trees, rocks, mountains, rivers, and lakes. Since the earliest times, Tibetans have considered notable mountains to be the residence of omnipotent spirits held to be the ancestors of the clans living in the neighbourhood. Annual offerings of sacrifice were commonly undertaken to appease these spirits. Later, as a result of the propagation of Buddhism some mountain peaks became the abode of Buddhist deities.

It was during the so-called Yar lung dynasty, known in ancient Tibetan texts as *sPu rgyal bod* (c. 600–842), that the rulers of Tibet came into contact with Buddhism. King Srong btsan sgam po's (reigned c. 618–649) interest in Buddhism was very likely initiated by Wencheng (Tib.: Wun shing Kong jo), his Chinese wife and presumably a practicing Buddhist. According to tradition, the first Buddhist images were brought to Tibet as part of her dowry. It is also recorded that Khri btsun, also known as Bhṛkuṭī, King Srong btsan sgam po's Nepalese wife, brought several Buddhist statues from Nepal as part of her dowry. There can be no doubt that at this time Buddhism was established on a small scale and the activities were restricted to the inner circle of the court with little effect on the life of the average Tibetan. In this early period, Buddhist teaching in Tibet was primarily the domain of Indian, Nepalese, Khotanese, and Chinese missionaries. Each of them interpreted Buddhism according to their own particular tradition. In order to gain a foothold among the Tibetan masses, Buddhism needed either to assimilate the various categories of spirits or to defeat them. For this purpose, according to the popular tradition, the Tibetans invited in the 8th century the famous tantric practitioner Padmasambhava from Uḍḍiyāna in North-Western India. The functions of the Tibetan monarch, known as *bTsan-po* (meaning "mighty one"), also changed due to the introduction of Buddhism. The "divine ruler" (*lHa btsan po*) became also the "ruler of the Buddhist teaching" (*Chos rgyal*). The Tibetan cult of divine ancestry related to the worship of the tombs of Tibetan kings was also probably transformed by the introduction of Buddhism and the related practices. Among the seven known copper statues attributed to the Yar lung period two statues are identified as Yama, the Hindu and Buddhist "lord of death" (**Plates 30–31**). It remains to be explored to what extent the introduction of the cult of Yama had any relevance for the death cult in general and the royal ancestry cult in particular. One of the reasons for the successful dissemination of Buddhism was the assimilation of the traditional local beliefs, which in each culture were different.



Fig. I. Gilt copper and brass statues of Indian, Nepalese, Tibetan, and Chinese origin, dating between the 10th and 17th centuries and of various styles, displayed in the Li ma lha khang in the “Red Palace” of the Po ta la Palace at Lhasa. (Photo: 1991).

Formation of Tibetan Art Styles

It is realistic to assume that at the time of the introduction of Buddhism in the 7th century there did not exist any Tibetan craftsmen qualified to produce the sculptures and paintings required for Buddhist practice. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the first Buddhist sculptures and paintings to reach Tibet were brought by missionaries from the surrounding Buddhist countries. The missionaries not only carried Buddhist manuscripts with them, but also religious objects of various kinds: sculptures made of metal, stone, wood, and terracotta, in addition to illustrated palm-leaf manuscripts (*pustaka*) with painted manuscript covers (*pustakāṣṭha*), and presumably paintings on cloth (*paṭa*). Among the statues were examples originating from North-Eastern India, Nepal, Kashmir and Swat (Uḍḍiyāna), China, and perhaps Central Asia. As has occurred with religious expansion elsewhere, the missionaries who came first were soon pursued by all sorts of craftsmen. However, the foreign artists came from different regions and practiced their crafts according to the styles in which they had been trained in their native countries.

During the formative period of Tibetan Buddhism there was not only a competition between different Buddhist philosophical systems, but also a range of different artistic traditions to be chosen from by the Tibetan patrons. The Tibetan apprentices of the foreign artists, copied, as expected, the particular art style practiced by their teachers. It is not known how long it took until Tibetan craftsmen had mastered their crafts satisfactorily enough to work independently of their foreign teachers. But it is now adequately documented that Tibetan artists were already manufacturing, or at least participating in the casting of, metal sculptures during the Tibetan imperial period (c. 600–842) (**Plates 8–9, 30–31**). Nevertheless there were presumably never enough local Tibetan artists to satisfy the increasing demand for Buddhist art. In addition, the level of skill of available local craftsmen might not always have been sufficient to meet the criteria of the more discerning patrons. It was probably both factors that added to the influx of foreign craftsmen, especially from India and Nepal. With regard to Tibetan paintings, the situation was much the same, with the impulse caused by imported paintings on cloth and illuminations of Buddhist manuscripts on palm-leaf and paper.

The development and formation of different Tibetan art styles was not only influenced by various foreign styles but also fragmented due to the great distances within Tibet. The development of the art styles in Western Tibet (mNga' ris) initially depended on stylistic inspirations from the neighbouring Buddhist traditions flourishing in Himachal Pradesh, the greater areas of Kashmir and Swat (Uḍḍiyāna) including Gilgit. The artistic influence of the North-Eastern Indian art traditions had less impact in Western Tibet than in Central Tibet. Increasingly, from about the 12th century onward, Newār artists were employed in Western Tibet by the rulers of the Khāśa kingdom of Western Nepal (late 11th to middle of the 14th century) who had extended the territories under their control into Western Tibet. In Southern and Central Tibet (gTsang and dBus) the artistic stimulation was received primarily from Nepal and North-Eastern India. Eastern Tibet (Khams) next to the Chinese province of Sichuan, and North-Eastern Tibet (Amdo) bordering the Chinese province of Gansu, were exposed to influences from China.

Portable sculptures have more often than not been relocated from the monastery for which they were commissioned, and their present location is rarely identical with the place of manufacture. The definition of sculptural styles according to geographical terms, therefore, at best might only be valid with regard to the earliest works of a particular style. The mobility of the artist is one of the reasons why the same style was soon practiced in other areas as well. Examinations of inscribed statues intensify our understanding, as does the study of the enormous wealth of Tibetan literary references with regard to Buddhist art.



Fig. II. Life-size brass image of Avalokiteśvara Padmapāni, commissioned from the Indian artist Bhidhaka in 998 by Rin chen bzang po (958–1055) during his stay in Kashmir. Kha tse monastery (Western Tibet). (Photo: Thomas J. Pritzker, 1999).

Tibetan Classifications of Metal Sculptures According to Styles

It is of interest to point out that Tibetans themselves took an interest in defining the styles of Buddhist metal images. The most famous among the Tibetan scholars interested in this subject was Jo nang Tāranātha (1575–1635), who wrote a “History of Image-Makers” in his *History of Buddhism in India*.⁴ Another Tibetan categorization forms part of a work by Padma dkar po (1526–1592).⁵ An unknown author wrote “A Tibetan Classification of Buddhist Images, According to their Style”. This text forms part of an incomplete manuscript entitled *Jig rten lugs kyi bstan bcos dpyad don gsal ba’i sgron me*.⁶ Jigs med gling pa (1729–1798) wrote, or rather compiled, another account.⁷ These Tibetan literary works divide the Indian metal statues according to regions regardless of age. With regard to the Nepalese statues, some texts distinguish between “old”, “middle” and “new”. Similarly, Tibetan statues of the so-called Tibetan imperial period (c. 600–842) are known to the Tibetans as the period of the “rulers of the Buddhist teaching” (*Chos rgyal*) and are divided into “former”, “intermediate”, and “later” *Chos rgyal*, or “old”, “middle”, and “new” *Chos li*. Some Tibetans further distinguish groups according to Buddhist sects such as the *bKa’ gdams* and the *bKa’ brgyud*, or historical persons such as lHa bla ma Ye shes ’od and lHa bla ma Byang chub ’od. Modern interpretations of the Tibetan treatises have caused more confusion than help for the task of classification. As the treatises are not illustrated, the interpretations are open to a wide spectrum of speculation about the statues discussed.

	Text translated by G. Tucci	Text by Jigs med gling pa (1729–1798)
India:	Indian (<i>rGya gar</i>):	Indian li ma (<i>rGya gar li ma</i>):
– Central India	– Middle India (schools of Madhyadeśa?)	Central Indian <i>li ma</i> (<i>rGya gar dbus li</i>)
– Eastern India	– East India (Eastern school)	East Indian <i>li ma</i> (<i>rGya gar shar li</i>)
– Western India	– West India (including Kashmir)	West Indian <i>li ma</i> (<i>rGya gar nub li</i>)
– Southern India	– South India (Southern style)	South Indian <i>li ma</i> (<i>rGya gar lho phyogs pa’i li ma</i>)
– Northern India	– North India (Northern style)	North Indian <i>li ma</i> (<i>rGya gar byang phyogs pa’i li ma</i>)
Hor:	Hor (E. Lo Bue: Turkestan)	Mongolian li ma (<i>Hor li</i>):
– Lower Hor		– Lower Hor <i>li ma</i> (<i>sMad hor li ma</i>)
– Upper Hor	– Upper Hor (<i>sTod hor</i>)	– Upper Hor <i>li ma</i> (<i>sTod hor li ma</i>)
– Uigur	– Uigur (<i>Yu gur</i>)	– Yu gur in <i>sTod hor</i>
– Kashgar		– <i>Li yul kha sha</i> similar to the “Old” <i>Chos li</i>
Nepal:	Nepalese (included in E. India section)	Nepalese li ma (<i>Bal li</i>):
		– “Old”, “Middle”, “New” Nepalese
Tibet:	Tibetan (<i>Bod</i>):	Tibetan li ma (<i>Bod li</i>):
	– “Former” <i>Chos rgyal</i>	– “Old” <i>Chos li</i> [<i>Chos rgyal li ma</i>]
	– “Intermediate” <i>Chos rgyal</i>	– “Middle” <i>Chos li</i> [<i>Chos rgyal li ma</i>]
	– “Later” <i>Chos rgyal</i>	– “New” <i>Chos li</i> [<i>Chos rgyal li ma</i>]
		– lHa bla ma Ye shes ’od / – lHa bla ma Byang chub ’od
		– <i>bKa’ gdams li ma</i> ; – <i>bKa’ brgyud pa</i> [<i>li ma</i>]
		– <i>Sle’u chung pa’i li ma</i> ; – Padma mkhar pa’i <i>li ma</i>
China:	Chinese:	Chinese:
	– Old Chinese (<i>rGya rnying</i>)	– Old Chinese
	– New Chinese (<i>rGya gsar ma</i>)	– New Chinese (Ming) / – New Chinese <i>sku rim ma</i> (Qing)

4. Despite limitations of accuracy, the translations by G. Tucci, D. Chattopadhyaya, and L. S. Dargyab were used to compile the lists of names. Chattopadhyaya, D. (transl.). 1970. *Tāranātha’s History of Buddhism in India*, pp. 347–349.

5. Khams sprul Don brgyud nyi ma (ed.). 1970. *Texts on the Design and Creation of Buddhist Icons (Paintings, Statues, Stupas and Mandalas)* [*Li ma brtag pa’i rab byed smra ’dod pa’i kha rgyan* by Padma dkar po]; Lo Bue, E. F. 1997. “Sculptural Styles According to Pema Karpo”, *Tibetan Art*, pp. 242–253, 302–303, figs. 284–96.

6. Tucci, G. 1959. “A Tibetan Classification of Buddhist Images, According to their Style”, *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 22, pp. 179–87: For a more detailed study it is necessary to consult the numerous notes of this article.

7. Jigs med gling pa (1729–1798). *gTam tshogs theg pa’i rgya mtsho las sku gsung thugs rten rnams kyi sku rgyu ngos ’dzin bya tshul gsal bar bshad pa’i tshul*. The English translations are taken from Dargyab, L. S. 1977. *Tibetan Religious Art*, pp. 55–56.

The above-mentioned literary works clearly reveal that the Tibetans distinguished between different art styles in Tibet and the surrounding Buddhist cultures. Parts of these texts were probably copied from earlier ones, at least with regard to the more ancient styles. In such cases it was not necessary for the authors to be actually able to recognize statues belonging to any particular style. The actual expertise was probably rather restricted to the capability of distinguishing between particular centres of production of images cast inside Tibet in the author's own time. There is, however, also the danger that some of the later authors changed the definitions of ancient styles according to their own interpretation. To these uncertainties, the superstitious nature of Tibetans has to be added. Their belief in supernatural matters is indicated by the popular belief of the self-materialization of particular images. Furthermore, there is a tendency among monks to exaggerate the age of certain images installed in their monasteries, which is something encountered everywhere.

Foreign Classifications of Metal Sculptures According to Styles

The inaccessibility of Tibet is certainly the principal reason why Tibetan culture became the last major Buddhist civilization to be discovered and subsequently researched by Western scholars. It is one of the characteristics of art-historical scholarship in its preliminary stage about a newly discovered culture, that scholars are constantly reminded of well-known art styles prevailing in surrounding cultures. This of course is a reflection of the influences that actually had taken place. It is therefore tempting to name traditions of Tibetan art that include recognizable foreign influences with hyphenated terms like Indo-Tibetan, Nepalo-Chinese, Nepalo-Tibetan, Sino-Tibetan, Sino-Nepalese, Tibeto-Chinese, etc. The hyphenating of terms is a recurring phenomenon in the research of unfamiliar cultures and was widely used in the 19th and early 20th centuries to describe the art of India and South-East Asia, with terms such as Græco-Buddhist, Romano-Buddhist, Indo-Greek, Indo-Persian, Indo-Chinese, Indo-Burmese, Indo-Javanese, etc. Statues bearing similarities with the Newār tradition of the Kathmandu valley are thus described as “Tibeto-Newār”,⁸ a term which is replaced in this publication with “Nepalese schools in Tibet”. The sculptures bearing similarities with those of North-Eastern India are often described as Indo-Tibetan. Any similarities between Tibetan and Chinese art is often still indiscriminately termed “Sino-Tibetan”, regardless of whether a Tibetan piece of art reflects a Chinese influence, or a Chinese object resonates Tibetan influence.⁹ These two contradictory influences can only be distinguished by using different terms, namely “Tibeto-Chinese” relating to Tibetan influence in China, and “Sino-Tibetan” relating to Chinese influence in Tibet.¹⁰ With the growing awareness by Tibetologists about the existence of distinct Tibetan schools of art, the use of hyphenated terms will in future occur less often. However it will take time until such particular art styles of Tibetan Buddhist sculptures are documented by a reasonable number of similar works and preferably substantiated by Tibetan literary references. With regard to basic classification of Tibetan statues this publication follows the method applied in *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* and *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*. This classification distinguishes broadly between statues manufactured according to the “Tibetan gilt copper tradition” or the “Tibetan brass tradition”.

8. E. F. Lo Bue. 1985. “The Newār Artists of the Nepal Valley. An Historical Account of their Activities in Neighbouring Areas with Particular Reference to Tibet - Part I”, *Oriental Art, New Series*, Vol. XXXI, No. 3, p. 265.

9. H. Karmay [-Stoddard]. 1975. *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, p. 1.

10. U. von Schroeder. 1981. *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, p. 510.

Classifications According to Technical Aspects

The definition of any particular art style should be based on characteristics in common among a number of art objects that clearly distinguishes them from objects belonging to other styles. To achieve this goal, an analytical study of an art object should take different features into consideration. This includes technical, iconographical, compositional, proportional, stylistic, and aesthetic aspects. The technical aspects are perhaps the most important of all with regard to the basic stylistic classification of cast statues. With regard to the raw material used, Tibetan statues can basically be divided into two distinct traditions; one following the Nepalese Newār custom of casting statues with an alloy of almost pure copper, subsequently gold plated (cf. Chapters XV–XVI). The other tradition follows the North-Eastern Indian and Western Himalayan method of using brass – an alloy of copper and zinc (cf. Chapters XVII–XVIII). This is different from the Chinese methods of using, in early periods for metal sculptures gilt bronze – an alloy of copper and tin (cf. Chapter XIX) – and later gilt brass (cf. Chapter XX). Also important is whether an image is solid or hollow cast in one piece, assembled from several separately made parts, or made of embossed sheets of copper. Other features are whether or not precious or imitation stones are employed to increase the lustre and beauty of statues. In Nepal, there was a preference for precious stones like rubies, emeralds, or rock crystal, whereas the Tibetans had a preference for turquoise, coral, and lapis lazuli. Another distinction can be made regarding the inlaying technique with silver and copper of statues primarily made of brass, and only rarely encountered with gilt copper works.

Additional data for the classification of metal sculptures can also be obtained through metallurgical analyses. For this, one or several small metal samples are obtained from a particular statue by drilling or other means. However, the results obtained from a single-sample metal analysis are only accurate in regard to the number of detected elements, such as copper, tin, lead, zinc, iron, etc. But such single-sample metal analyses are very unreliable regarding the resulting percentage of each element present. This becomes evident when comparing the relative percentages of the constituent elements of several samples taken from the same metal image.¹¹ From this follows that classifications of statues based on results obtained with single samples produce random results within a broad spectrum of deviation.¹² Any attribution of metal images to particular styles based on single sample metal analyses is therefore highly unreliable. Metal analysis is only helpful within a whole pattern of criteria. Such comparisons only make sense when several of these features do correspond among a group of statues. A large number of single-sample metal analyses, despite being unreliable as to the resulting percentages, have nevertheless helped to chart a pattern with regard to principal preferences for certain metal alloys. The results thus clearly demonstrate that in the Western Himalayas, including Western Tibetan regions, there existed at all times a preference for brass alloys, except for the works created by Newārs who always had a liking for gilt copper alloys. In Nepal and its sphere of influence, especially in Southern and Central Tibet, there was also a preference for gilt copper statues. In contrast are the artistic traditions of North-Eastern India, whose preference for brass alloys was evident everywhere in the Buddhist world where the Pāla styles migrated. But under no circumstances should a statue be attributed to a particular style area based on the metal analyses alone, especially when the aesthetic features do not correspond.

11. The detailed study of a South Indian Rājamannār group of four images includes the results of 14 samples (hip, neck, heel, and base). The copper percentages vary between 88.39 % and 95.8 %; tin between 1.62 % and 4.89 %; lead between 1.5 % and 6.15 %; zinc between 0.05 % and 0.36 %; etc. Cf. Pal, P. and Johnson, B. B. 1972. *Krishna: The Cowherd King*, pp. 54–55.

12. Cf. Craddock, P. T. 1981 “The Copper Alloys of Tibet and their Background”, *Aspects of Tibetan Metallurgy*, pp. 1–31; von Schroeder, U. 1981. *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, pp. 49–53; Reedy, C. L. 1986. *Technical Analysis of Medieval Himalayan Copper Alloy Statues for Provenance Determination*; Reedy, C. L. 1997. *Himalayan Bronzes: Technology, Style, and Choices*.



Fig. III. Large brass image of a standing Bodhisattva. This statue represents Vajrapāṇi if the broken right hand originally held a diamond sceptre (*vajra*), or Mañjuśrī if the missing attribute was a sword (*khadga*). Height: *c.* 90 cm. Cast in the 11th century by Indian artists from Kashmir working for patrons of the sPu rangs-Gu ge kingdom of Western Tibet. Phyi dbang cave monastery; a mountainside monastery with cave dwellings and cave temples located in Western Tibet. (Photo: Thomas J. Pritzker, 1994).

Dating Tibetan Buddhist Sculptures

Among the sculptures illustrated in this publication, there is not a single Tibetan metal image that can be accurately dated on the basis of an inscription.¹³ Until a reasonable corpus of inscribed and dated Tibetan metal statues is properly documented, the problems relating to the dates of manufacture can only be approached on stylistic, iconographical, and technical grounds. However, reliable results can only be expected if the conclusions are preferably based on the examination of several similar statues.

For the dating of individual statues the condition of the surface is one of the helpful criterions. The surface is a mirror of all impacts that have left marks, and its condition depends first of all on the ritual practice to which a statue was exposed. In ancient times many of the sculptures were regularly touched and cleaned during purification rituals, which resulted in smooth and shiny surfaces. However, because not all statues were subject to the same extent of ritual use, such signs of wear are not always indicative of the age. Nevertheless it can be taken for granted that most Tibetan statues that have acquired a highly polished surface with rounded features as a result of ritual handling cannot have been made later than the 13th or 14th centuries. In Tibet the daily ritual handling came to an end sometime during the 15th or 16th century as a result of gilding the faces of images with painted “cold gold” (Tib.: *Grang gser*). As this made ineffective the inlaying of the eyes with silver or the lips with copper, such inlay works were also no longer made. From this follows that while a very old statue could very well retain an untouched appearance – no statue younger than five hundred years could acquire a worn and shiny surface. As a result of being painted with “cold gold” these later statues were only very seldom touched. Nepalese gilt copper statues in Tibetan monasteries were usually much less exposed to ritual activities than those that were worshipped in the Kathmandu valley. The less worn appearance of such statues prompts some writers to date those in Tibet later than their counterparts in Nepal, if they do not call them outright Tibetan copies of earlier Nepalese prototypes. However, it has to be expected that a Nepalese image in a Tibetan monastery will retain a great deal more of its original mercury gilding and inset precious stones than a statue of the same age in the Kathmandu valley subject to much more extensive ritual washing and handling. In many cases the Tibetans replaced the original stones inlaid by the Newārs with stones of their choice, preferably coral and turquoise. With regard to images inset with gemstones, it seems that in general they do not date from before the 11th or 12th century.

Iconographical peculiarities of deities are only helpful for dating if they illustrate a particular form whose practice was restricted to a known period of time. Sometimes it is possible to find out when the *sādhana* literature of a particular form had developed and thus arrive at an earliest possible date of manufacture. Tibetan Buddhism follows the late North-Eastern Indian forms of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism. Many of the Tibetan statues correspond therefore with the descriptions contained in the Indian iconographic compendiums that were translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan – most prominent among them the *Sāadhanamālā* and *Niṣpannayogāvalī*. As a result of further developments and sectarian differentiation, the number of deities in the Buddhist pantheon increased, with new entities often replacing older forms. The fact that many deities were exclusively worshipped by certain traditions might prove of interest for a classification of images according to sects and might thereby provide additional indications for the dating of an object.

13. Among the more than one thousand statues published by U. von Schroeder in *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet* only one Tibetan statue is accurately dated by an inscription. This exception is the statue of sMin gling gter chen 'Gyur med rDo rje (1646–1714) which depicts him at the age of sixty-seven, i.e. in 1713 AD (Pl. 281A–C). Three of the illustrated dated sculptures originate from the greater Kashmir region (Fig. II–5, Pls. 9, 22, 52); one of from Northern India (Pl. 74B–C), and three from China cast during the Northern Wei Dynasty (386–534) (Pls. 337, 338, 339C–F). The remaining dated images were all cast in China during the Ming Dynasty, in particular the Yongle period (1403–1424) and also the Xuande period (1426–1435).

The evolution and development of art styles is a slow process that does not affect all workshops of a given tradition at the same time and to the same extent. As mentioned above, the definition of an art style should be based on similar or identical characteristics occurring among several statues that distinguish them from statues of different styles. In addition to formal stylistic and aesthetic considerations, useful criteria for comparisons are compositional elements such as garments, jewellery, style of hair, or physiognomy. Such details were traditionally designed to conform with local fashion, as recommended by the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, an ancient Indian Sanskrit text: “An image should be represented in such a way that its equipment, dress, ornaments, and outward form be in agreement with the country”.¹⁴ However, a date hinted at by stylistic and compositional considerations can only be accepted if the technical properties of a sculpture lead to the same conclusion. Any dating based purely on stylistic arguments faces obstacles in the form of statues that were deliberately modelled after older statues of particular fame. One example is the celebrated 7th century wood sculpture of 'Phags pa Lo ke shwa ra in the 'Phags pa lha khang of the Po ta la palace, which over many centuries has been copied repeatedly in wood and sometimes also in ivory.¹⁵ Most prominent examples of copying old styles are the sculptures and paintings by Chos dbyings rdo rje (1604–1674), the Tenth Karma pa (**Plates 32–33**). The patina of his ivory carvings appears to have been artificially aged, something that makes it difficult for some people to believe that they were carved in the 17th century and not earlier. Although the brass statues from the atelier of Chos dbyings rdo rje copy ancient statues, in particular of Kashmir origin, they were not artificially aged. Nevertheless, not all statues and paintings rendered in the style of Chos dbyings rdo rje are necessarily his personal work but sometimes rather replicas by other artists.¹⁶

In the case of portrait sculptures of teachers where the identity is established by an inscription, the date of manufacture can sometimes be guessed if the years of the teacher's life are known. Whereas portrait sculptures of eminent lineage holders were sometimes made already during their lifetime, in most cases such statues were commissioned soon after the death of the depicted master. However, especially in the case of very eminent teachers, statues of them continued to be manufactured centuries after their decease. Under such circumstances, it is first of all important to illustrate the development of styles and only of secondary importance to attribute a precise date to the sculptures. In view of the very few existing Tibetan images with a dated inscription, the dating of the overall oeuvre will always be tentative at best. Every art style or tradition is bound to undergo changes, and mostly through slow modification. Regardless of the approach taken, it should be remembered that the history of art is primarily a history of the evolution and diffusion of styles.

14. J. N. Banerjea. 1956. *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, pp. 580, 586: chapter 57; verse 29.

15. U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 820–825, pls. 195–196.

16. Such works will be illustrated in the forthcoming publication about the art of the Tenth Karma pa by U. von Schroeder.

Literary References to Buddhist Sculptures

The various genres of Tibetan literature contain an incredible wealth of information about Buddhist sculptures and painting. Such references, of which only a few have been translated, exist among all the different sectarian traditions, such as the *rNying ma*, *bKa' gdams*, *Sa skya*, *bKa' brgyud*, *dGe lugs*, and also the *Bon*. One source of information are the *dKar chag*. These are written guides or eulogies of monasteries composed for visitors and pilgrims. Other references of interest are contained in the biographies of monks and teachers (*rNam thar*). Besides information about their teachers, the works studied, the Tantras practiced, the texts written, and the travels undertaken, there are also references to images and paintings that often record the names of the patrons and artists as well. Another source is the travel diaries of Tibetan pilgrims that contain much information about the sites of pilgrimage and the monasteries visited.¹⁷ Unfortunately only a few objects mentioned in the literary references can actually be identified among existing images. Nevertheless, the literary references are a great source of information about many different subjects.

The selection of literary references published here all concern the Tenth Karma pa Chos dbyings rdo rje (1604–1674), perhaps the most significant artist in Tibetan history (**Fig. IV; Plates 32–33**). His works of art clearly reflect his life-long fascination with ancient Indian sculptures of Kashmiri origin, and Tibetan sculptures of the Yar lung period (7th–9th centuries). That the Tenth Karma pa in some cases produced outright replicas of ancient works of art is documented by the two statues of Sarasvatī (**Fig. IV**). But not all sculptures made by Chos dbyings rdo rje are outright copies. His Avalokiteśvara seated on a cow (**Plate 32A**) was nevertheless clearly inspired by an ancient Tibetan statue (**Plate 30**). His paintings on the other hand were clearly influenced by Chinese works. The selected references are all part of the unpublished biography of Chos dbyings rdo rje, originally intended as part of a larger history of the *bKa' brgyud* tradition.¹⁸ This unpublished biography is much more detailed than the published biography.¹⁹

For example, in the unpublished biography is an episode that took place in 1630 just before the death of the Karma pa's teacher, Chos kyi dbang phyug, the Sixth Zhwa dmar pa (1584–1630): “Furthermore, ... he created unprecedented images of Tārā in the form of a human girl with an extremely passionate demeanour (cf. **Fig. IV**), and of Avalokiteśvara seated upon a cow and holding the stem of a lily”.²⁰ This passage almost certainly relates to the illustrated Avalokiteśvara seated on a cow or a similar brass image (**Plate 32A**). According to his biography, some of the Tenth Karma pa's works were the results of visions. However, his statue of Avalokiteśvara seated on a cow was very likely inspired by his encounter with an image of Yama seated on a buffalo during one of his visits to the Jo khang temple in Lhasa (**Plate 30**). It must be pointed out that although 108 forms of Avalokiteśvara are known in traditional Buddhist iconography, none of them is seated on a cow or a buffalo. The similarity of the Po ta la statue with an unpublished Avalokiteśvara statue in a monastery at sDe dge in Eastern Tibet (Khams) can only be explained by the use of matrices for the production of the wax models from which metal sculptures are made. And it appears that not all works executed in his enigmatic style were necessarily made by personally by Chos dbyings rdo rje. It is stated in his biography that the Karma pa also founded workshops (*las grwa*) and collaborated with other craftsmen at different places during his travels: In 1637 he went

17. G. Tucci. 1949. *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, pp. 150–170.

18. Si tu paṅ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1700–1774) and 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab. *Bsgrub brgyud karma kam tshang brgyud pa rin po che'i rnam par thar pa rab 'byams nor bu zla ba chu shel gyi pheng ba*.

19. David P. Jackson generously provided a copy of the unpublished biography and Cyrus Stearns made the translations: fol. 173b; 173b–174a; 181a; 183b; 184b; 185a; 189a.

20. gTsang mkhan chen 'Jam dbyangs dpal ldan rgya mtsho (1610–1684). *rGyal mchog chos dbyings rdo rje'i rnam thar mdo sde rgyan gyi lung dang sbyar ba*, p. 141: (translated by Cyrus Stearns).

to dGa' ma mo, and while there he founded a workshop with ten craftsmen.²¹ It is further recorded that in about 1637 Chos dbyings rdo rje visited the Third Karma pa's retreat of Nags phu and took from there an amazing Chinese painting (*Si thang*) of the sixteen *sthaviras* (*gNas bcu*) made during the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368). During the ox year (*gLang lo*) of 1649, Karma pa spent the summer retreat at Khang sar monastery in rGyal thang. While there he created a number of art works, among which were an image of Hayagrīva from *li* metal and a silver image of Mahākāruṇika. During the rabbit year (*Yos lo*) of 1651 he completed an image of Tārā from white sandalwood. It is further stated that in the dragon year (*'brug lo*) of 1652 he gave his attendant Kun tu bzang po a figure of Tārā that he had sculpted from rhinoceros horn and an image of the “noble lady” (Tārā) carved from sandalwood. According to his biography, it appears that already in 1645 Chos dbyings rdo rje had sculpted an image of Tārā from rhinoceros horn and given it to his attendant. At the beginning of the wood-sheep (*Shing lug*) year of 1655, the Karma pa carved an image of Vajrapāṇi from black stone. It is further mentioned, that soon afterward he made an image of Avalokiteśvara from white sandalwood. During the following year, the earth-dog (*Sa khyi*) year of 1658, he made various works of art, such as two images of Avalokiteśvara from ivory and a sculpted figure of Tārā. The following event occurred in 1673, the year before the Karma pa's death: “For (*his?*) mother he made from white sandalwood an image of Mārīcī seated on a pig”.²² In the same year the Karma pa visited the Li ma lha khang and the 'Phags pa Lo ke shwa ra image in the Po ta la and painted copies of the images there.²³ Although our selection is restricted to just a few references, they nevertheless give an idea about the range of information to be gained from studying them.



Fig. IV. Metal statues of Sarasvatī. On the left side is a copper statue dating from the Yar lung Dynasty; 7th/8th century (13 cm). sMin grol gling monastery. (Photo: 1993). On the right side is a statue of Sarasvatī cast in brass, presumably copied by the Tenth Karma pa Chos dbyings rdo rje (1604–1674) (16.4 cm). Po ta la Collection. (Photo: 1993).²⁴

21. Unpublished biography of Chos dbyings rdo rje (1604–1674), fol. 173a: *bzo bo bcu phrag gcig gis las grwa tshugs/*

22. The Karma pa's mother would have been at least in her late 80s by this time. See fol. 189b: *ma yum la 'od zer can ma'i sku phag la bzhugs pa tsan dan dkar po las phyag bzo g nang/* (translated by Cyrus Stearns).

23. Unpublished biography of Chos dbyings rdo rje (1604–1674), fol. 189a.

24. U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*. Volume Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 760–761 and 818, pls. 178, 194A.

II. Casting Metal Images

The casting of images is a delicate and time consuming process always executed by specialized craftsmen. Because the entire manufacturing process is divided into several separate stages, many artisans specialize in particular tasks according to their individual abilities and qualifications. Nevertheless, there is always a chief artisan who supervises and co-ordinates the entire process, and who is responsible for contact with the patron and the suppliers of the requisite raw materials.

The development of an artistic style depends on the observation of a certain proportional conformity. In India, such observances were followed and committed to writing for the continued use by artists of future generations. Among the many texts on the proportions of sculptures (*śilpāśāstra*), or containing chapters devoted to such considerations, are the *Pratimāmānalakṣaṇa*,²⁵ the *Citralakṣaṇa*,²⁶ and the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*²⁷ to mention just a few. The fact that proportions similar to those of the Indian traditions were also employed in adjoining areas such as Nepal and Tibet can be observed by a simple comparison of the statues from these neighbouring regions. A translation of the *Pratimāmānalakṣaṇa* text forms part of the Tibetan *bsTan 'gyur*. However, curiously the Tibetan translator did not bother to exchange the names of the Hindu deities in the *śilpāśāstra* with names from the Buddhist pantheon. This should be understood as a reflection that in India most artists could produce sculptures for any of the prevalent religious traditions and in all cases applied identical proportions; differentiation manifested itself in the appropriate iconographic requirements of a given deity. In spite of a general similarity in rules regarding proportions, different local variations developed in the course of time; even similar proportions still left ample freedom in the artistic interpretation of a figure. Thereby various local traditions developed with distinct variations in the execution of details such as garments, hair-dresses, and jewellery, in addition to the assimilation of the physical features of the local population. Furthermore, the making of an image had also to comply with well-defined iconographic standards laid down in Sanskrit compendiums of *sādhana* texts,²⁸ which in Tibetan translations have often been illustrated with xylographs.²⁹ However, the standardization of iconography was also far from complete, as illustrated by the many regional variations and new deities added to the Buddhist pantheon over the centuries.

The first step in the process of casting an image is the modelling of the required statue in wax. The shape of the finished image depends first and foremost on the wax model, and is therefore, from the artistic and stylistic viewpoint, the most important and vital part of the entire process. The size and type determines

25. J. N. Banerjea. 1956. *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, pp. 590–617; D. C. Bhattacharyya. 1991. *Pratimālakṣaṇa of the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*. [*The Tibetan Tripitaka*, no. P. 5807].
26. B. Laufer. (transl.). 1913. *Das Citralakṣaṇa. Nach dem Tibetischen Tanjur herausgegeben und übersetzt*; B. N. Goswamy (transl.). 1976. *An Early Document of Indian Art: The 'Citralakṣaṇa of Nagnajit'*, [following the German Edition based on the Tibetan *bsTan 'gyur*, edited and transl. by B. Laufer]; G. Roth. 1990. "Notes on the Citralakṣaṇa and Other Ancient Indian Works on Iconometry", *South Asian Archaeology 1987*, Part 2, pp. 979–1028. [*The Tibetan Tripitaka*, no. P. 5806].
27. M. Lalou (transl.). 1930. *Iconographie des Étoffes Peintes (Paṭa) dans le Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*; A. Macdonald (transl.). 1962. *Le Maṇḍala du Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*. [*The Tibetan Tripitaka*, no. P. 162].
28. B. Bhattacharyya (transl.). 1925 & 1928. *Sādhnamālā*; B. Bhattacharyya (transl.). 1949. *Niṣpannayogāvalī*; B. Bhattacharyya. 1958. *Indian Buddhist Iconography*; M.-T. de Mallmann. 1975. *Introduction à l'iconographie du tântrisme bouddhique*.
29. L. S. Dargyab (transl.). 1984. *Die Sādhana der Sammlung Ba-ri brgya-rtsa*; L. S. Dargyab (transl.). 1986. *Die Sādhana der Sammlung sNar-thang brgya-rtsa*; Kolmas, J. 1986. *The Iconography of the Derge Kanjur and Tanjur*, [Facsimile reproductions of the 648 illustrations in the Derge Edition of the Tibetan Tripitaka in Prag]; L. S. Dargyab (transl.). 1991. *Die Sādhana der Sammlung sGrub-thabs 'Dod-'jo*; L. S. Dargyab (transl.). 1991. *Die Sādhana der Sammlung rGyud-sde kun-btus*; L. Chandra (ed.). 1991. *Buddhist Iconography, Mongolian Kanjur* [1–510], *Narthing Pantheon* [511–1009], *Bhadralakṣaṇa Sūtra Pantheon* [1010–1081], *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Pantheon* [1082–2203], *Three Hundred Icons (sKu brnyan sum brgya)* [2204–2503]; S. Lohia (ed.). 1994. *Lalitavajra's Manual of Buddhist Iconography*.

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whether an image is solid or hollow cast. In the case of hollow statues, the artist first shapes in clay a raw image intended as the core of the wax model. The beeswax employed in the modelling is modified with admixtures of various kinds depending on the climatic conditions, so as to have the necessary consistency to work with. The wax image is carefully and patiently shaped down to the most precise and minute details. For the hollow casting process the thickness of the wax model must be related to the type of alloy selected. The softer the alloy, the stronger and thicker the wax model must be, since castings of comparatively soft unalloyed copper require more metal than castings of harder alloys such as brass or bronze.

Once the wax model is completed, the preparatory steps for its covering with clay are initiated. The mouth and wax pipes needed later for the funnelling of the molten metal and the circulation of the displaced air inside the mould must be attached. In the case of hollow statues, the core is stabilized in relation to the mould with so-called “core nails” hammered into the clay model. The next step involves the application of several layers of clay for the required casting mould. This is time-consuming, since each layer must be slowly and uniformly dried before each successive layer of clay can be applied. The clay mould for small images rarely needs to be thicker than one centimetre, something that can be applied and dried within one week. For a larger image, it may take up to a total of two or three months to apply and dry all the layers needed for a clay mould strong enough for the expected stresses of the casting process.

Once the casting mould has been thoroughly dried, the image can be cast at any time. The amount of raw metal required for the casting can be gauged by the amount of wax used for the making of the models. The actual casting process is divided into three stages: the melting out of the wax model resulting in an empty cavity, the filling of the pre-heated, empty clay mould with molten metal, and finally the breaking open of the clay mould to free the cast statue. Most of the metal statues illustrated in this publication were cast in unalloyed copper or brass alloys composed of copper primarily enriched with zinc, in addition to traces of other metals. To reach the high temperature necessary for smelting – for copper almost 1100 degrees centigrade is required – sufficient amounts of charcoal, or even better coal, are essential in addition to the normal firewood. Once the metal in the crucible has reached a liquid state, the casting moulds are taken from the furnace and lined up beside each other with their funnels facing upward. The crucibles with the liquid hot metal are lifted out of the furnace with iron tongs, and emptied into the red-hot glowing clay moulds. After sufficient cooling the mould is then broken and the cast image freed.

The distinction of a metal image depends to a large degree on the quality of the finishing work once the casting is completed. This exercise includes the complete removal of the clay mould and clay core, the chiselling away of the circulation pipes leading to the funnel, the eventual correction of casting errors, as well as the polishing with grinding sand and pieces of cloth, engraving, and, if required, gilding, and setting with precious stones. With brass and bronze, the alloys are less porous and have a greater stability which permits thinner castings. Unalloyed copper statues require the most time consuming of finishing work, but the malleability of this metal also allows the most rewarding effects in the course of perfecting an image.

Statues of unalloyed copper are usually gilt using the method of fire gilding. For this technique, an amalgam of powdered gold and mercury is applied to the object. The image is then held over the fire and as soon as the temperature reaches 360 degrees centigrade, the mercury spontaneously evaporates leaving the gold evenly coating the surface of the metal. The brilliance of the fire gilding depends upon the granulation of the gold powder. Gilding with mercury is extremely durable and can be applied to all basic alloys such as copper, brass, and bronze.

The contrasting colours of different metal alloys can be utilized to emphasize particular details of statues. The tradition of inlaying the eyes, especially of yellowish brass statues, with silver or the mouth

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with brown copper was introduced into Tibet from India. It was practiced earlier in the Swat and Kashmir regions of North-Western India, as well as in North-Eastern India. Relatively soft and malleable metals, such as gold, silver, copper, and tin, are especially suited for this purpose. Because silver and tin are similar in colour and are seldom applied unalloyed, the term silver is used in this publication for describing metal inlays of whitish colour. The metal used for inlaying is hammered into grooves that are larger at their base to prevent the metal from falling out. When applied to highlight the eyes and lips, the metal is polished down to the level of the cast surface, whereas when *ūrṇās* and jewellery are inlaid, it is often done in relief. The inlay tradition was later rendered obsolete by painting the faces of statues with “cold gold” (Tib.: *Grang gser*).

A further method employed to increase the beauty of statues is the setting of precious and imitation stones. This method seems to have come to Nepal and Tibet from India. However, it appears that in India the inlaid stones were often glass imitations. The Nepalese used translucent precious stones like rubies, emeralds, and rock crystal. The Tibetans preferred blue turquoise – to which they attributed magical powers to ward off evil spirits – in addition to red coral, blue lapis lazuli, and yellow amber. The choice of inset precious stones depended therefore on whether an image was commissioned by Newārs or Tibetans. Images commissioned by Tibetans were most likely inset with turquoise and coral, but in the case of images imported from Nepal, the turquoise and coral might be replacements for originally inset rubies and other translucent precious stones.

An important aspect, which is almost never taken into consideration in publications about Tibetan metal sculptures, concerns the making of the wax models – whether they were shaped by hand or with the help of reusable matrices. This time-saving method could be employed for whole statues or only for certain decorative elements such as lotus pedestals, crowns, or any other part of an object. The partial application of reusable matrices is difficult to detect on individual images, and can only be proven if identical shapes occur among several statues. Some of the earliest images cast by Tibetans – mostly of smaller size and simple design – certainly were manufactured with the help of reusable matrices (**Plate 47**). Some of the later portrait images of monks and lay masters also give the impression of having been produced with the help of reusable matrices. Most prominent among the mass-produced portrait statues are those of Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1292–1361), of which a number have surfaced recently in Tibetan monasteries.³⁰ Because reusable matrices could be employed over a long period of time, not all statues made with the help of the same matrices were thus necessarily cast at the same period of time. Contrary to the Indian, Nepalese, and Tibetan traditions where a natural hesitation restrained the use of reusable matrices, its utilization was practically mandatory in China. The numerous statues produced during the Yongle period (1403–1424) and the Xuande period (1426–1435) amply document this (**Plates 55–57**). Such a consistent similarity in the modelling could only be achieved through the employment of reusable matrices, something that is characteristic for Chinese metal objects since the earliest times. This conformity could only be achieved by the means of centralized supervision strictly enforced and extended to all workshops under their jurisdiction. Such governmental intervention is in contrast to the traditions prevailing in India, Nepal, and Tibet, where different local styles could develop in a self-regulated artistic environment.

30. U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 700, 717, 1126, 1202–1203; pls. 328C–328F.

III. Consecration, Worship, and Practice

Consecration of Buddhist Statues in Tibet

Every image – regardless of whether Buddhist or Hindu – requires formal consecration before it acquires a sacred status and can serve as an object of worship and veneration. Prior to the act of consecration, an image is not regarded as a sacred object, but as an ordinary sculpture. The consecration ritual (Tib.: *Rab gnas cho ga*), of which different types exist, is not restricted to images and paintings but also conferred on books, *stūpas*, and temples as symbolic receptacles of the Buddha’s *body*, *mind*, and *speech*. The extensive Tibetan commentaries on consecration distinguish basically three types, namely *Sūtra*-style, *Tantra*-style, and combinations of *Sūtra*-style and *Tantra*-style. During the *Sūtra*-style consecration of the type introduced in Tibet by Atiśa (982–1054), the object to be consecrated is visualized as Buddha Śākyamuni. This meaning differs from the *Tantra*-style consecration ritual, where the “enlightened awareness being” (Skt.: *Jñānasattva*) in the form of the practitioner’s tutelary deity (Tib.: *Yi dam*) is invited to reside within a particular receptacle to render it appropriate for worship.³¹ Statues and paintings are regarded as receptacles of the Buddha’s “body”; books, *mantras*, and *dhāraṇīs* are regarded as receptacles of the “speech”; and *stūpas* are regarded as receptacles of the “mind”. This explains why Buddhist temples usually contain, in addition to images and thangkas, books, and *stūpa* reliquaries. The consecration ritual has to be performed for every receptacle, regardless of its intended use in a temple or as the personal object of a monk or a layperson.

The first part of the consecration ritual is the filling of the receptacle with relics. Over the centuries and especially after the decline of Buddhism in its homeland of India, many of the Buddhist rituals in Tibet were modified. However, most customs of ceremonial worship and offerings to Buddhist deities still retain similarities to ancient Indian traditions. Concurrently, the Tibetans also developed their own ritual for the consecration (Tib.: *Rab gnas*) of hollow cast images which differs in many ways from the originally transmitted tradition of Indian Buddhism, where only in rare instances have indications been found that statues were once filled with sacred substances (Tib.: *gZungs gzhus*). In Tibet, hollow representations of seated deities were at least from the 11th century onward filled with relics and sealed at the bottom of the pedestal. Hollow cast standing images were filled through openings at the back of the torso and subsequently sealed with a piece of metal. Important constituents among the substances placed inside hollow statues are sacred texts and hand-written or block-printed *mantras* for the invocation of the depicted deity. The Tibetans differentiate between the kinds of *dhāraṇī* (Tib.: *gZungs*) texts, to be placed inside the image’s head (Tib.: *dBu gzungs*), neck (Tib.: *mGrin gzungs*), torso (Tib.: *Thugs gzungs*), and the lotus pedestal (Tib.: *Pad gzungs*). In addition to the scriptures, there is a large variety of objects that can be placed within the image, depending on the size and kind of deity represented. Among these objects can be bodily remains of highly respected teachers, including their hair, nails, teeth, skulls, or pieces of cloth. Other objects can be *stūpas*, images, clay amulets (Tib.: *Tsha tsha*), paintings, block-printed pictures, and *dhāraṇī* texts. The

31. Y. Bentor. 1992. “Sūtra-style Consecration in Tibet and its Importance for Understanding the Historical Development of the Indo-Tibetan Consecration Ritual for Stūpas and Images”, *International Association of Tibetan Studies 1989*, Vol. 1, pp. 1–12.

throne space can be filled with earth and stones from sacred locations, jewels, medicinal herbs, grains, and plants considered to possess purifying effects – such as branches of the juniper tree.³² After the appropriate substances have been placed inside the hollow statues, the opening is sealed as airtight as possible with a cover, usually made from a sheet of copper marked with a *viśvavajra*. Especially among the earlier brass statues, the bottom of the lotus pedestal is sealed with a piece of wood (**Plate 36A**). In the case of damage, or whenever considered opportune, the consecration can be renewed.

In Tibetan Buddhism, it has been the custom for the last four or five hundred years to paint the face and uncovered parts of the neck, and also sometimes the uncovered shoulders, arms, and feet, with a mixture consisting of powdered gold diluted with an adhesive binding agent. This cold gilding (Tib.: *Grang gser*) serves as groundwork for the painting of the features during the consecration and invocation ceremonies of the particular deity to be invoked by the image. It is considered a gesture of reverence to have the gold painting of statues renewed. This is almost daily the case with the most sacred statue of Tibet, the Jo bo Rin po che representing “Śākyamuni at the age of twelve years” installed in the Lhasa Jo khang/gTsong lag khang.

Worship and Practice

Parallel with the expansion of Buddhism from India, the related rituals that were concerned with consecration, installation, and worship, spread simultaneously and affected also the Himalayan regions and Tibet. It is thanks to the travel accounts of Chinese visitors that information is available about the worship of Buddhist images in India in ancient times, although less about their consecration. The pilgrim Fa Xian (travelled 399–414), who passed through Northern India in the early 5th century, recorded accounts of Buddhist processions in which the statues were carried around for exhibition.³³ Another Chinese pilgrim named Yi Jing (I-tsing) (travelled 673–685) visited India at the end of the 7th century and stayed for an extended period at Nālandā Mahāvihāra in North-Eastern India, maybe the most important Buddhist university of its time. He recorded in detail the daily life of the Buddhist monks at Nālandā and also, in particular, described the duties and activities in regard to images.³⁴ According to the records of Yi Jing, the cleaning of images was part of the worshipping ritual: “*Copper images, whether large or small, are to be brightened by rubbing them with fine ashes or brick powder, and pouring pure water over them, until they become perfectly clear and beautiful like a mirror. A large image must be washed in the middle and the end of the month by the whole assembly of priests, and a small one every day, by individual priests. By doing so, one may gain great merit at small expenditure*”.³⁵

The offering of flowers was an important part of the daily worship not only of the principal images installed in the temples but also of the statues kept in the private quarters. On the Tibetan plateau flowers were not as plentiful as in the climate of India. Instead, the offerings of the Tibetans consist primarily of incense sticks, butter for the lamps, clean water, and white scarves. Other traditional ways of expressing reverence are *gTor ma* offerings, made of ground barley powder mixed with coloured butter.³⁶

32. Y. Bentor. 1994. “Tibetan Relic Classification”, *International Association of Tibetan Studies 1992*, Vol. 1, pp. 16–30.

33. J. Legge (transl.). 1886. *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms; Being an Account of the Chinese Monk Fā-Hien of his Travels in India and Ceylon*, p. 79.

34. J. Takakusu (transl.). 1896. *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago (671-695 AD)*, by I-Tsing, pp. 21–22.

35. J. Takakusu (transl.). 1896. *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago (671-695 AD)*, by I-Tsing, p. 150.

36. R. J. Kohn. 1996. “An Offering of Torma”, *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, pp. 255–265.

None of the 108 Buddhist images selected for this publication were produced for purely ornamental or aesthetic reasons. The primary objective of the artist was to create a figural conception of a divine being, whose material realization serves as an object for spiritual evocation by the adept through worship ultimately aimed toward identification with the chosen deity. The initiated viewer of an icon, regardless of whether the latter is symbolized by a painting or a sculpture, experiences naturally different emotions than the uninitiated lay people. The practitioner tries to identify himself with a particular deity through visualization techniques. He is not only familiar with the *sādhana* and the *mantras* associated with a particular deity, but understands the full meaning of the symbolic values attached to the colours, attitudes, and gestures.

Visualization practices aim first to create a “clear mental picture” (Tib.: *rNam par gsal ba*) of the chosen deity. This goal achieved, the meditator then reflects upon the iconographical meaning of the deity. For example, for a six-armed, four-legged deity he brings to mind that the six arms symbolize the six transcendental perfections (Skt.: *pāramitā*), the four legs stand for the four boundless states (Skt.: *caturprameya*), and so on. This is called “clear recollection” (Tib.: *rNam dag dran pa*). Finally the meditator’s ultimate aim is to identify himself with the deity. This third step in visualization practice is called “stable pride” (Tib.: *Nga rgyal brtan pa*). While maintaining the visualization, the yogin recites the *mantra* of the deity. At the end, he imagines that the deity dissolves into a recognition of emptiness (Skt.: *śūnyatā*). These two stages, visualization and dissolution of the deity, are indispensable parts of every *sādhana*: the “stage of generation or creation” (Skt.: *utpattikrama*) and the “stage of dissolution or perfection” (Skt.: *sampannakrama*). In order to familiarize the practitioner with the outer form of a particular deity, statues and painted representations are indispensable objects for the meditator.

Such an intimate experience of practicing visualization is based on a close relationship between the practitioner and the deity. This is naturally restricted to the particular deities that form part of the actual initiations received and which are regularly invoked. The yogin would infuse the image or painting of his chosen meditation deity daily with blessings by performing a short consecration ritual at the conclusion of the *sādhana* practice. As a support for his meditation the sacred object would accompany him throughout his entire life. Such an object is consequently called “practice receptacle” (Tib.: *Thugs dam gyi rten*) and is viewed to be the deity in person. Being the most precious object in his possession, it would be passed on from generation to generation of meditators. These objects are kept extremely secret.

For non-initiated laypersons, the experience of being confronted visually with a deity is entirely different. Being unable on intellectual and ritual terms to communicate with a particular deity, his viewing practice is considered to create a positive link and is immediately rewarded by “liberation through seeing”, which is one of the “six liberations”.³⁷ Most monasteries have in their custody sacred sculptures, the worshipping of which is considered to be especially rewarding. Whereas the fame of some images is restricted to the local district, other images are famous throughout Tibet. The most sacred and famous of all Buddha images in Tibet certainly is the Jo bo Rin po che in the Jo khang/gTsong lag khang in Lhasa. This image is also called the “liberation through seeing”, because merely looking at the Jo bo is considered to accumulate merit for the lay adherent. Similarly, listening by lay people to learned discourses by monks is considered a good deed as “liberation through hearing”, even if the meaning of the teaching remains obscure.

37. There exist “six liberations” (Tib.: *Grol ba drug ldan*): 1. *Thos grol* = liberation through hearing; 2. *sTags grol* = liberation through wearing (sacred texts); 3. *mThong grol* = liberation through seeing; 4. *Dran grol* = liberation through remembering; 5. *Myong grol* = liberation through tasting (of sacred substances); 6. *Reg grol* = liberation through touching (sacred objects or persons).

IV. North-Western India: Greater Gandhāra and Swat Region (Uḍḍiyāna)

Plates 1–2

Among the countless Buddhist statues in the custody of Tibetan monasteries are a great number of brass images originating from North-Western India and the western Himalayas. In this publication they are divided into five principal categories: Gandhāra and the Swat region identical with Uḍḍiyāna (**Plates 1–2**), the Kashmir region (**Plates 3–5**), the Paṭola-Ṣāhi kingdom of the Gilgit valley (**Plates 6–7**), and the two principal kingdoms of Western Tibet, namely Zhang zhung (**Plates 8–9**) and sPu rangs-Gu ge (**Plates 10–15**).

Gandhāra, located in the North-Western Frontier Province of Pakistan and Eastern Afghanistan, was a major early Buddhist centre together with Mathurā, located further east in Northern India, both forming part of the extensive domain of the Kuṣāṇa empire (1st–3rd century). Prior to Kuṣāṇa rule, Gandhāra was partly ruled by Indo-Greeks, many of whom endorsed Buddhism. In spite of the Indo-Greek tradition of making anthropomorphic representations of their gods, there is no conclusive proof so far that they sculpted images of Buddha Śākyamuni. There seems to be a general agreement among art historians that in the early Buddhist art pre-dating the 1st century, no anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha were created. Wherever the Buddha presence was required as part of an artistic depiction, symbols were used, such as the *dharmacakra* symbolizing the “wheel of the doctrine”, the Bodhi tree under which the historical Buddha had defeated the negative forces personified by Māra (*māravijaya*) and subsequently attained enlightenment, the vacant throne, the foot mark of the Buddha (*buddhapāda*), etc.³⁸

The origin of anthropomorphic representations of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni has for a long time been a major issue among the art historians of South Asian Buddhism. The dispute is not only with regard to the date but also with regard to the place of origin. As to the geographical area, the opponents are divided basically into two groups, advocating either the Indian subcontinent or Sri Lanka.³⁹ The proponents for a Sri Lankan origin are by far outnumbered by the scholars who are convinced that the cult of the Buddha image developed in India. For them, the issue centres primarily on the question of whether the Buddha image was invented in Gandhāra or in Mathurā, both forming part of the Kuṣāṇa empire. The dispute concerns the impact of the so-called “Græco-Roman” trends of Gandhāra as opposed to earlier indigenous traditions of India. Lately there seems to have emerged a mutual agreement that the image cult had developed more or less independently in Gandhāra and Mathurā, at least as far as stylistic matters are concerned. Of more importance is the fact that the statue type developed in the greater area of Gandhāra under the patronage of Greeks and their descendants was ultimately the prototype for the folded and pleated monastic robes later accepted universally. As to the period of invention, a dating from the 1st century is generally accepted, although repeated attempts have been made to push this date

38. S. L. Huntington. 1990. “Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism”, *Art Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 4, pp. 401–408, 9 figs; V. Dehejia. 1991. “Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems”, *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. 21, pp. 45–66, 24 figs; S. L. Huntington. 1992. “Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems: Another Look”, *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. 22, pp. 111–156, 19 figs; V. Dehejia. 1992. “Rejoinder to Susan Huntington”, *AO*, Vol. 22, p. 157; S. L. Huntington. 1992. “Icons and Early Buddhist Art”, *Eastern Art Report*, Vol. III, No. 4, pp. 23–28.

39. U. von Schroeder. 1990. *Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka*. (Visual Dharma Publications Ltd.), pp. 19–25.

back.⁴⁰ It has to be recalled that another group of historians, mostly Theravāda scholars, propagate Sri Lanka as the place where the cult of the Buddha image originated, or at least developed independently. With regard to the development of Tibetan Buddhist art in the 7th century, however, the question of the origin of the first Buddha image is more or less irrelevant.

The invasion of North-Western India by the Hūṇas (Hephthalites) some time during the middle of the 5th century had catastrophic consequences for the Buddhist communities that were almost completely eradicated in Gandhāra proper. While tolerating more or less the Hindu faith, the Hūṇas systematically persecuted Buddhism and laid waste to nearly all of the Buddhist establishments that fell in their path. Although most of the Buddhists monasteries of the Swat valley (Uḍḍiyāna) were annihilated by the Hūṇas, it appears that at least some small, but active pockets of Buddhism survived there, whereas in Gandhāra proper they virtually disappeared. From the famous Chinese pilgrim Xuan Zang (Hüan Chwang, Hsüan-tsang, travelled 629–645), we conclude that at the beginning of the 7th century Buddhism again thrived in the Hindu Kush as well as in the greater Gandhāra and Swat region. The history of this area from about 850 till 1030 consists of the constant struggle between the retreating Hindu-Ṣāhi, the successor of the Turki-Ṣāhi, and the Yāmīnī Muslims who pushed eastward from their stronghold at Ghazni in Afghanistan. Between 998 and 1030, the Ghaznavids annexed the Kabul valley, Gandhāra, and the partly mountainous area of Swat. From the 9th century on, many refugees of the distressed, defeated Hindu-Ṣāhi sought refuge in Swat and further to the north and east. Though it is usual to speak almost exclusively of the Hindu sects in connection with the Hindu-Ṣāhi, religious freedom seems to have prevailed in their domains. There is every reason to believe that Buddhism in the greater Swat region did not survive the repeated invasions of the Yāmīnī Muslims, and came eventually to an end in the late 10th century.

The earliest published Buddhist images of Indian origin discovered in Tibet date from about the 6th century and belong to the Post-Gandhāran tradition (**Plate 1**). These images thus predate the official introduction of Buddhism during the reign of Srong btsan sgam po (reigned c. 618–649), the foremost ruler of the Tibetan imperial period (c. 600–842). However, it can be assumed that some Tibetans, among the trading population especially, had already come into contact with Buddhism prior to the official introduction during Srong btsan sgam po's reign. It seems certain that the population of the Western Tibetan kingdom of Zhang zhung had trade relations with the Buddhist population of the western Himalayas in areas such as Gilgit. Interestingly, the large number of 7th and 8th century metal images found in Tibet and originating from the greater area of Swat and Kashmir is in contrast to the few examples of this period originating from North-Eastern India.

40. J. C. Huntington. 1985. "A Note on a Buddha Image from China Dated to the Year 36 of the Pre-Christian Era (Former Han Chien Chao Third Year)", *Lalit Kalā*, No. 22, pp. 27–31, 4 figs; J. C. Huntington. 1985. "Origin of the Buddha Image, Early Image Tradition and the Concept of Buddhadasanapunya", *Studies in Buddhist Art of South Asia*, pp. 23–58, figs. 1–8; J. C. Huntington. 1988. "The Buddha Image of 36 B.C. Published in *Lalit Kalā*, No. 22 is a Fake", *Lalit Kalā*, No. 23, pp. 44–45; P. Pal. 1989. "Much Ado about a Little Clay Pot", *South Asian Studies*, Vol. 5, pp. 73–77, 4 figs.

The Oldest Indian Buddhas Discovered in Tibet

The earliest published images of Indian origin discovered in Tibet represent standing statues of Buddha Śākyamuni (Tib: Śākya thub pa) that can undoubtedly be attributed to the Post-Gandhāran tradition (**Plate 1A–1B**). These statues of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni reflect a distinct influence of the Gandhāran art flourishing between the 1st century to about the middle of the 5th century in the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent and in adjoining areas of Afghanistan. The asymmetric draping of the monastic robes especially reflects the distinct “Græco-Roman” influence of the Gandhāran period, which is quite different from the stereotype of narrow and symmetrically spaced draping applied by the artists of the late Mathurā school in Northern India. When comparing the dozen or so published standing Buddhas attributed to the Gandhāran and Post-Gandhāran traditions, it is evident that they are the products of various workshops.⁴¹ Whereas earlier authors tended to date them as early as the 3rd century, it is now generally accepted that some of them at the earliest date from the 2nd half of the 5th century, whereas the later products of these schools may have been cast as late as the 7th century. The Po ta la Buddhas appear to be the product of the same workshop, and can be attributed to the Post-Gandhāran tradition of *circa* 6th century.

1A–1B. Two Standing Statues of Buddha Śākyamuni North-Western India: Post-Gandhāran Style; c. 6th Century

Brass; hollow cast in one piece. The faces are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 31.8 cm; 41.8 cm.

The two Buddhas stand in a slightly bent attitude. The right hands are raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*), while the left hold the hem of the monastic robe. The palms of the right hands, distinguished by webbed fingers, are decorated with lotus emblems indicated by dotted marks. The upper monastic robes are rendered with broad, asymmetrically distributed folds and cover both shoulders. The lower robes are also visible. As documented by intact images of similar style, they were mounted on stepped pedestals of rectangular shape and in addition had aureoles decorated with rays attached to tenons at the back.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory nos. 377; 395

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 30–31, pls. 1A–1E.

“The Buddha Goes to Town”

The Tibetan tradition distinguishes three types of “receptacles” or “supports” (Tib.: *rTen*), namely statues, scriptures, and *stūpas*. The monasteries in Tibet pride themselves for the wealth in Buddhist art and scriptures accumulated over centuries. Especially sacred objects are called “inner receptacles” (Tib.: *Nang rten*). Among them Buddha statues are viewed with highest respect and are particularly venerated. The so-called “Indian metal statues” (Tib.: *rGya gar li ma*) are said to contain the blessing of Madhyadeśa, the “centre land” where Buddhism originated. If high monks visit a monastery, the “inner receptacles” of the monastery are displayed. Tibetan monks, being natural art-lovers, will then discuss the importance, place of origin, and style of the objects. A standing Buddha with one leg slightly placed in front represents, according to the Tibetans, “the Buddha goes to town” (Tib.: *Sang rgyas grong gshes ma*).

41. U. von Schroeder. 1981. *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, pp. 64–81, colour plate V, pls. 3B, 4A–4I. See also the references listed at the end of this chapter.



1A



1B

Art Styles of the Greater Swat Region (Uḍḍiyāna)

These two images originate from the greater Swat valley region. This style area extends from the Swat valley in Northern Pakistan to the Upper Indus valley and possibly even further north to the western Tarim Basin. Statues that can be attributed to this tradition have a number of characteristics in common which distinguish them from the surrounding style areas such as the Kashmir region. Such characteristics include the narrow folds of the robes, or lotus pedestals often characterized by narrow waists. Holding the arms to the side is another particularity of many statues belonging to the various Swat styles.

2A. Buddha Śākyamuni Seated on a Lion Throne

North-Western India: Greater Swat Region (Uḍḍiyāna); 7th/8th Century

Brass; hollow cast in two parts. The eyes and the *ūrṇā* are perhaps inlaid with silver. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair of the Buddha and of the lions with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 22.3 cm.

The Buddha is depicted in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāsa*) signifying deep meditation and introspection. He is seated on a rectangular throne supported by a pair of lions placed on a double lotus pedestal with a rectangular stand. The Buddha extends the right hand in the gesture of charity (*varadamudrā*), the left hand holds the hem of the upper monastic robe. The robe is rendered with evenly arranged narrow folds and covers both shoulders. The separately cast aureole is lost.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 812

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 40–41, pls. 6A–6C.

2B. Unidentified Six-Armed Buddhist Goddess – Perhaps Cundā

North-Western India: Greater Swat Region (Uḍḍiyāna); 7th/8th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The face and crown are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 21.6 cm.

The unidentified six-armed goddess with three eyes represents perhaps a form of Cundā, sometimes also spelled Cuṅḍā (Tib.: Tsunda). She is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāsa*) on a circular constricted double lotus pedestal mounted upon a rock-shaped rectangular pedestal. The goddess is clad in a pleated cloth tied by a belt around her waist. She wears jewelled ornaments, namely a crown decorated in front with a small effigy of Amitābha (?), a pair of earrings, two necklaces, and bracelets. Originally, a separately cast nimbus was attached to the broken tenon at the back. Possible keys to the identification of this goddess are the attendant figures seated on the pedestal, depicting two pairs of snake kings and queens in anthropomorphic form known as Nāgas and Nāginīs. Several cobra hoods surmounting their heads characterize the upper pair of Nāgas. The one on the proper right is playing cymbals, whereas the one on the proper left is playing the flute. The lower pair represents Nāginīs characterized by a single cobra hood surmounting their heads. The one on the proper left is playing the lute, whereas the one on the proper right is playing another stringed instrument similar to a harp of elongated shape. Female representations are only rarely found among the statues discovered in the greater Swat region and due to the lack of *sādhana* texts most of them remain unidentified.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 566

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 36–37, pls. 4A–4C.



2B



2A

V. North-Western India: Kashmir Region

Plates 3–5

Mostly cast in brass alloys, metal statues from Kashmir, are hailed to be among the finest of their kind. The development of the various art styles in the greater Kashmir region has been influenced by different traditions: the styles of the extreme North-West, including Gandhāra, the Swat valley, and the Hindu Kush, and the styles prevalent in the adjoining Northern Indian provinces, namely Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh.

The valley of Kashmir, located in the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent, represents another region with a long tradition of Buddhism. From the 3rd century BC, the area was part of the Maurya empire (c. 320–185 BC) and Buddhism entered the mountainous region of greater Kashmir during the reign of Emperor Aśoka (reigned c. 269–232 BC). The Hūṇas (Hephthalites) invasion of North-Western India in the mid 5th century was catastrophic for the Buddhist community. Whereas the Hūṇas more or less tolerated the Hindu faith, they unrelentingly persecuted Buddhism and systematically laid waste to almost all the Buddhist establishments in their path. For Buddhism the situation changed for the better in the early 7th century with the founding of the Kārkoṭa dynasty (626–850) by King Durlabhavardhana (reigned c. 626–662) (**Plate 3B**). The political power of Kashmir expanded during the reign of the Kārkoṭa kings and reached its full height during the rule of Lalitāditya (763–770) when its territories included not only other areas of North-Western India, but also parts of Central Asia north of the Hindu Kush. The monarchs of the Kārkoṭa dynasty were generally followers of Hindu gods such as Śiva and Viṣṇu, but religious freedom seemed to predominate. Buddhism and Hinduism continued simultaneously during the Utpala dynasty (855/856–1003). Religious activities in Kashmir declined rapidly towards the end of the subsequent First Lohara dynasty (1003–1101) when the king, Harṣa (reigned 1089–1101), ordered the looting of temples in a futile attempt to replenish his treasury which had been depleted by costly military campaigns. During the Second Lohara dynasty (1101–1338), Kashmir was considerably weakened by the intrigues of the court. The Muslims first attempted to conquer Kashmir under the leadership of Sultan Mahmūd of Ghazni in 1014, but failed. They only succeeded in the 14th century with the help of Sahamera, a Muslim adventurer who succeeded in overthrowing Queen Koṭādevī, and in 1338 under the self-proclaimed title of Sultan Shamsuddin declared Islam the official religion. This proclamation established a Muslim state of affairs that has continued up to the present day. The artistic traditions connected with Buddhism and Hinduism came thus to a sudden end. However, as documented by the large number of known Kashmir brass statues, many small portable metal images were carried away to Tibet, something that was more difficult with larger ones. One of the exceptions is the life-size brass image of Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi commissioned in 998 from the Indian artist Bhidhaka by Rin chen bzang po (958–1055) during his stay in Kashmir (**Fig. II**). Another large and important statue of Kashmir origin that has survived is the preaching Buddha Śākyamuni at Phyi dbang monastery (**Plate 4**); also the two large statues of Buddha Śākyamuni in the collections of the Po ta la palace (**Plates 3A–3B**). Almost all of the known statues attributed to the Kashmir styles that are now in Western collections were for over one thousand years in monasteries located in the Western Himalayas and Tibet.

VI. North-Western India: The Paṭola-Ṣāhi Dynasty of the Gilgit Valley

Plates 6–7

The existence of the Paṭola-Ṣāhi kingdom of Gilgit is most known through rock-inscriptions and the publication of inscribed Buddhist metal statues. Some of these exquisite brass statues are dated and the names of kings and queens are recorded in the inscriptions as donors. The existence of the dynasty of the Paṭola-Ṣāhi of Gilgit was earlier known through the colophons of the famous so-called “Gilgit manuscripts” found accidentally in 1931 at nearby Naupur by a shepherd searching for firewood. Additional sources of information are the rock inscriptions of Hatun and the one at Hodar. Until recently it was generally considered that the Paṭola-Ṣāhi kingdom had been ruled from Gilgit, but research now demonstrates that the capital was further to the east at Skardu (Tib: sKar du) in Baltistan. References to people calling themselves Paṭola/Palalo/Palala/Pālolo appear in inscriptions dating from between the 4th and the 7th centuries. It seems that the territory of the Paṭola-Ṣāhi was part of the confederation of kingdoms of Bolōr (Tib: Bru sha?), known to the Chinese as Bo lu luo or Bo lu. The kingdom of Bolōr was an important region in the struggle between the Chinese and Tibetans for control of the trade between Central Asia and North-Western India. The political alliance between the Paṭola-Ṣāhi and China naturally also facilitated the cultural contact with the Buddhists of Central Asia, especially among the Saka people who had settled in the Khotan area as early as the 2nd century BC. This would explain the popularity of two Buddhist texts, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* and the *Samghāṭa Sūtra* at both places. A number of Saka people seem to have been living with the Paṭola-Ṣāhi in the Gilgit valley and probably elsewhere in the western Himalayas. The important influence of Kashmir on the Buddhism of Central Asia has long been acknowledged, particularly through the work of monk-translators between the 6th and the early 8th century. It can be assumed that, beside manuscripts and paintings, small images made of stone, wood, ivory, or metal were also carried from India to China by Indian monks and Chinese pilgrims on their return from India. Some time in the middle of the 8th century, the rule of the Paṭola-Ṣāhi was replaced by that of the Trakhāns, a dynasty of Turkish descent.

A number of Buddhist brass statues in monastic, public, and private collections have been attributed on the basis of their inscriptions to the Paṭola-Ṣāhi.⁴² Other statues, though without inscriptions, can be attributed to the Paṭola-Ṣāhi on stylistic grounds (**Plates 6–7**). Although their provenance is not known, it can be assumed that most of them had been for over a thousand years in Tibetan monasteries. As indicated by the Sanskrit inscriptions, it had not been Tibetan patrons that commissioned the Gilgit statues. Some of the Gilgit statues were perhaps looted during the Tibetan military campaigns in the western Himalayas. Buddhist missionaries and refugees may have brought others. In fact very few of the Buddhist sculptures made in the western Himalayas prior to the 10th century were Tibetan commissions. This situation changed only from about the middle of the 10th century onwards, that is, from the period of the “second propagation” of Buddhism in Tibet (*Phyi dar*). Many of the 11th/12th century Western Tibet metal sculptures are the product of Indian craftsmen originating from Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh (**Plates 10–15**).

42. Cf. U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 62–67, pls. 19–24.

The Earliest Dated Indian Buddha Statues in Tibet

These two tall brass statues of Buddha Śākyamuni (Tib: Śākya thub pa) originate from Kashmir and are certainly the product of the same workshop. One of the Buddhas bears an inscription referring to “King Śrī Durlabha”. King Durlabha is identical either with Durlabhavardhana (reigned c. 626–662), the founder of the Kārkoṭa dynasty (626–850), or Durlabhavaka (reigned 662–712), his successor. This enables us to date the two Buddhas securely between 650 and 700 . They are among the earliest dated Indian metal statues.

The two Buddhas stand in a slightly bent attitude and are mounted on separately cast rectangular, stepped lotus pedestals. Their right hands are raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*), their left hands hold the hem of the upper monastic robe. The robes are rendered in a transparent manner with regularly arranged, broad folds and cover both shoulders. Note that the robes covering the legs are modelled without folds. The pleated lower robes are also visible. Originally, a separately cast aureole was attached to the back. Sometime during the 11th century, or about four hundred years after having been cast, the dated Buddha statue became part of the personal collection of lHa btsun Nāgarāja (**Plate 3B**). He was one of the sons of lHa btsun bTsan po 'Khor re who later became the monk lHa bla ma Ye shes 'od (died c. 1024), one of the great patrons of the second propagation of Buddhism in Western Tibet.

3A. Standing Buddha Śākyamuni

North-Western India: Kashmir (Kārkoṭa Dynasty); c. 650–700

Brass; cast in two parts, partly hollow. The separately cast aureole is lost. The eyes and the *ūrṇā* are perhaps inlaid with silver, the lips perhaps with copper. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: (total) 85 cm, (Buddha) 70.5 cm.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 406

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 124–125, pls. 27A–27C.

3B. Buddha Śākyamuni – Personal Image of Nāgarāja

North-Western India: Kashmir (Kārkoṭa Dynasty); c. 650–700

Brass; cast in two parts, partly hollow. The separately cast aureole is lost. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The eyes and the *ūrṇā* are perhaps inlaid with silver, the lips perhaps with copper. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: (total) 94 cm; (Buddha) 76 cm.

On the lower part of the pedestal there is a metrical dedicatory Sanskrit inscription in Proto-*Śāradā* script. According to this inscription the statue was commissioned by the monk named Priyaruci at the occasion of reaching eighty years of age after “King Śrī Durlabha has destroyed a host of enemies”. On the recessed part of the separately cast pedestal in front is a single-line Tibetan inscription in *dBu can* script: lha btsun pa na ga ra dza'i thugs dam, meaning “Personal image of royal monk Nāgarāja”. According to the Tibetan inscription added during the 11th century, this image formed part of the personal collection of lHa btsun Nāgarāja.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 407

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 126–129, pls. 28A–28D.



3A



3B

4. Buddha Śākyamuni in the Act of Preaching North-Western India: Kashmir (Kārkoṭa Dynasty); 7th Century

Brass; hollow cast in one piece. The separately cast aureole is lost. The eyes and the *ūrṇā* are perhaps inlaid with silver, the lips perhaps with copper. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 58.5 cm.

This magnificent image is one of the most important known Buddha statues originating from Kashmir. The Buddha is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāsa*) on a lion throne placed on a rectangular, stepped pedestal supported by three lions with a pair of atlantes between. With his hands he displays what is known as the “gesture of the wheel of the doctrine” (*dharmacakra-mudrā*). In many publications such statues are identified as representing the historical Buddha Śākyamuni delivering the first sermon in the deer park at Sārnāth in Northern India. However, a positive identification of this event requires the presence of the “wheel of the doctrine” (*dharmacakra*) on the pedestal often with a pair of flanking deer, not shown here (cf. **Plates 6, 7A**). The upper monastic robe, rendered with symmetrically distributed pleats, covers the left shoulder only. The lower robe visible beside the right foot is also pleated. Originally, a separately cast nimbus was attached to the back of the pedestal.

The fact that the image does not bear an inscription recording the name of the patrons is an indication that the donor was rather a Buddhist monk or layman than a worldly ruler.

Phyi dbang Monastery

(Western Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: Prof. Huo Wei 1997)

Published: Huo Wei and Li Yongxian. 2001. *The Buddhist Art in Western Tibet*, [Chinese with English introduction and captions]. (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe. Sichuan People’s Publishing House, 2001); p. 129, pls. 195–196.



Fig. V. Cave monastery of Phyi dbang in Western Tibet, founded during the 11th century, with a very important collection of ancient Kashmiri metal statues. (Plates 4, 11; fig. III). (Photo: Huo Wei, 1997).



Variations in the Arrangement of the Monastic Robes of Buddha Statues

With regard to the monastic robes worn by Buddha statues, there exist many variations. As such, the robes can either cover both shoulders or only the left one, leaving the right shoulder uncovered. Another distinction is whether the robes are plain, rendered with pleats, and draped with or without folds. Other variations include robes made of patchwork. It seems that no written rules exist that compel an artist to fashion the monastic robes in a particular way. Both principal ways, covering one or both shoulders, seem to exist among the Buddha statues of any particular Indo-Tibetan region and period of time. When comparing many Buddha statues originating from North-Western India and the western Himalayas it seems that standing images – almost without exception – have both shoulders covered. Seated representations of Buddhas, in contrast, can have one or both shoulders covered by the monastic robe. Nevertheless, strict categorizations often prove wrong when a sufficiently large number of statues are taken into consideration.

5A. Buddha Śākyamuni in the Act of Preaching

North-Western India: Kashmir (Kārkoṭa Dynasty); 7th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast aureole is lost. The eyes and the *ūrṇā* are perhaps inlaid with silver, the lips perhaps with copper. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The pedestal is not sealed. Height: 23.2 cm.

Buddha Śākyamuni (Tib.: Śākya thub pa) is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*) on single lotus throne placed on a plain rectangular, stepped pedestal. The upper monastic robe, rendered with symmetrically distributed folds, covers the left shoulder only; the lower robe is also visible. With his hands he displays the “gesture of the wheel of the doctrine” (*dharmacakra-mudrā*).

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 362

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 94–95, pls. 15A–15C.

5B. Buddha Śākyamuni Granting Reassurance

North-Western India: Himachal Pradesh; 7th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast aureole is lost. The eyes and the *ūrṇā* are inlaid with silver, the lips with copper. The face has traces of cold gold, the hair of a blue pigment. The pedestal is not sealed. Height: 20.5 cm.

Buddha Śākyamuni (Tib.: Śākya thub pa) is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*) on a single lotus throne mounted on a rectangular, stepped pedestal supported by four circular legs. The Buddha displays the right hand in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*), the left hand holds the hem of the monastic robe. The upper robe is rendered without folds in a transparent manner and covers the left shoulder only. As indicated by the projection at the back, there was originally an aureole attached. Of particular interest are the unusual modelled lotus seat and the four equally unusual cone-shaped legs. On the pedestal is a dedicatory Sanskrit inscription in Proto-Śāradā script recording this gift of the monk Sarvajñapriya. This Buddha is the product of a workshop in Himachal Pradesh rather than nearby Kashmir.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTug lag khang Collection; inventory no. 660

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 98–99, pls. 17A–17C.



5A



5B

Painting the Faces with “Cold Gold” as Part of the Tibetan Consecration Ritual

Most of the Buddhist statues in Tibetan monasteries have faces painted with “cold gold” (Tib.: *Grang gser*) as part of the consecration process. Not only does it alter the original features but it also prevents verification of whether the eyes, *ūrṇā*, and lips are inlaid with silver and copper. It is obvious that the practice of painting the faces with cold gold rendered any inlay work in the face useless. Since statues cast after the 16th century seldom had the eyes or lips inlaid, this indicates that from about that time the custom of painting the faces was becoming widespread. The painted cold gold, which is not waterproof, has been the main reason why statues are no longer regularly ritually washed and cleaned. Nonetheless, unclean Buddhist images reflect a neglect of the traditional requirement of worship transmitted with the image-cult from India. As stated earlier, according to the account of the Chinese pilgrim named Yi Jing (I-tsing) (travelled 673–685) who stayed in India in the late 7th century: “*Copper images, whether large or small, are to be brightened by rubbing them with fine ashes or brick powder, and pouring pure water over them, until they become perfect clear and beautiful like a mirror*”. How much more stunning this statue could be with daily applied ritual washing.

6. The Historical Buddha Śākyamuni Delivering the First Sermon North-Western India: Paṭola-Ṣāhi of the Gilgit Valley; 7th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast aureole is lost. The cushion is inlaid with silver and copper ornaments. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Now covered with paint, the eyes and the sign on the forehead (*ūrṇā*) almost certainly are inlaid with silver, and the lips with copper. Height: 30.3 cm.

This image is one of the masterpieces of Indian metal sculpture and originates from the Paṭola-Ṣāhi kingdom of the Gilgit valley in Northern Pakistan, which flourished from the 4th to 8th century. The Buddha, identified as Śākyamuni (Tib: Śākya thub pa), is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāsa*) on a cushion delicately decorated with a floral pattern of inlaid silver and copper segments, and relief work filled with a black lacquer-like substance. The Buddha’s hands display the “gesture of setting in motion the wheel of the doctrine” (*dharmacakra-pravartana-mudrā*) as indicated by the “wheel of the doctrine” symbol (*cakra*) on the pedestal. The upper monastic robe is rendered with narrow and symmetrically distributed folds and covers the left shoulder only. The hem of the lower robe, visible beside the right foot, is inlaid with copper. A peculiarity of this image is the “crest jewel” (*cūdāmaṇi*) crowning the cranial protuberance (*uṣṇīṣa*). The rectangular cushion is placed on a two-tiered stepped pedestal, decorated in front with two horizontal open work panels filled with figures and animals. In the upper panel, the centre is filled with the figure of a Yakṣa flanked by two squatting lions looking back over their shoulders. Placed at the corners beside pillars are two winged griffins. On both sides, the two upper panels are filled with representations of an elephant flanked by two kneeling donors in monk’s attire. The centre of the lower panel is decorated with a “wheel of the doctrine” (*dharmacakra*) flanked by two guardians (*dharmapāla*) stepping forcefully to the sides (*pratyālīḍha* and *ālīḍha*), and two niches formed by pillars in which are two pairs of monks in respectful attitude. They probably represent four of the monks that attended the first sermon. Both lower side panels are filled with representations of a pair of deer and lions. The upper part of the base is shaped like rocks. Two monks flank the Buddha, each holding a garland of flowers (*puṣpamālā*). They possibly represent the donor of the statue on the proper right, who had commissioned it in memory and honour of his teacher, shown on the proper left. The names of the two monks remain a secret due to the absence of an inscription; had they been lay donors, their names would more likely have been recorded.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1383

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1993)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 106–109, pls. 19A–19C.



Buddha Śākyamuni wearing the Crown of a Cakravartin or “World-Sovereign”

The seated Buddha depicts the historical Buddha Śākyamuni delivering the first sermon. He wears the crown of a Cakravartin, that is, a person endowed with the thirty-two marks of the “world-sovereign”. According to the *Lakkhaṇa Sutta* text in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, such a person either becomes a Buddha if he lives in a homeless state, or becomes a Cakravartin or “world-sovereign” if he lives the life of a householder.⁴³ However, there is no doubt that crowned images of Buddha Śākyamuni can have different meanings.⁴⁴

7A. Crowned Buddha Śākyamuni Delivering the First Sermon North-Western India: Paṭola-Ṣāhi of the Gilgit Valley (?); 650–750

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The eyes of all images are inlaid with silver and the lips of the Buddha and of the two attendants with copper. The lower robe of the principal image is inlaid with copper. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed.
Height: 24 cm.

Buddha Śākyamuni, wearing the crown of a “world-sovereign”, is seated with both legs pendant (*bhadrāsana*) on a rectangular throne supported by a pair of lions – an attitude signifying sovereignty. The hands form the “gesture of setting in motion the wheel of the doctrine” (*dharmacakra-pravartana-mudrā*), as indicated by the “wheel of the doctrine” symbol (*cakra*) and a pair of deer on the pedestal. The monastic robe is rendered with narrow pleats. Two Bodhisattvas flank the throne: Maitreya (Tib.: Byams pa), identified by the Stūpa in the crown, and Padmapāṇi (Tib.: Phyag na padmo) holding a lotus (*padma*) and carrying a tiny image of Amitābha in the crown. The aureole has seven oval cartouches filled with Buddha images. Six of these Buddhas together with the principal Buddha in the centre represent the “seven emanational Buddhas” (Skt.: *sapta-buddha*), namely Vipāśyin, Śikhin, Viśvabhū, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, and Śākyamuni. The crowned Buddha at the top presumably represents Maitreya, the future Buddha.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 261[A]

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 110–111, pl. 20.

7B. Standing Buddha Śākyamuni North-Western India: Paṭola-Ṣāhi of the Gilgit Valley (?); 7th Century

Gilt copper; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The eyes and the *ūrṇā* are perhaps inlaid with silver, the lips perhaps with copper. The face is painted with cold gold.
Height: 63 cm.

The tall Buddha, standing in a slightly bent attitude was originally mounted on a separately cast pedestal. His right hand is raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*), the left hand holds the hem of the upper monastic robe. The robe is rendered with regularly arranged, narrow pleats and covers both shoulders; the part covering legs is without folds. Originally, a separately cast aureole was attached to the back.

Tibet Museum Lhasa

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China)

Published: Kretschmar, Marit & Kretschmar, Andreas (editors). 2006. *Tibet – Klöster öffnen ihre Schatzkammern*, [Ausstellungskatalog, Kulturstiftung Ruhr Essen, Villa Hügel, 2006]; S. 167–170, Nr. 14: Buddha Śākyamuni. Kaschmir, 7./8. Jh.

43. *Lakkhaṇa Sutta*, D.iii, 1, 142ff.

44. For the different opinion about the meaning of crowned Buddhas cf. U. von Schroeder. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, [see index]



7B



7A

VII. Western Tibet: Zhang Zhung Kingdom

Plates 8–9

Prior to the consolidation of power during the Tibetan empire (c. 600–842), the Tibetan plateau was under the control of a confederation of numerous small kingdoms whose allegiance shifted according to the political situation. As recorded in the Dunhuang documents, during the rule of the “religious kings” or “*dharma* kings” (Tib.: *Chos rgyal*), the Tibetan tribes were divided into four principal areas, covering the entire area of Tibet, namely Zhang zhung centred around Mt. Kailāśa and lake Manasārovar in the far west, Sum pa located in the central plains and parts of the east, ’A zha in the north-east of the Ko ko nor region, and Mi nyag making up the eastern borderland. The territory of Zhang zhung was annexed in 644–645 by Srong btsan sgam po and was for almost two hundred years part of the Tibetan empire ruled from Central Tibet.

Information about the religious practices in the kingdom of Zhang zhung are scarce. But it is regarded to have been one of the centres of the early non-Buddhist *Bon* cult. This form of *Bon* was of Indian origin and should be strictly distinguished from the later monastic forms of *Bon* resembling in many aspects the Buddhist traditions. The rise of Tibetan civilization is usually associated exclusively with the introduction of Buddhism in Central Tibet. This view reflects a tendency to consider anything non-Buddhist as uncivilized, a view fostered in the historical writings of the Tibetan Buddhists. The importance of the pre-Buddhist *Bon* culture has been systematically ignored in Tibetan historical writings. However, Zhang zhung already had a script of its own when the rest of Tibet was still illiterate. The introduction of Buddhism into Zhang zhung would have occurred, at the latest, during the time of its integration into the Tibetan empire ruled from Central Tibet. However, the people of Zhang zhung through their contacts with India and Central Asia must have already been aware of the existence of Buddhism. It can be assumed that Buddhism existed in Western Tibet from at least the late 7th until the middle of the 9th century. Nevertheless, *Bon* and other pre-Buddhist traditions continued to play important roles in the cultural and religious life of Zhang zhung. As elsewhere, religious struggles between the clergy of the traditional religious traditions and the advocates of Buddhism must have been inevitable. Such conflicts are usually the case when new religious traditions are introduced or imposed.

Scholars from the Kashmir region, which had a great influence on Buddhism in Central Tibet during its first propagation, from about the 7th century onward, were certainly also active in the Zhang zhung area. Due to a lack of trained local craftsmen, the first Buddhist statues in Zhang zhung were presumably made by Indian artists from neighbouring countries such as Kashmir and Swat (**Plates 8–9**). A similar situation existed in Central Tibet where Newār craftsmen presumably participated in the manufacturing of some of the images attributed to the Yar lung dynasty of Central Tibet (**Plates 30–31**). There can be no doubt that further discoveries will enlarge the group of statues characterized by similar stylistic features. But more research into the literary sources will also be needed to illuminate the cultural past of the land of Zhang zhung, almost forgotten by Tibetan Buddhist historians, perhaps partly because of its association with the pre-Buddhist *Bon* tradition.



Fig. VI. The sacred dome-shaped Kailāśa is located at the heart of the ancient kingdom of Zhang zhung in Western Tibet. Mount Kailāśa is worshipped by all Tibetans, *Bon pos* and Buddhists alike, as a holy mountain, and regarded as the centre of the cosmos. This mountain is worshipped by the Hindus as Śrī Kailāśa, the abode of Śīva. Since remote antiquity, Hindu, Buddhist, and *Bon* pilgrims have circumambulated the mountain. Note the wild antelopes in the foreground. (Photo: Helmut & Heidi Neumann, 1995).

Buddhist Statues from Zhang Zhung Resembling those from Kashmir and Swat

There can be no doubt that Buddhist activities did take place in Zhang zhung between the 7th and 9th centuries. The spread of Buddhism always went hand in hand with art needed for devotional purposes. Tibetan statues of the imperial period are called in Tibetan literature “statues of the time of the kings of the doctrine” (*Chos rgyal li ma*). It is therefore to be expected that among the tens of thousands of images in Tibetan monasteries there must be examples dating from the “first propagation” of Buddhism in Tibet (*sNga dar*) (c. 600–842), including images from Central Tibet as well as Zhang zhung. It should not come as a surprise that the Zhang zhung sculptures (**Plates 8–9**) would resemble contemporary works of their neighbours in Swat and Kashmir (**Plates 1–7**). Especially, as it was missionaries from those areas who acted in Central Tibet, then why not in Zhang zhung? Art historians have tried to attribute this group to Kashmir and Swat instead of Zhang zhung. Yet, although they appear to be similar, when studied and compared in detail, distinct differences become apparent, such as in the execution of garments, ornaments, as well as facial expressions.

8A. Bodhisattva Maitreya – the Future Buddha Western Tibet (Zhang Zhung Kingdom); 7th/8th Century

Dark-coloured brass with remains of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 17 cm.

This image very likely represents Bodhisattva Maitreya (Tib: Byams pa). He is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*) and was originally mounted on a now lost, separately cast lotus pedestal. The displayed “gesture of the wheel of the doctrine” (*dharmacakra-mudrā*) is one of the characteristics of Maitreya. He is clad in a cloth tied around the hips and decorated with narrow, symmetrically distributed pleats. He wears the bejewelled ornaments of the Bodhisattvas in the *sambhogakāya* aspect, namely a three-leaved crown in front of the hair fashioned like a tall fan-shaped turban, a pair of earrings, a necklace, and bracelets.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1262

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, p. 782, pls. 185A–185B.

8B. Prajñāpāramitā – the “Goddess of Wisdom” Western Tibet (Zhang Zhung Kingdom); c. 8th Century

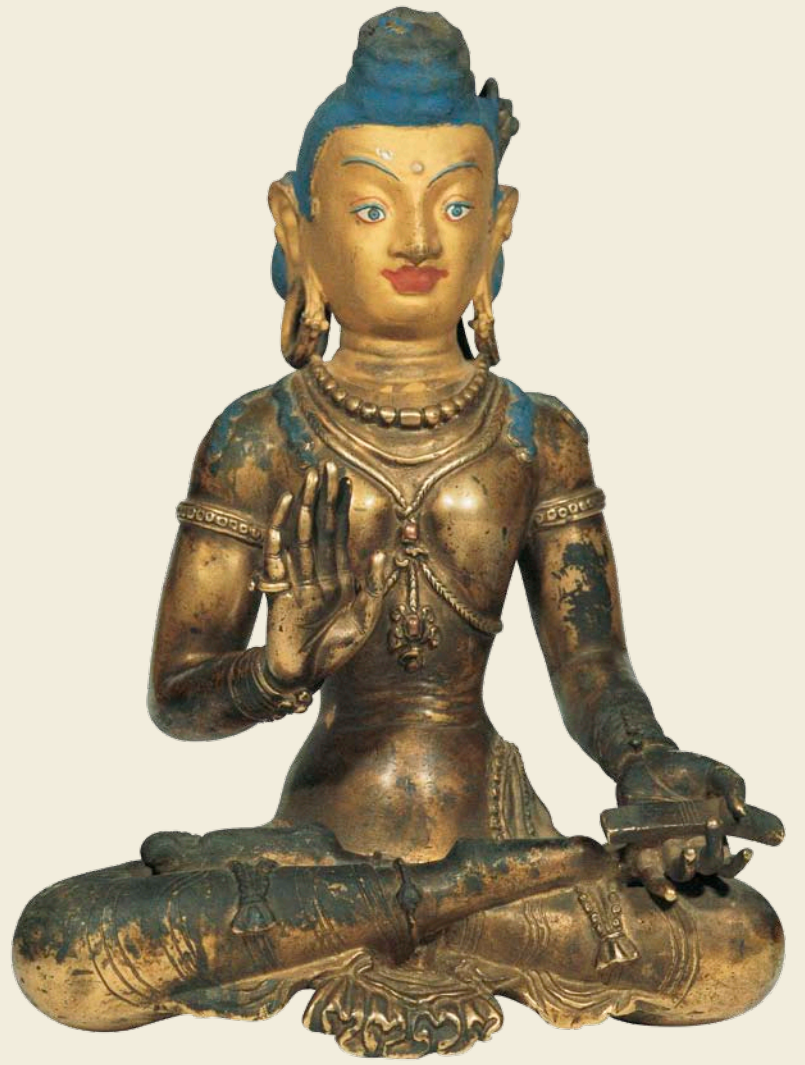
Brass, cast in one piece, partly hollow. The pedestal is lost. The eyes are probably inlaid with silver. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 22 cm.

This goddess seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*) probably represents Prajñāpāramitā (Tib.: Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin ma, also known as Yum chen mo). Her right hand is raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*); the left hand extended in the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*) holds a manuscript (*pustaka*) of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. She is clad in a cloth and wears a diaphanous jacket with embroidered borders covering the breast but leaving the belly bare. She wears ornaments, namely earrings, a necklace, a crossband (*channavīra*), and bracelets. This image is perhaps that of an aristocratic lady as a personification of Prajñāpāramitā – the “goddess of wisdom”. Her costume shows remarkable similarities with the fashion of the Śāhi nobility, who were enthusiastic patrons of Buddhism and donors of many statues.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 742

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 788–789, pls. 188A–188C.



8B



8A

9A. Twelve-Armed Form of Avalokiteśvara Western Tibet (Zhang Zhung Kingdom); 7th/8th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast pedestal is lost. The face and the crown are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 23.2 cm.

This image represents a rare twelve-armed form of Avalokiteśvara (Tib.: sPyan ras gzigs). He stands in an upright attitude and was originally fixed with tenons protruding from the feet to a now-lost, separately cast lotus pedestal of rectangular or circular shape. The principal right hand is raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*). Of the other five right hands, the lowest displays the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*), the second from the top holds an indistinct attribute and the remaining three have lost their attributes. The principal left hand, lowered in the “ring hand gesture” (*kaṭaka-mudrā*), once probably held the stalk of a lotus flower (*padma*). Of the other five left hands, the lowest holds a water-jar (*kuṇḍikā*), the middle one a “crest jewel” (*cūḍāmaṇi*), and the uppermost a manuscript (*pustaka*). The attributes of the two hands displaying the “ring hand gesture” (*kaṭaka-mudrā*) are lost. Among the lost attributes, in addition to the bow (*cāpa*) and the arrow (*śara*), were possibly the rosary (*akṣamālā*) and the wheel (*cakra*). Avalokiteśvara is clad in the skin of an antelope (*ajina*) tied around the hips and a long ribbon-like scarf carried over the left shoulder, the ends of which hang down in front and at the back. The ornaments are restricted to a three-leaved crown decorated in front with a stylized effigy of Amitābha (Tib.: 'Od dpag med), and the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*).

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1569

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1997)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 780–781, pls. 184A–184D.

9B. Tibetan Noblemen Represented as Caryatid Western Tibet (Zhang Zhung Kingdom); c. 8th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast pedestal is lost. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: c. 25 cm.

This statue is one of three similar male figures standing with their feet apart. The three figures were originally fixed with tenons protruding from the feet to one or three separately cast pedestals, which are now lost. With the right raised arms they were possibly together supporting a ritual object such as a ceremonial tray. The left arms are held at the hip. All three figures wear boots and are clad in heavy plain coats with folded sleeves. It is of interest to compare the costumes with the painted representation of the Tibetan minister mGar sTong brtsan, who at the request of King Srong btsan sgam po (reigned c. 618–649) visited China.⁴⁵ These brass images probably represent Tibetan officials or noblemen acting as caryatids, but certainly not Buddhist deities. The similarity of the three images is a clear indication that the wax statues were modelled with the help of matrices secured from the first image that had been modelled by hand. The technical properties of the casting and the style of the coats all point to a date prior to the 10th century. The reason for attributing this image to Zhang zhung is the brass alloy, whereas Yar lungs statues of Central Tibet are mostly of gilt copper.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 70

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 790–791, pls. 189A–189C.

45. Deijin Zangmo. 1975. “Tibetan Royal Costumes in Dun-huang Wall Paintings”, *Tibetan Review*, Feb.-March 1975, pp. 18–19; Karmay, H. 1977. “Tibetan Costume, Seventh to Eleventh Centuries”, *Essais sur l'art du Tibet*, ed. by A. Macdonald and Y. Imaeda, pp. 64–81, 11 illus.



9A



9B

VIII. Western Tibet: sPu rangs-Gu ge Kingdom

Plates 10–15

During the “first propagation” of Buddhism in Tibet (*sNga dar*), from about the 7th century onward, teachers from the Kashmir region had a great influence on Tibetan Buddhism. During the “second propagation” of Buddhism in Tibet (*Phyi dar*) from about 978 onward, it was the efforts of scholars from Kashmir that were of great importance, especially in Western Tibet. One West Tibetan king who acquired great merit as a result of his zealous activities towards the revival of Buddhism was lHa btsun bTsan po 'Khor re. He later became a monk and was thereafter known as lHa bla ma Ye shes 'od (died *c.* 1024). He sponsored twenty-one young Tibetans to be sent to Kashmir for Buddhist studies. Rin chen bzang po (958–1055), one of these students, was later sent on a second mission for the purpose of collecting religious texts and to enlist artists and craftsmen. Six years later he returned to Gu ge with thirty-two artists and craftsmen ready to work for Tibetan patrons. However, Kashmir provided not only gifted craftsmen but also many great scholars who worked as translators in Tibet. The vast Tibetan literary corpus contains numerous references to scholars of Kashmir who were instrumental in the spread of Buddhist teachings in Tibet.

Of principal interest within this chapter are statues executed by artists from Kashmir and also Himachal Pradesh for Tibetan patrons of the sPu rangs-Gu ge kingdom in Western Tibet (**Plates 10–15**). The areas that were formerly part of this kingdom are at present divided between Tibet (parts of Gu ge, sPu rangs), India (Baltistan, Nubra, Ladakh, Zangskar, Lahul, Spiti with parts of Gu ge), and Nepal (Karnali, Dolpo, Mustang). Artists from Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh not only worked in the sPu rangs-Gu ge kingdom, but also to a lesser extent also in Southern and Central Tibet.

It is essential to recapitulate Tibet's early history to better comprehend the political and religious circumstances that led to the creation of an active Buddhist culture in Western Tibet from about the middle of the 10th century onward. The “first propagation” of Buddhism in Central Tibet occurred in the period between the middle of the 7th and the middle of the 9th century. During this period Western Tibet had formed part of Zhang zhung, which had been forcefully integrated into the Tibetan empire (*c.* 600–842). Under the official auspices of the rulers of the Yar lung dynasty, Buddhism had flourished in various parts of Tibet, ending abruptly with the murder of King Khri gtsug lde brtsan (reigned *c.* 815–838), popularly known by the name Ral pa can. The breakdown of Buddhism following the reign of gLang dar ma (reigned *c.* 838–842) was only partly the result of the unresolved struggle between the traditional priests and the Buddhist clergy. The more important factor was the scarcity of patronage due to the economic crisis following the disintegration of the Tibetan empire.

Historians agree that the Western Tibetan areas of Mar yul, Gu ge, and sPu rangs were ruled from the middle of the 10th century on by various descendants of the former Yar lung empire, which lasted till the Gar log invasion in the middle of the 12th century. It can be quite accurately assumed that the political fates of Western Nepal and Western Tibet were interlocked irrevocably during the rule of the Khāśa/Ya tshe empire (*c.* late 11th-mid 14th century). It appears that the Aryan tribe of the Khāśa entered Western Nepal from Northern India. The capital of the Khāśa/Ya tshe kingdom was located at Señjā (Tib: Ya tshe), modern Sija or Lamathada, north-west of Jumla in the Karnali region of Western Nepal. As documented by gilt copper and silver alloy statues, there is stylistic evidence that the rulers of the Khāśa/Ya tshe kingdom

VIII. Western Tibet: sPu rangs-Gu ge Kingdom

employed mainly Newār craftsmen. As a result of their employment by the Khāśa/Ya tshe rulers, their sphere of influence extended also into Western Tibet.

During the “second propagation” of Buddhism in Western Tibet (mNga’ ris), the Tibetans had no native-born artists from whom they could commission the sculptures and paintings needed to furnish their newly built monasteries. Therefore they had to rely on experienced artists from Kashmir and to a lesser extent also from Himachal Pradesh and Nepal. The stylistic influences of the Kashmir traditions were felt throughout the western Himalayas. The fact that Newār artists had less impact on the development of Western Tibetan Buddhist art during the 11th/12th century is documented by the predominant use of brass in Western Tibet. Brass alloys were the common medium in Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh, whereas in areas of Nepalese influence gilt copper images predominated. The Newār influence was most strongly felt in the Karnali, Dolpo, and Mustang areas, and after the 12th century also in the sPu rangs-Gu ge kingdom and other areas of greater mNga’ ris. However, the widespread propagation of Vajrayāna Buddhism from the monastic centres located in North-Eastern India was accompanied by the Pāla art styles. They represented a strong and vital force not only in the formulation of Nepalese and of Southern and Central Tibetan art, but were felt throughout the Buddhist world of that time. The influence of the Pāla art styles on Western Tibet was mainly due to Newār artists working for the Khāśa-Mallas, who ruled over parts of Western Tibet and adjoining areas. Originating from the Kathmandu valley, the Newārs were themselves exposed to the Pāla traditions.

For the Western Tibetan Buddhists, Kashmir represented during the second propagation of Buddhism the most easily accessible country with an active Buddhist tradition. Kashmir not only provided Buddhist translator-scholars, but also, together with Himachal Pradesh, artists experienced in the casting and painting of images because of the lack of experienced, skilled artists among the native populace of Western Tibet. Although the artists of Himachal Pradesh, where Buddhism was of less importance, originated from an artistic milieu primarily engaged with the production of Hindu images, Buddhist commissions would have posed little problem for them as they could create images of deities for any religious community. Other cultural influences came from the eastward retreat of the Śāhi Buddhists fleeing the onslaught of the Islamic Yāmīnī from their stronghold at Ghazni in Afghanistan. The rugged, mountainous areas of Kashmir and those north of Himachal Pradesh offered ideal refuges for the retreating Śāhi and other tribes, while they in turn contributed new cultural trends in the areas to which they migrated.

The Significance of Postures in the Practice of Visualization

In the practice of visualization of deities, profound importance is attached to the various postures signifying different frames of minds. The most often occurring posture, the so-called diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāsa*), signifies deep meditation and introspection; the attitude of ease (*lalitāsana*) is a sign of beauty and serenity; seated with both legs pendant (*bhadrāsana*) signifies sovereignty; stepping to the left (*ālīḍha*) indicates heroism; while stepping to the right (*pratyālīḍha*) represents fierceness and a destructive mood. Similarly, hand gestures have different meanings, something that applies to the different colours as well.

10A. Buddha Śākyamuni in the Act of Preaching

Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet (sPu rangs-Gu ge Kingdom); 10th/11th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The eyes are inlaid with silver. The lips and border of the garment are inlaid with copper. The separately cast pedestal and aureole are lost. The face has remains of painted cold gold, the hair traces of a blue pigment. Height: 33.5 cm.

The Buddha, seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāsa*), was originally attached to a separately cast pedestal that is lost. The Buddha's hands display the "gesture of the wheel of the doctrine" (*dharmacakramudrā*). The upper monastic robe is rendered with narrow pleats and covers the left shoulder only; the lower robe is visible beside the feet.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 591

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 118–119, pls. 24B–24D.

10B. Tārā / Maitreya / Śākyamuni / Padmapāṇi / Bhṛkuṭī

Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet (sPu rangs-Gu ge Kingdom); 10th/11th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The faces show remains of painted cold gold, the hair remains of a blue pigment. Height: 19.6 cm; width 25 cm.

This group of five Buddhist deities, each with a pointed nimbus, stand on single lotus pedestals and share one rectangular stand. They represent from left to right: Tārā (Tib.: sGrol ma), with the gesture of respectful salutation (*añjali-mudrā*) and a blue water lily (*nīlotpala*) attached to the left shoulder; Bodhisattva Maitreya (Tib.: Byams pa) with a Stūpa attached to the hair, holding a rosary (*akṣamālā*) in the right hand raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*), holding the neck of a water-jar (*kuṇḍikā*) in the lowered left; Buddha Śākyamuni (Tib.: Śākya thub pa) in the centre, the right hand raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*), the left hand holding the hem of the upper monastic robe; Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi (Tib.: Phyang na padmo) with a small effigy of Amitābha in the topknot, holding a rosary (*akṣamālā*) in the right hand raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*), holding in the left the stalk of the lotus flower (*padma*) that blossoms above the left shoulder; and Bhṛkuṭī (Tib.: Khro gnyer can ma) with the gesture of respectful salutation (*añjali-mudrā*) and a lotus (*padma*) attached to the left shoulder. Note the three male donors in respectful adoration of one of the male deities, and two female donors worshipping Tārā and Bhṛkuṭī. Their names are recorded in Śāradā script on the pedestal.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 24.

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 142–143, pls. 35A–35B.



10A



10B

Phyi dbang Monastery and Cave Complex in Western Tibet

Phyi dbang is a famous ancient Buddhist monastery in the Gu ge Byang ngos area of Western Tibet. It is located near Dun dkar/Dun mkhar, famous for its caves decorated with ancient Buddhist wall paintings. Phyi dbang is considered to be one of the earliest of the eight temples built in Western Tibet during the time of lHa bla ma Ye shes 'od (died c. 1024). He was a former king who acquired great merit as a result of his activities towards the popularization of Buddhism. The extensive ruins and the large complex of cave temples testify to the former grandeur of Phyi dbang. Between the 12th and 15th century the capital of the Gu ge was located in this region. During the 15th–early 16th century the *Sa skya pa* controlled Phyi dbang.

11A. Standing Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi

Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet (sPu rangs-Gu ge Kingdom); 11th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast pedestal is lost. Height: 129 cm.

This tall statue of a bejewelled Bodhisattva represents Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi (Tib.: Phyang na padmo). It is an important example of a statue commissioned by a Tibetan patron and manufactured in Tibet by an Indian artist working in the Kashmir style. The Bodhisattva stands in a slightly bent attitude and was originally mounted on a separately cast pedestal. His right hand is lifted in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*), the lowered left holds the stalk of the lotus (*padma*) flowering above the left shoulder. The Bodhisattva is clad in a cloth tied by a belt around the hips, its folds hanging down between the legs, and wears the skin of an antelope (*ajina*) over the left shoulder. He has bejewelled ornaments, namely a prominent three-leaved crown decorated in front with an effigy of Amitābha, a necklace with a pendant inset with one turquoise, and bracelets on the upper arms and wrists. Few metal statues of this size have survived.

Phyi dbang Monastery

(Western Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: Huo Wei 1994)

Published: Huo Wei and Li Yongxian. 2001. *The Buddhist Art in Western Tibet*, [Chinese with English introduction and captions]. (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe. Sichuan People's Publishing House, 2001), p. 126, pls. 188 & 189.

11B. Standing Buddha Śākyamuni

Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet (sPu rangs-Gu ge Kingdom); 11th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast pedestal is lost. Height: 48 cm.

The Buddha is fashioned in an almost straight and upright manner often interpreted as a walking attitude. The statue was earlier attached to a separately cast pedestal now lost. His right hand is raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*), the left holds the hem of the upper monastic robe. The robe is rendered with very few pleats on the torso and covers both shoulders; its lower part is rendered plain. The visible lower robe is rendered with folds. This statue is of a rather unusual style characterized by features that set it apart from other sculptures made by Indian artists in Western Tibet. Although the face is clearly modelled after a statue in the Kashmir style, such as the Avalokiteśvara (**Plate 9A**), one would not attribute this work to an Indian craftsman. The artist might have been a Tibetan perhaps assisted by an Indian craftsman.

Phyi dbang Monastery

(Western Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: Huo Wei 1997)

Published: Huo Wei and Li Yongxian. 2001. *The Buddhist Art in Western Tibet*, [Chinese with English introduction and captions]. (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe. Sichuan People's Publishing House, 2001), p. 131, pl. 199.



11A



11B

Divine Ruler, Tantric Master, or Transcendental Bodhisattva with Consorts

The image of the “divine ruler” is already found in the Pāli scriptures of early Buddhism as the concept of the “world-sovereign”, the Cakravartin. Since the time of the Indian emperor Aśoka (c. 269–232 BC), the king took on the function of a Dharmarāja, ruler and protector of the Buddhist doctrine. In Tibet, some of the early kings were given divine status. Such was the case with Srong btsan sgam po (reigned c. 618–649 AD). References can be found in the *Ma ñi bka’ ’bum*, an important collection of *gTer ma* texts – as formerly hidden texts concealed by great masters are known. Srong btsan sgam po is described as an emanation or incarnation of Avalokiteśvara (Tib.: sPyan ras gzigs), the most important patron-deity of Tibet. His Chinese wife Wencheng was considered an incarnation of Sita-Tārā, the “white Tārā” (Tib.: sGrol dkar), and the Nepalese wife Khri btsun, also known as Bhṛkuṭī, an incarnation of Śyāma-Tārā, the “green Tārā” (Tib.: sGrol ljang). The trio of King Srong btsan sgam po together with Wencheng and Khri btsun is also identified with Khasarpaṇa, a form of Avalokiteśvara, attended by Tārā (Tib.: sGrol ma) and Bhṛkuṭī (Tib.: Khro gnyer can ma) (**Plate 12**). The great Indian master Padmasambhava (“born from a lotus”) (Tib.: Padma ’byung gnas) who lived in the 8th century is also often depicted in sculptures and paintings together with two consorts, namely the Tibetan Ye shes mtsho rgyal and Mandāravā (Tib.: Mandā ra bā), daughter of the Indian king of Zahor.

12. Avalokiteśvara Khasarpaṇa attended by Tārā and Bhṛkuṭī Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet (sPu rangs-Gu ge Kingdom); 12th Century

Brass; cast in two or more parts, partly hollow. The leg garment and the shawl carried over the left shoulder of Khasarpaṇa are inlaid with silver, as are probably the eyes. The garments are additionally decorated with engraved patterns. The principal figure is inset with coral and turquoise. The faces are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The back is only crudely worked. Height: 47 cm.

This group of images is composed of Avalokiteśvara Khasarpaṇa (Tib.: sPyan ras gzigs dbang phyug mkha’ spyod) in the centre, attended to his proper right by Tārā and to his proper left by Bhṛkuṭī. The images are encircled by an aureole topped by representations of the five Tathāgatas, namely, clockwise, Akṣobhya (Tib.: Mi bskyod pa), Ratnasambhava (Tib.: Rin chen ’byung ldan), Vairocana (Tib.: rNam par snang mdzad), Amitābha (Tib.: ’Od dpag med), and Amoghasiddhi (Tib.: Don yod grub pa). The moulded rectangular pedestal with a double projection in front is decorated in the middle register with the “seven jewels” (*saptaratna*) owned by a Cakravartin or “world-sovereign”, namely, on the front side the “wife-treasure”, the “horse-treasure”, the “wish-granting jewel”, the “elephant-treasure”, the “household-treasure”, i.e. “minister-treasure”, and on the two sides the “wheel-treasure” and the “guide”, i.e. “general-treasure”, who is sometimes replaced by Jambhala. Khasarpaṇa, a form of Avalokiteśvara, is usually not represented with two attendants only, but four, namely Tārā (Tib.: sGrol ma) (east), Sudhanakumāra (Tib.: Nor bzang gzhon nu) (south), Bhṛkuṭī (Tib.: Khro gnyer can ma) (west), and Hayagrīva (Tib.: rTa mgrin) (north). As such, Tārā is placed at the proper right of Khasarpaṇa, and Bhṛkuṭī on the proper left. The broken support on the left corner of the pedestal possibly once carried an image of the donor, or of Sūcimukha begging for nectar.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 106

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1997)

Published: Xizang zizhiq wenwu guanli weiyuanhui [Administrative Commission of Cultural Relics of the Tibet Autonomous Region]. 1992. *Xizang wenwu jingcui*. [“A Well-Selected Collection of Tibetan Cultural Relics”], pp. 71, 176, pl. 41:

Avalokitesvara with Manjushri and Vajrapani. Song Dynasty (960–1279).

Lo Bue, E. F. (ed.). 1994. *Tesori del Tibet*, p. 109, no. 69: Padmapāṇi with Tārā and Bhṛkuṭī(?). Tibet, 13th/14th century.

U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 1148–1149, pl. 301C.



Myth of the so-called “*Tribhaṅga*” Posture

During the early 20th century Indian scholars started to use the Sanskrit term *tribhaṅga* or “three *bhaṅga*” to describe the posture of standing images bent twice at the hip and at the neck. This praxis now widely used by Indian and Western scholars ignores the fact that, according to the *śilpaśāstra* literature, the term *tribhaṅga* is not the name of a particular standing position but is used in the sense of the “three *bhaṅgas*”, namely *ābhaṅga*, *samabhaṅga*, and *atibhaṅga*.⁴⁶ The term “*bhaṅga*” usually interpreted as “*bent*” actually means “*lowering or shortening*” of the height of a statue. The term *tribhaṅga* as a term of a particular stance does not exist in any *śilpaśāstra* text and is therefore not used in this publication.

13A. Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi

Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet (sPu rangs-Gu ge Kingdom); 12th Century

Dark ungilt copper or brownish-coloured brass alloy; cast in one piece, partly hollow.

The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 48 cm.

This Bodhisattva represents Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi (Tib.: Phyag na padmo). He stands in a slightly bent attitude and was originally fixed with tenons protruding from the feet to a now-lost, separately cast pedestal. His right hand displays the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*), the left once held the stalk of a lotus (*padma*) that blossomed above the left shoulder. Avalokiteśvara is clad in a cloth tied by a belt around the hips, some folds draped between the legs and at both sides. He has jewelled ornaments, namely a tall crown decorated with an effigy of Buddha Amitābha, flowers above the ears, a pair of earrings, a necklace, the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*) designed like a long necklace, bracelets on the upper arms and wrists, and anklets.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 138.

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 164–165, pl. 46B.

13B. Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi

Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet (sPu rangs-Gu ge Kingdom); 11th Century

Brass; cast in two parts, partly hollow. The ornaments are inset with a few pieces of

turquoise, some lost. The garment is decorated with engraved linear and dotted patterns.

The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 37 cm.

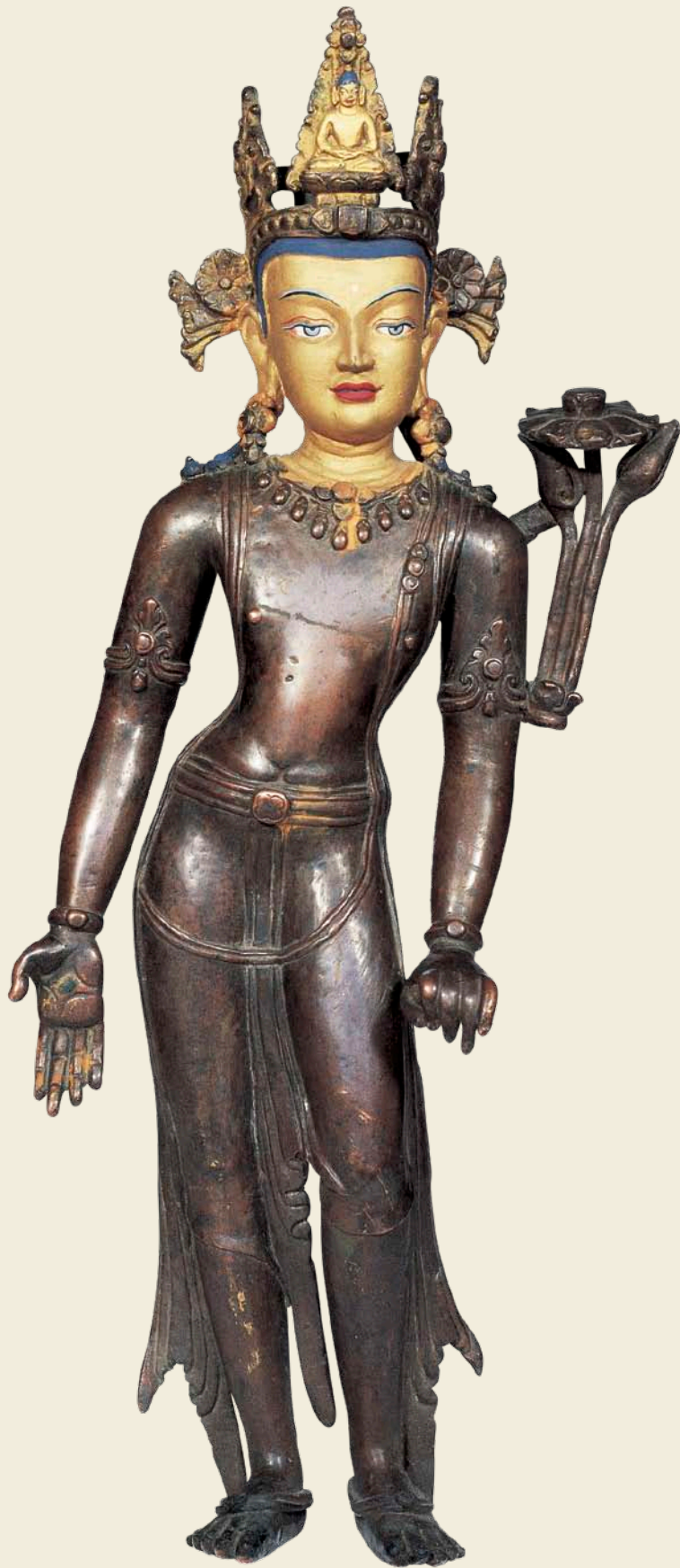
Another statue rendered in a somewhat related style also represents Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi (Tib.: Phyag na padmo). The Bodhisattva stands in a slightly bent attitude on a single oval lotus base mounted on a rectangular, openwork pedestal. His right hand is raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*), the left holds the stalk of the lotus (*padma*) blossoming above the left shoulder. He is clad in a cloth tied around the hips with folds falling down between the legs and wears a ribbon-like scarf over the shoulders with the swirling ends hanging down on both sides. He has two long strands of hair falling onto the shoulder, flowers above the ears, and wears jewelled ornaments composed of a crown, earrings, a necklace, the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*), and bracelets. The image was originally encircled by a separately cast aureole.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 242

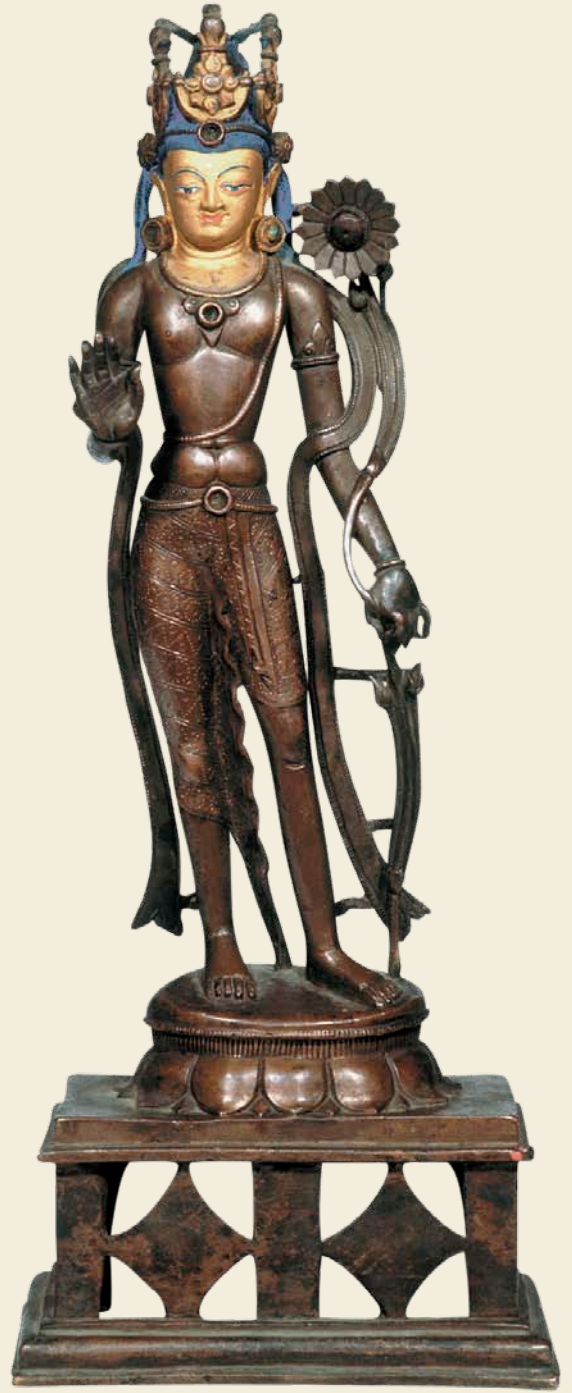
Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, p. 166, pl. 47B.

46. Cf. K. M. Varma. *Myth of the So-called 'Tribhaṅga' as a 'Pose'*. (Santiniketan, 1983).



13A



13B

Esoteric Forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism known as Vajrayāna and Tantrayāna

It is a phenomena of all religious traditions that doctrinal disputes lead in the course of time to the formation of different schools. The various traditions of Tibetan Buddhism are all based in one way or another on Northern Indian forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism containing the *Sūtra*-teachings and the *Tantra*-teachings, the latter popularly known as Vajrayāna, Tantrayāna, or Guhyamantrayāna. The “old translation tradition” (Tib.: *sNga bsgyur*) of the *rNying ma* order maintain that their tradition was transmitted during the Tibetan imperial period, or 8th to 9th centuries. The “new translation traditions” (Tib.: *gSar ma pa*) of the *bKa’ brgyud*, *Sa skya*, and *dGe lugs* orders all developed from the 11th century onward. Regardless of the different views, all Tibetan Buddhist sects practice esoteric forms of Tantrism (Plates 14–15).

14A. Unidentified Twenty-Two-Armed Male Tantric Deity Kashmir or Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet; c. 10th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast aureole is lost. The three faces are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 25.5 cm.

The unidentified three-headed and twenty-two-armed male tantric image is stepping to the left with the left leg bent and the right one straight (*ālīḍha*), signifying heroism. He tramples on the bodies of two Hindu deities prostrate on the single lotus base carried by a rectangular, stepped, openwork pedestal decorated in front with pillars and squatting lions. The deity is clad in a piece of cloth tied around the hips, wears the *pañcamudrā* ornaments and a long garland of flowers (*puṣpamālā*). The two principal hands and the uppermost pair of hands are turned outwards and crossed, both thus depicting the “gesture of conquering the three worlds” (*trailokyavijaya-mudrā*) or “*vajra Hūṃ* syllable gesture” (*vajrahūṃkāra-mudrā*). The remaining eighteen hands hold various attributes as published earlier.*

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsub lag khang Collection; inventory no. 34

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

* Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 198–199, pls. 61C–61D.

14B. Six-Armed Form of Avalokiteśvara Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet (sPu rangs-Gu ge Kingdom); 11th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The garment is decorated with linear engravings and clusters of dots. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 20 cm.

Avalokiteśvara rests in the attitude of ease with the left leg hanging down (*vāmārdhaparyāṅka*) on a rectangular openwork pedestal with a pair of lions in front. The principal right hand, displaying the “pensive gesture”, holds a diamond sceptre (*vajra*), the other two right hands hold a noose (*pāśa*) and a flywhisk (*cāmara*). The principal left hand holds a lotus (*padma*); the other two left hands a hook (*aṅkuśa*) and a water-jar (*kuṇḍikā*). Avalokiteśvara is clad in a cloth tied around the hips and carries the skin of an antelope (*ajina*) over the left shoulder tied across the chest. He wears ornaments, namely a small effigy of Amitābha in the knot of matted hair, a beaded necklace, bracelets, the beaded sacred thread (*ratnopavīta*), and a long garland of flowers (*puṣpamālā*). The image is encircled by a broad aureole with a pointed nimbus.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsub lag khang Collection; inventory no. 348[A]

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 174–175, pls. 51D–51E.



14B



14A

An Exceptional Three-Dimensional Maṇḍala

The later form of Buddhism known as Esoteric Buddhism was to a great extent influenced by the Tantra practice developing in Hinduism. These new forms of Buddhism are known under various terms such as Mantrayāna, in which the Mantras, words and syllables of mysterious power, were the chief means of attaining salvation. Symbolism was essential to Esoteric Buddhism, which also made use of Maṇḍalas representing psycho-cosmic diagrams of various aspects of the cosmos. The Maṇḍala practice is common in all Indian religions, including – and especially – the later forms of Buddhism. A Maṇḍala consists of five principal sections composed of the four cardinal directions revolving around a centre point or axis. The Sanskrit term Maṇḍala is translated into Tibetan as *dKyil 'khor*, meaning “centre” (Tib.: *dKyil*) and “periphery” (Tib.: *'Khor*). This reflects the basic structure of a Maṇḍala with the principal deity or symbol placed in the centre and the other deities or symbols arranged at the periphery. Maṇḍalas were used as objects of meditation and practice with the goal to elevate the practitioner to the realization of ultimate reality. Within the Buddhist tradition developed a number of different Maṇḍalas encompassing the whole pantheon of Buddhist deities. During the early 12th century, the Indian Buddhist scholar Mahāpaṇḍita Abhayākaragupta of the Eastern Indian Vikramaśīla monastery compiled the *Niṣpannayogāvalī*. This text represents a collection of *sādhanas* describing the appearance of 26 Maṇḍalas. Other collections contained in the *Vajrāvalī* refer to 28, 42, 45, and 55 Maṇḍalas. The most common way of representing Maṇḍalas are two-dimensional paintings on paper, cloth, wooden board, or temple walls. Others are temporary, created with coloured sand. The illustrated sculpture of the tantric Buddhist deity Cakrasaṃvara united with his consort Vajravārāhī is a rare three-dimensional representation of a Maṇḍala. It is also one of the most spectacular tantric sculptures known from the Western Himalayas.

15. Maṇḍala of Cakrasaṃvara United with Vajravārāhī

Kashmir Schools in Western Tibet (sPu rangs-Gu ge Kingdom); 11th Century

Brass; assembled from thirteen separately cast parts, partly hollow. The faces are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 42.4 cm.

The four-headed and twelve-armed form of Cakrasaṃvara (Tib.: *'Khor lo sdom pa*) is united with his consort Vajravārāhī (Tib.: *rDo rje phag mo*). He is trampling, although suspended in the air above them, on the bodies of two Hindu deities on two separate lotus pedestals. They are the emaciated Kālarātrī (proper right) and Bhairava (proper left). The two principal hands of the four-headed and twelve-armed Cakrasaṃvara hold a five-pronged diamond sceptre (*pañcasūcika-vajra*) and a prayer-bell (*vajraghaṅṭā*). His hands turn inwards and cross in front to embrace his consort Vajravārāhī, symbolizing the fusion of the polarities. She holds a ritual chopper with a *vajra* handle (*vajrakartrikā*) and a skull-cup (*kapāla*), and has her right leg wrapped around the hips of Cakrasaṃvara. The twelve attributes held by Cakrasaṃvara correspond with the description of the Saṃvara Maṇḍala in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* (NSP 12). The aureole is decorated with four “full vases” (*pūrṇakalāśa*) surmounted by skull-cups (*kapāla*). The four cardinal points of this composition conceived as a Maṇḍala are occupied by the attendant goddesses of Cakrasaṃvara, namely Ḍākinī (east), Lāmā (north), Khaṇḍarohā (west), and Rūpiṇī (south). Due to their identical appearance it is not possible to identify them individually.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1436

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 196–197, pl. 60.



IX. North-Eastern India: Pāla and Related Styles (c. 750–1200)

Plates 16–22

Between the 8th and 12th centuries, the Buddhist monasteries and universities of North-Eastern India such as Nālandā (Patna district), Vikramaśīla (near modern Antichak), and Odantapurī (present Bihar Sharif) became the international centres of Mahāyāna studies, Sūtra as well as Tantra. The teachings of the Vajrayāna/Tantrayāna traditions attracted numerous students from the entire Buddhist world. The development of Tibetan Buddhism was predominantly based on the esoteric forms of Buddhism practiced in Northern India. This was especially the case during the “second propagation” of Buddhism in Tibet (*Phyi dar*) from the 10th century onward. A large number of Tibetans were among the countless visitors to India tracing the footsteps and original teachings of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni. Some were pilgrims visiting the “eight great places” (*aṣṭamahāsthāna*), where Śākyamuni’s “eight great miraculous events” (*aṣṭamahāprātihārya*) took place, namely Lumbinī, Bodhgayā, Sārnāth, Śrāvastī, Sāṅkāśya, Rājagṛha, Vaiśālī, and Kuśīnagara (**Plate 19**). Other visitors came to collect Buddhist texts intended for translation. A large number of Indian Buddhist texts are only known through their translations in Tibetan and Chinese, their original Sanskrit versions considered to be lost.⁴⁷ This transfer of knowledge depended also on the extensive labour of many Indian scholars who worked in Tibet and other Buddhist countries. There, in collaboration with local scholars, countless Indian texts were translated. Many of them were later compiled in the Tibetan Buddhist canon consisting of the *bKa’gyur* – the “translation of [Buddha’s] word” – containing the discourses attributed to the historical Buddha Śākyamuni, as well as scriptures such as the *tantras*, attributed to Vajradhara and other *dharmakāya* manifestations of the Buddha, and the *bsTan’gyur* – the “translation of the commentaries [on Buddha’s words]”, etc. Tibet thus became the recipient of a multitude of Indian Buddhist texts, especially those concerning later developments within the Mahāyāna tradition. The missionaries to foreign countries, and the visitors from there, not only carried manuscripts with them, but also objects of various kinds: sculptures made of metal, stone, and wood, illustrated palm-leaf manuscripts (*pustaka*) and painted manuscript covers (*pustakāṣṭha*), and presumably paintings on cloth (*paṭa*). Each played a part in the diffusion of Pāla art styles, not only in Tibet but also throughout the Buddhist world. This explains the impact of Pāla art styles in every country professing Mahāyāna Buddhism, including the regions of the Himalayas and Tibet. Among the first statues carried from India to Tibet by missionaries, pilgrims, and merchants were Post-Gupta and early Pāla-style works produced in North-Eastern India, in addition to those from Kashmir and the Swat regions in North-Western India.

The rulers of the Pāla dynasty (c. 750–1200) were of considerable significance for the development of Buddhism in India. Through their generosity to Buddhist monasteries, Indian Buddhism reached its final zenith, especially in the later forms of Mahāyāna as expressed by Vajrayāna, Tantrayāna, or Guhyamantrayāna. The development of the Buddhist monasteries and universities in Bihar and Western Bengal into the most important Indian centres for Buddhist studies was largely due to the support granted by these mighty Pāla monarchs. The artistic remains of the North-Eastern Indian territories of Bihar and Bengal produced between

47. Meanwhile it is known that thousands of Indian Sanskrit palm-leaf manuscripts have survived in Tibetan monasteries due to the dry climate. These manuscripts will gradually become published and will add enormously to our understanding of Indian Buddhism.

the 8th and 12th centuries are generally referred to as Pāla art. Nevertheless, the limited correspondence between the cultural and political situations would actually exclude the use of the generalized term “Pāla style”, but would rather necessitate the implementation of the term “Pāla and related styles”. This would concur not only with the constantly changing political pattern of that time but would also give justice to the various local styles. The similarities between the Hindu and the Buddhist images prove once again that the same artistic communities were responsible for the casting of the images for all religious commissions. The similarity of the style elements employed limits the differences to iconographically related points.



Fig. VII. The Mahābodhi Stūpa at Bodhgayā – the location of Buddha’s enlightenment. (Gayā district, Bihar, North-Eastern India). (Photo: Suresh Cordo).

Foreign Influence during the First Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet

It has repeatedly been stated that North-Eastern India played a crucial role during the “first propagation” of Buddhism (*sNga dar*) in Tibet during the imperial period (c. 600–842). With this in mind, one would assume that there must be a considerable number of 7th/8th century statues of North-Eastern Indian origin in the Tibetan monasteries. This is not the case, and surprisingly the number of Buddhist sculptures of early Kashmir and the greater Swat region is considerably larger. This is a strong indication that the influence of North-Eastern India has likely been exaggerated and the influence of Kashmir and Swat in North-Western India has not been taken sufficiently into consideration with regard to the first propagation of Buddhism. This fact is collaborated by the early metal statues of the Tibetan imperial period (c. 600–842) (Plates 8–9, 30–31). They bear similarities with contemporary Licchavi works of Nepal and those from the greater Kashmir and Swat regions. On the other hand, a distinct influence by Post-Gupta and early Pāla works appears to be missing. One might argue that the Northern Indian influence reached Tibet disguised through the early Nepalese art that was in iconographic and stylistic aspects heavily indebted to Northern India.

16. Buddha Śākyamuni Donated by Dadaka North-Eastern India: Early Pāla Style; 8th/9th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. All parts of the Buddha not covered by his robes are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the image is not sealed. Height: 21.2 cm.

This statue is a classical example of a Buddha statue in the Pāla style cast in North-Eastern India during the 8th or 9th century. The modelling of the lotus petals, the square pedestal, the shape of the aureole surmounted by a parasol, are elements encountered in more or less similar ways in countless Pāla statues.

This Buddha represents the historical Buddha Śākyamuni (Tib: Śākya thub pa) and commemorates the defeat of Māra (*māravijaya*) at Bodhgayā (North-Eastern India). The Buddha is depicted in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāsa*) signifying deep meditation and introspection. He is seated on a circular double lotus mounted on a square stepped pedestal with four legs. The left hand rests in the lap while the right hand is extended in the gesture of touching the earth (*bhūmisparśa-mudrā*). The upper monastic robe is rendered without folds in a transparent manner and covers the left shoulder only. The Buddha is encircled by an oval aureole decorated with branches of the Bodhi tree (Skt: *aśvattha*, *pippala*; Hindi: *pīpal*; Lat: *Ficus religiosa*) and, to increase its stability, the open space is filled with two lotus flowers. A parasol (*chattrā*) surmounts the aureole. Note the small effigy of a garland-bearing male donor attached to the proper right corner. At the front of the pedestal is an inscription recording the gift by Dadaka.

The shape of the aureole and the lotus petals of the throne are important features for the dating of Pāla-style images. Broad aureoles and rather wide lotus petals are common among the earlier Pāla statues of the 8th and 9th centuries. Later, especially during the 11th and 12th centuries, the lotus leaves become narrower and the lotus thrones were usually decorated with beaded borders (Plates 18, 20). The lustrous patina is the result of ritual devotion by countless generations of Buddhist monks in Tibet, where this Indian statue had been worshipped for more than eight hundred years. This is in contrast with the archaeological patina of all the countless numbers of Buddhist metal sculptures of the Pāla traditions that were excavated in India after having been buried for almost a thousand years. Nevertheless, the beauty of the Jo khang Buddha would be even more spectacular if properly cleaned, instead of being covered in the painted cold gold applied by Tibetans.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 280

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 228–229, pl. 67C.



Foreign Influence during the Second Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet

During the “first propagation” of Buddhism in Tibet (*sNga dar*) (c. 600–842), the art of North-Western India – Kashmir and Swat – together with that of Nepal were the principal sources of inspiration. However, during the “second propagation” from the late 10th century onward, the influence of North-Eastern India prevailed when the monasteries such as Bodhgayā, Nālandā, Vikramaśīla, and Odantapurī became the centres of Mahāyāna as well as Vajrayāna Buddhist teachings. These universities not only attracted students from all over India and the Himalayas, but also from Tibet and places as far away as China. This situation lasted until the end of the 12th century when the advancing Muslims destroyed the Indian monasteries. A great number of metal statues were excavated at the site of the Nālandā Mahāvihāra; many more were discovered at Kurkihār monastery.⁴⁸ Whereas the images excavated at Nālandā date primarily from the 7th to the 10th century, those discovered at Kurkihār date mostly from the 9th to the 12th century. Because the majority of Indian metal statues in Tibetan collections date from the 11th/12th centuries, it is only natural that they bear more similarity to those discovered at Kurkihār than those found at Nālandā. However, not all images were necessarily cast at the same place where they had been excavated. Although it is of interest to compare the Pāla images in the custody of Tibetan monasteries with similar ones from India, one cannot on the basis of this comparison confidently attribute them to particular casting centres in India.

17. Tathāgata Ratnasambhava Donated by the Monk Jñānasādhūka North-Eastern India: Late Pāla Style; 1050–1150

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The ornaments, the cushion and the pillars supporting the pedestal were originally extensively inset with glass or precious stones, most of which are lost. The painting of the face with cold gold prevents any examination of whether the eyes, *ūrṇā*, and lips are inlaid with silver or copper, as are the borders of the garment and part of the jewellery. The hair is painted with a blue pigment. Height: 22.4 cm.

This image of Ratnasambhava (Tib: Rin chen ’byung ldan) – the “jewel-born” Buddha – forms part of a group of the five Tathāgatas or “transcendental Buddhas” of which four are in the Po ta la collection, and one in the Palace Museum in Beijing. Ratnasambhava is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāsa*) on a decorated cushion placed on a semi-circular stepped pedestal. With the right hand he displays the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*), the left hand rests in the lap. He wears the bejewelled ornaments of the “transcendental Buddhas” in the *saṃbhogakāya* aspect. He should actually not wear the monastic robe, which is characteristic of the “emanational Buddhas” in the *nirmāṇakāya* aspect. On both sides a lotus flower (*padma*) is growing from the pedestal and blossoms above the shoulder while supporting a prayer-bell (*vajraghaṅṭā*) and the emblem of Ratnasambhava, the jewel (*ratna*).

Around the lower edge of the pedestal is one line of inscription in Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit. As recorded in the inscription, this image of Ratnasambhava was donated by the monk Jñānasādhūka. The pedestal is decorated in front with a pair of horses and three unidentified attendant figures. The horse (*aśva*) represents the mount (*vahāna*) of Ratnasambhava.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1471

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 256–257, pls. 81A–81B.

48. Cf. U. von Schroeder. 1981. *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, where numerous images excavated at Kurkihār and Nālandā are illustrated.



In Search of Excellence – Craftsmanship of Late Pāla Metal Sculptures

There is a general tendency to regard the products of post-classical periods of any culture as inferior to earlier works and to over-emphasize the art produced in the archaic and classical periods. This narrow-minded approach does not even consider the possibility that the best works of post-classical times are often superior to average works from an earlier, classical period. In regard to the production of the workshops of Bihar and Bengal in North-Eastern India during the late Pāla period of the 11th/12th centuries, there is more than sufficient documentation that many works of this time are characterized by a very high degree of artistic and technical skill. This makes many pieces of the 9th/10th century look comparatively dull and repetitive. The ever-expanding pantheon of Vajrayāna Buddhism of this period posed a never-ending challenge and opportunity for Buddhist masters, scholars, and artists to create new compositions of Buddhist deities, whereas the iconography of the Hindu deities was set within a fixed framework. Many of the illustrated Buddhist sculptures of the late Pāla style were obviously not the result of hasty production, and instead display a joyful desire for perfection down to the last detail (Plates 18–20).

18A. Buddha Śākyamuni Copied After the Mahābodhi Image at Bodhgayā North-Eastern India: Late Pāla Style; 11th/12th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. Above and below the double lotus is a segment inlaid with copper. The borders of the upper monastic robe and of the folded shawl placed over the left shoulder are inlaid with copper. The bottom of the pedestal is sealed with a plain sheet of copper. Height: 15 cm.

This image represents the historical Buddha Śākyamuni (Tib.: Śākya thub pa) and commemorates the defeat of Māra at Bodhgayā. He is seated on a decorated cushion that symbolizes the *vajrāsana* stone on which the historical Gautama Buddha had attained enlightenment. This decorated cushion with a *kīrtimukha* emblem is one of the insignia of the principal Buddha image inside the Mahābodhi Stūpa at Bodhgayā. This and similar images represent copies of the sacred stone Buddha inside the Mahābodhi. The only notable difference is with regard to the double lotus pedestal in contrast to the rectangular pedestal of the original stone image. Presumably cast at Bodhgayā, such Buddha images were sold to pilgrims. Such images of Buddha and other deities carried the Pāla art style from Northern India to the whole Buddhist world of that time.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 140

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1992)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 266–267, pls. 85E–85F.

18B. Mañjuśrī in the Attitude of Royal Ease North-Eastern India: Late Pāla Style; 12th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. Many ornaments are inlaid with silver and with copper. Some jewellery was originally inset with glass backed with coloured foil. The bottom of the pedestal is sealed with a copper plate. Height: 15 cm.

Mañjuśrī (Tib.: 'Jam dpal) rests in the attitude of royal ease (*rājalīlāsana*) on a double lotus pedestal.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 248

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 292–293, pls. 97B–97C.



18A



18B

Pilgrimage to the Great Places in the Life of the Buddha

With the development of the worship of Stūpa monuments in early Buddhism, the practice of pilgrimage to the important places in the life of Buddha Śākyamuni became popular. The first four locations were Lumbinī (modern Nepal and the only location outside India), the birth-place of Siddhārtha, the future Buddha Śākyamuni (**MP 1**); Bodhgayā, the location of Śākyamuni’s victory over Māra (*māravijaya*) and subsequent enlightenment under the Bodhi tree (**MP 2**); the deer park at Sārnāth, the location of Śākyamuni’s first sermon known as “setting in motion the wheel of the doctrine” (*dharmacakra-pravartana*) (**MP 3**); and Kuśīnagara, the site of Śākyamuni’s passing away into *mahāparinirvāṇa* (**MP 8**). Later, the pilgrimage was extended to four more sites in Northern India, creating the “eight great places” (*aṣṭamahāsthāna*) of Śākyamuni’s “eight great miraculous events” (*aṣṭamahāprātihārya*) (**AMP**). The four additional locations were at Jetavana monastery at Śrāvastī, where the “great miraculous event” of the twin miracle and the miracle of the multiplication took place (**MP 4**); Sāṅkāśya, the site of Śākyamuni’s descent from the Trāyastriṃśa heaven (**MP 5**); Rājagṛha, the place of Śākyamuni’s taming of the wild elephant Nālāgiri (**MP 6**); and Vaiśālī, where Śākyamuni received the gift of honey from one of the monkeys at the Monkey’s Pond (**MP 7**).

19. The “Major Events in the Life of Buddha Śākyamuni” North-Eastern India: Late Pāla Style; 11th/12th Century

Fine-grained yellowish-beige stone (possibly phyllite). The face of the principal image is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 16 cm.

Among the treasures of the Po ta la palace are a considerable number of exquisite miniature stone sculptures carved primarily between the 11th and the 13th centuries by North-East Indian and Burmese artists. Most of them are the products of craftsmen of the Pāla and Sena dynasties that ruled over Bihar and Bengal from the 8th until the end of the 12th century. Other carvings such as the miniature temple models of the Mahābodhi Stūpa at Bodhgayā reflect stylistic characteristics traditionally associated with Burmese art, such as Buddha statues characterized by short necks. The mostly small sculptures are carved from fine-grained, dark grey or yellowish-beige stone – mostly phyllite.

This miniature stone sculpture depicts the “major events in the life of Buddha Śākyamuni”, known as the “eight great illusory displays” (*aṣṭamahāprātihārya*) (**AMP**). In the centre of the small carving is Buddha Śākyamuni (Tib: Śākya thub pa) seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*) on a double lotus, which is supported on a stalk with scrolling leaves growing from the pedestal with quadruple projections at the front. The left hand rests in the lap while the right hand is extended in the gesture of touching the earth (*bhūmisparśa-mudrā*). The upper monastic robe is rendered without folds in a transparent manner and covers the left shoulder only. The throne-back is decorated with a pair of elephants, leogryphs, and geese with long tail feathers blending into foliate scrolls. The principal image commemorates the defeat of the evil represented by Māra (*māravijaya*) at Bodhgayā (**MP 2**).

		MP 8		
MP 6	goose		goose	MP 5
MP 3	leogryph	MP 2	leogryph	MP 4
MP 1	elephant		elephant	MP 7

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1631

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 400–401, pls. 129C–129D.



Tārā – the Supreme Buddhist Goddess as a Symbol of the Female Principle

The reluctance of early Buddhists to recognize the female principle is the reason for the relatively late introduction of goddesses into the Buddhist pantheon. Initially, the nuns known as *bhikṣuṇī* occupied a very subordinate position within the organized Buddhist community. According to the early Theravāda Buddhist scriptures, the historical Buddha was against the conversion of women. He even rejected the admission of the widowed Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, his stepmother. But Ānanda, the favourite disciple of Buddha, pleaded strongly on her behalf. As a result Buddha reluctantly gave his consent for her initiation on condition that every nun must strictly follow eight special rules of monastic discipline or *vinaya* ensuring subordination to the monks, or *bhikṣus*. The female element was thus suppressed for centuries. Growing disagreements in the interpretation of Buddha's teachings led eventually to the development of different traditions. It was with the formation of the later Mahāyāna Schools that the female aspect became equally accepted and the practice of goddesses introduced. The worship of Tārā is of Indian origin and its beginning dates back to the 6th or 7th century. Tārā is the supreme Buddhist goddess and is in concept similar to the Hindu goddess known as Devī. At first Tārā was conceived as the consort of Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of compassion. Later numerous manifestations of Tārā developed, all characterized by different names and iconic features in accordance with their particular nature. The Tārā cult reached Nepal in the 7th or 8th century and Tibet during the late 8th century. However, the popularization of Tārā worship in Tibet is generally associated with the teachings of the Indian Paṇḍita Atiśa (982–1054).

20. Khadiravaṇī-Tārā Attended by Ekajaṭā North-Eastern India: Late Pāla Style; 11th Century

Brass; cast in three parts, partly hollow. The separately cast aureole is lost. The ornaments are inset with a few precious stones or glass backed with red foil. The faces are painted with cold gold, the hair of the Khadiravaṇī-Tārā with a blue, the hair of Ekajaṭā with a red pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 39.8 cm.

Khadiravaṇī-Tārā (Tib.: Seng ldeng nags kyi sgröl ma) is a form of the “green Tārā” or Śyāma-Tārā rendered in the attitude of ease (*lalitāsana*) – signifying beauty and serenity. She is placed on a double lotus mounted on a rectangular, stepped pedestal with a projection at the front carried by six legs and rests her right foot on a lotus flower (*padma*). She extends the right hand in the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*) and with the raised left hand holds the stalk of the blue water lily (*nīlotpala*) flowering above the left shoulder. At the back of her right hand emerges the stalk of another flower that blossoms above her right shoulder. Tārā is clad in a cloth tied around her hips and with a shawl placed over the left shoulder and tied across the chest. She has bejewelled ornaments, namely a small crown fastened with a ribbon with swirling ends, a pair of circular earrings, two necklaces, bracelets on the upper arms and wrists, and anklets. To her left is a lotus pedestal supporting the separately cast image of Ekajaṭā (Tib.: Ral gcig ma). The ferocious-looking, triple-eyed acolyte of Tārā is seated in the attitude of royal ease (*rājalīlāsana*) with the right hand holding a ritual chopper with a *vajra* handle (*vajrakartrikā*); in the left hand she holds a skull-cup (*kapāla*). She is clad in a leopard skin tied below the protruding belly and carries a tiger-skin shawl over the left shoulder and tied across the chest. She wears a necklace and is decorated with snakes. It has been verified that there has never been another lotus pedestal to Tārā's right.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1435 and 494

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 240–241, pls. 73B–73C.
Chen Xiejun, Wang Qingzheng (chief editors). 2001. *Treasures from Snow Mountains: Gems of Tibetan Cultural Relics*, [catalogue of the exhibition held at the Shanghai Museum, Shanghai], p. 100, pl. 31: Green Tara, Qing Dynasty (1644–1911).



The Final Days of Monastic Buddhism in North-Eastern India

By the end of the 12th century, the Islamic forces had conquered the whole of Northern and North-Eastern India. This subjugation was accompanied by the destruction of the major Buddhist monasteries, which together with a general persecution of its adherents led to the almost complete extinction of monastic Buddhism in North-Eastern India. Many Indian Buddhists successfully escaped the onslaught and found shelter further east or in the south of India, while others escaped into the Himalayas. Among the refugees were many eminent Indian Buddhist scholars who had salvaged valuable manuscripts, and who probably carried with them also metal and stone sculptures, mostly of small size. It can be assumed that among these displaced Indians were not only Buddhist scholars but also skilled artists and craftsmen. It had all started at the end of the 10th century when the Yāmīnī Muslims pushed eastward from their stronghold in Ghazni, Afghanistan. In the years 998 to 1030, the Ghaznavids annexed the Kabul valley, Gandhāra, and the mountainous area of Swat. It took another 170 years until the Muslim armies reached Bengal.

21. Buddhist Goddess Mārīcī

North-Eastern India (Bengal): Late Pāla Style; 11th/12th Century

Copper alloy, fire gilt on the front; cast in two parts, partly hollow. The faces are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The pedestal is not sealed. Height: 30.8 cm.

This image represents the youthful three-headed and eight-armed yellow form of Mārīcī (Tib.: 'Od zer can ma), her left head being that of a sow. Mārīcī is stepping to the right with the right leg bent and the left one straight as if in violent combat (*pratyālīḍha*), placed on a double lotus mounted on a moulded, rectangular, stepped pedestal raised on eight legs. The front is decorated with seven pigs and Rāhu the charioteer with a *makara* head as part of the chariot in front of him. Mārīcī, the “rays of light”, is related to the male Hindu sun-god Sūrya, whose chariot is drawn by seven horses. Mārīcī holds the following attributes in her hands, with the missing ones identified according to the *sādhanas* (*SM* 134, 137, 142, 146): in the right hands a needle (*sūcī*), an arrow (*śara*), now lost, a hook (*aṅkuśa*), now lost, and a five-pronged diamond sceptre (*pañcasūcika-vajra*); in the left hands a thread (*sūtra*), a bow (*cāpa*), now lost, a noose (*pāśa*), and a branch of the Aśoka tree (Lat.: *Saraca indica*), now lost. Mārīcī is clad in a cloth tied around the hips with a belt with beaded tassels attached. She has bejewelled ornaments, namely a small crown in front of the tall knot of hair with a bejewelled tip, a necklace, bracelets, and anklets. Above Mārīcī's head is one of her four four-armed sow-headed attendants representing either Vartālī, Vadālī, Varālī, or Varāhamukhī, holding a branch of the Aśoka tree in her left and two indistinct objects in her right hands. Mārīcī is backed by an aureole surmounted by a Stūpa topped by a “sun in the crescent moon” emblem. The small effigy of a seated Buddha with the meditation gesture (*dhyāna-mudrā*) at the base of the Stūpa flanked by two flower buds does not represent Amitābha (Tib.: 'Od dpag med) but rather Vairocana (Tib.: rNam par snang mdzad). According to the iconographic literature, Mārīcī is always associated with the transcendental Buddha Vairocana. This Mārīcī corresponds almost completely to one of the descriptions contained in the iconographic compendium *Sādhanamālā* (*SM* 134), the only *sādhana* describing the attendants as four-armed and holding an Aśoka branch in their left hands. A xylograph of a similar image named Aṣṭabhuja-Mārīcī, or “eight-armed Mārīcī”, is depicted in the *Zhu Fo Pusa Sheng Xiang Zan*.⁴⁹

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 42[B]

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 284–285, pl. 93C.

49. M.-T. de Mallmann. 1975. *Introduction* ..., pp. 55–56, 75, 259–265; W. E. Clark. 1937. *Two Lamaist Pantheons*, Vol. II, p. 285, no. 243/63.



Large Buddhist Statues Cast by Indian Craftsmen in Tibet

Among the countless Buddhist statues of the Po ta la are two magnificent standing statues representing Maitreya and Tārā. These two large and important images date from the 11th/12th century and were presumably cast by Indian craftsmen trained in the Pāla styles of North-Eastern India. The assumption that the two Po ta la statues were cast in Tibet may explain some of the technical and stylistic differences when compared to statues discovered in India. Questions concerning authorship are often problematic when an object was commissioned from a craftsman working far away from his home. The proportions and overall modelling of such images are usually very similar to the ones produced in his native land. However, comparison of the details does often show discrepancies, prompting some scholars to doubt that artists of the same tradition could have manufactured statues of such different types. Such an approach tends to forget that details such as garments and jewellery have in all cultures traditionally been designed in compliance to local fashion. Images which overall resemble their Indian counterparts, but differ in the design of details such as garments and jewellery, could naturally be the work of Indian craftsmen working abroad, as well as of Tibetan artisans. However, it is unlikely that Tibetan craftsmen active during the 11th/12th century were able to cast such large and technically perfect images in the Indian Pāla style of that period.

22A. Bodhisattva Maitreya – the Future Buddha Indian Work in Tibet: Late Pāla Style; 11th/12th Century

Brass; cast in two or more parts, partly hollow. The separately cast aureole is lost. The eyes are probably inlaid with silver. The garment is extensively inlaid with silver and copper ornaments and decorated with engraved designs. The face, the upper part of the body, the crown, and the emblem on the *jaṭāmakūṭa* are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. The rectangular, stepped pedestal is not shown in this photograph. Height (total) 154 cm; (Maitreya) 138 cm.

This crowned and bejewelled Bodhisattva in the *saṃbhogakāya* aspect depicts Maitreya (Tib.: Byams pa), the future Buddha. He stands in a slightly bent attitude on a circular double lotus, earlier mounted on a rectangular, stepped pedestal. The right hand displays the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*). The left hand holds the stalk of a *nāgakeśara* branch attached to the left shoulder, bearing a water-jar (*kuṇḍikā*).

22B. Tārā – the Supreme Buddhist Goddess Indian Work in Tibet: Late Pāla Style; 11th/12th Century

Brass; cast in two or more parts, partly hollow. The separately cast lower section of the pedestal and the aureole are lost. The eyes are probably inlaid with silver. The ornaments are inset with coral and turquoise, some of which are lost. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. The rectangular, stepped pedestal is not shown in this photograph. Height: (total) 166 cm; (Tārā) 147 cm.

This goddess is identified here with the general term Tārā (Tib.: sGrol ma). She stands in a slightly bent attitude on a circular double lotus base, originally mounted on a rectangular, stepped pedestal. Tārā extends the right hand in the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*); the left hand holds a blue water lily (*nīlotpala*), as described in the *sādhana* text. According to the texts, Buddhist goddesses never hold lotus flowers.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1618 and 1616

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)



22A



22B

X. Nepal: Licchavi Period (c. 400–879)

Plates 23–24

The kingdom of Nepal is the climatic and cultural passage between the hot, fertile plains of India in the south and the cold, arid desert plateau of Tibet in the north. From well before its written history, the population of Nepal has been composed of tribes of different ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. This heterogeneous mixture primarily consists of Indo-Aryan immigrants from India and others of Mongolian strains that migrated down from Central Asia. As it is understood today, the culture and history of Nepal have always been centred on the main valley of Kathmandu and its largely Newār population originally of Northern Indian descent.

The Licchavi, an ancient tribe of Magadha with their capital at Vaiśālī (modern Basarh, Bihar, N.-E. India), already existed during the lifetime of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni in the 6th century BC. Suppression at the hand of Chandragupta (reigned c. 319–335 AD), founder of the Gupta empire, led to a migration of the Licchavi and subsequent invasion of Nepal. By around 400 AD the Licchavi were established as the dominant political force in Nepal. Even though they relocated their sphere of influence, they still paid tribute to the Imperial Guptas of Magadha. The end of the Licchavi period is not exactly known, but for convenience the year 879 AD has been proposed. This is the date when the Nepāla Saṃvat was introduced.

The term “Nepalese art”, as used in the context of most publications, refers to the artistic production of the Buddhist Newār, an urbanized community dwelling primarily in the towns and villages of the Kathmandu valley. These artistically very creative people claim descent from the Śākya clan, to which the historical Gautama Buddha belonged. They are not a homogenous ethnic group, but rather are composed of mixed Indo-Aryan and Mongolian ancestry. Their language, Newāri, belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese language group, whereas their script, which was first Gupta, and later replaced by Devanāgarī, has its origin in India. The majority of Newārs are Vajrayāna Buddhists, while the remainder adhere to various Hindu sects. From the earliest times, the Newārs of the Kathmandu valley occupied important positions as traders and artisans, an alliance conducive to the spread of their arts to neighbouring cultures, especially Tibet. Concentrated in the relatively small valley of Kathmandu, countless temples and shrines of the different religious sects survive. The sculptural decorations and paintings are almost exclusively the work of Buddhist Newār artisans. Any single workshop would be responsible for both Buddhist and Hindu commissions of images, resulting in there being almost no stylistic differences between them. The valley’s small size favoured the development of art styles shared by a number of local workshops, each of which nevertheless developed some small variation within the parameter of the contemporary style. The importance of Nepal as a vital centre of Buddhist studies increased in many different spheres with the decline and extermination of Buddhism in North-Eastern India at the end of the 12th century.

The artistic traditions of Nepal, including architecture, sculpture, and painting, were strongly influenced by North-Eastern India. Whereas the manufacturing of clay, wood, and stone sculptures was introduced at the latest during the Kuṣāṇa period (c. 1st–3rd century), it is likely that not much image casting occurred before the advent of the Licchavi at the end of the 4th century. Although distinctive through its local modification, the artistic development of Nepalese sculpture reflects the undeniable influence at first of the Kuṣāṇa styles (1st–3rd century), followed by the Gupta styles (c. 320–600), Post-Gupta styles (c. 600–750), and finally the succeeding Pāla and related styles (c. 750–1200). The later Pāla styles, revitalized by the activities of

esoteric Vajrayāna Buddhism, exerted a profound influence upon the Nepalese and Tibetan traditions of art. One must acknowledge this integral factor to understand the basic nature of Nepalese art. While receiving its fundamental artistic impulses from India in the south, Nepal radiated towards the north a strong and lasting influence on the formation of Buddhist art in Tibet from the 7th century onward. In China, during the Yuan (1279–1368) and early Ming (1368–1644) dynasties, Nepalese influence penetrated even into the imperial workshops (**Plates 55–57**).

Although Nepal's culture and history has always been interwoven with that of India, the natural barrier of the mountains has allowed the local population a certain degree of independence, which is reflected in their artistic production. Of all the various crafts, Nepal achieved its greatest fame from the Licchavi period (c. 400–879) onward for its tradition of producing gilt copper statues, which is documented by numerous surviving images. Some of the Nepalese metal statues of Śākyamuni in the custody of the Sa skya monastery (**Plate 23B**) and also the Po ta la palace collection (**Plate 23A**) have to be counted among the most refined artistic renderings known of this iconographic type. It appears to be somehow easier to create sculptures of seated deities in their inactive state than of deities in a standing pose sometimes simulating walking or other movements. Yet among the different iconographies, it is the unpretentious representation of a Buddha dressed in the simple robes of a monk bare of any jewellery that is the most demanding undertaking. Newār artists created some of the finest specimens known. They mastered the delicate rendering of the upper monastic robe with merely a few pleats covering both shoulders so that the contours of the body appear to shine through it. They were masters in modelling an image according to the proportions laid down in the *śilpaśāstra* treatises. With regard to the robes worn by Buddha statues there were, as pointed out earlier, differences possible (cf. **Plate 5**). It seems that no written rules existed that compelled artists to fashion the monastic robe in a particular way. When comparing many Buddha statues it becomes evident that standing Buddha images have more often both shoulders covered, but there are too many exceptions to stipulate a strict rule.

Problems of Attribution – North Indian or Nepalese Newār Artists (?)

The Buddha at Sa skya belongs to a small group of images with similar stylistic characteristics, usually attributed to Northern India.⁵⁰ However, none of the Gupta-style Buddha statues excavated in the Indian subcontinent bears much stylistic similarity with this group of Buddhas. Also, none of the Buddhas bears any inscriptions that could help solving the problem of origin. It is possible that Newār craftsmen cast this group of Buddhas in Tibet during the Tibetan imperial period, when Buddhism was introduced.

23A. Standing Buddha Śākyamuni Nepal (Licchavi Period); c. 8th Century

Gilt copper; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast pedestal is lost.

The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 60 cm.

This statue of Buddha Śākyamuni, standing in a slightly bent attitude, was originally fixed with tenons protruding from the feet to a separately cast lotus pedestal, now lost. His right hand, distinguished by webbed fingers, is raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*); the left hand holds the hem of the upper monastic robe. The robe is rendered in a transparent manner with a few broad, asymmetrically distributed folds and covers both shoulders. The lower robe is also visible.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1315

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 450–451, pls. 136C–136E.

23B. Standing Buddha Śākyamuni Northern India (Post-Gupta Style) or Nepal (Licchavi Period); 7th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The left ankle is repaired. The face is painted with cold gold. The image was originally fixed with tenons protruding from the feet to a separately manufactured pedestal, now lost. Height: 50 cm.

This image is one of the most important Buddha statues in Tibet. The Buddha – very likely representing Śākyamuni (Tib.: Śākya thub pa) – is standing in a superbly rendered slightly bent stance, often interpreted as a walking attitude. The right hand is raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*); the left hand holds the hem of the monastic robe. This combination of gestures is commonly found with standing Buddha sculptures attributed to the Gupta style. Webbed fingers, one of the particular features of early Buddha statues, distinguish the hands of this image. The upper monastic robe is rendered in a transparent manner with a few symmetrically distributed pleats and covers both shoulders. The lower robe is also visible.

Sa skya Monastery

(Southern Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 2005)

References to Gupta statues at Sa skya Monastery

Sāṅkṛityāyana, R. 1937. “Second Search of Sanskrit Palm-Leaf Mss. in Tibet”, *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. XXIII, Part 1, illustrated on p. 8.

Compare: U. von Schroeder. 1981. *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, p. 216; pl. 45A [Buddha by same workshop in the Metropolitan Museum].

U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 450–453; pls. 136–137.

50. U. von Schroeder. 1981. *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, pp. 216–217; pls. 45A–45C.



23A



23B

24A. Hayagrīva – in His Form as Padmāntaka (?) Nepal (Licchavi Period); c. 8th Century

Gilt copper; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast pedestal is lost. The face of Hayagrīva and the horse head are painted with cold gold, the hair with a red pigment. A third eye is perhaps covered by the cold gold. Height: 40.5 cm.

Hayagrīva (Tib.: rTa mgrin), the “horse-necked one”, is one of the Vajrayāna meditation deities (Tib.: *Yi dam*). He stands in a slightly bent attitude and rests the right hand on a staff surmounted by a skull (*yamadaṇḍa*). The raised left hand holds an unidentified object, which could be the seed of a lotus flower. In that case, this image could represent Padmāntaka (Tib.: Padma mthar byed), a form of Hayagrīva. He wears a tiger skin secured around the hips with a snake. He is adorned with ornaments composed of snakes (*nāga*). A billowing, ribbon-like scarf, its ends tied around the neck, encircles the head. Although the image was certainly cast by a Newār, it is possible that this work was designed to suit Tibetan sentiments. There is a resemblance with Tibetan works of the Yar lung dynasty (cf. **Plates 30–31**).

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsub lag khang Collection; inventory no. 285

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 472–473, pls. 147B–147D.

24B. Standing Buddhist or Hindu Goddess (?) Nepal (Licchavi Period); 8th/9th Century

Copper with remains of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately made pedestal is lost. The garment is decorated with engraved patterns. The face and the centre panel of the crown are painted with cold gold, the hair as well as the side panels of the crown with a blue pigment. Height: 41.5 cm.

In the Li ma lha khang of the Po ta la palace is a remarkable copper statue of an unidentified standing goddess holding a jewel (*maṇi*) in the right hand displayed in the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*), while the left is extended in the “ring hand gesture” (*kaṭaka-mudrā*) and holds a flowering twig or peacock feathers (?). She is adorned with bejewelled ornaments, namely a three-leaved crown, two earrings of different design, a heavy necklace, bracelets on the upper arms and wrists, and anklets.

This statue blends naturally with the myriad of Buddhist sculptures stored in the same chapel, and no Tibetan would ever have the slightest doubt that she represents the Buddhist goddess Tārā. It is the rather unusual upright stance which seems to set her apart from other standing goddesses who, especially in the case of Buddhist deities, are usually shown in a slightly bent attitude (**Plates 28A, 46B**). However, should she ever have been intended as a consort of a male deity, then the static upright position would have made sense only in the case of a male god represented in the same upright stance. As such she could have been conceived as a Hindu goddess as part of a group depicting Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī or Śiva and Pārvatī.⁵¹ It is easier to make a distinction between Hindu and Buddhist goddesses if they are shown holding a flower. In Northern India as well as in Nepal, Hindu goddesses always hold a lotus (*padma*) as opposed to the lily (*utpala*) held more commonly by the Buddhist goddesses.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 104

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 478–479, pls. 150C–150E.

51. Pal, P. 1974. *The Arts of Nepal*, Part I: *Sculpture*, pls. 116, 143.



24A



24B

XI. Nepal: Transitional Period (c. 880–1200)

Plates 25–28

The end of the Licchavi period is not exactly known, but for convenience the year 879 has been proposed. This is the date when the Nepāla Saṃvat was introduced. The period from the end of the Licchavi to the ascent of the Malla in about 1200 has often been termed the Ṭhākūrī period in earlier publications, but is now generally called the “Transitional Period”. Whereas in earlier publications only images made between 400 and 750 were identified as Licchavi, this term is now attributed to all works created prior to 880. Following the end of Licchavi rule in the late 9th century, the subsequent “Transitional Period” is distinguished by an absence of royal inscriptions or coinage. This fact probably points to domination by the Pāla monarchs or other rulers of North-Eastern India. This epoch, characterized by anarchy and internal dissension, ended only around 1200 with the founding of the Early Malla dynasty (c. 1200–1482) by Arimalla (reigned 1200–1216).

As were its political fortunes, Nepal’s Buddhist and Hindu activities as well as the religious arts were closely associated with those of India, particularly North-Eastern India. Although royal patronage might not always have been equally distributed among Buddhists and Hindus, there was a relatively peaceful co-existence of the manifold religious traditions. Throughout most of their history, the Buddhists and Hindus have lived together in harmony, often worshipping in the same temples and participating in the same festivals. This tolerance led to a syncretic religious and cultural pattern not often found in other places. The geographical location of Nepal served as a corridor for the transmission of cultural and religious ideas along the trade routes from India across the Himalayas to Tibet. The Newārs, who were mostly Buddhist and worked as artisans and traders, would have been natural conduits in the transmission of Buddhism to Tibet. The extent to which this was the case is indicated by the fact that they were also teachers and translators. With the almost complete disappearance of Buddhism in India towards the end of the 12th century, the importance of the Kathmandu valley as a vital centre of Buddhist studies and artistic production increased dramatically.

During the “second propagation” of Buddhism (*Phyi dar*) in Tibet, the Tibetan patrons had no trained native-born artists from which they could commission the sculptures and paintings needed to furnish their newly built monasteries. Therefore they had to rely on experienced artists from abroad, such as Indian artists from Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and North-Eastern India. But most important among the foreign artists were the Newārs from the Kathmandu valley.



Fig. VIII. Gilt copper image of a standing Buddha cast by Newār craftsmen, c. 11th century. Height: 136.5 cm. Top floor of the gSer khang or “golden temple” of the Zhwa lu monastery, founded in 1027. Located in Southern Tibet. (Photo: 1993).

“Emanational Buddhas”

Among the Buddha statues of the Po ta la palace are two large copper images. The similarities of style indicate that the same hands must have formed the wax models. It is also reasonable to assume that they were originally part of a group of statues. Representations of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni are usually commissioned and installed as individual statues. Solitary representations of Buddhas must be distinguished from groups of Buddha statues that represent “emanational Buddhas” in the *nirmāṇakāya* aspect, such as the group of “seven emanational Buddhas” (Skt.: *sapta-buddha*). However, they cannot be identified individually with their name. The Theravāda Buddhists recognize twenty-four “Buddhas of the past”, the Mahāyāna Buddhists up to thirty-two; but the group of seven is the one most often encountered in India and Tibet, namely Vipāśyin, Śikhin, Viśvabhū, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, and Śākyamuni (Plate 7A). Due to their similarities, the two Buddhas illustrated here obviously belong to a group of “seven emanational Buddhas”, although it is not possible to say which ones they represent. As individual images, both Buddhas would have been identified as Śākyamuni.

Traditionally, the Buddhas as well as the monks wear the threefold *dharma* robe (*tricīvara*) consisting of the lower robe (*antaravāsaka*), upper robe (*uttarāsaṅga*), and the patched cloak (*saṅghāṭi*). These different layers of robes are not always clearly distinguishable, because there are different ways of wearing them.

25A & 25B. Śākyamuni or Another of the “Emanational Buddhas” Nepal (Transitional Period); 10th/11th Century

Copper with faint traces of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast pedestal are lost. The faces are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 71 cm/ 75 cm.

Both Buddhas stand in a slightly bent attitude on a circular stand originally mounted on a separately cast lotus pedestal, now lost. The Buddha on the left side lowers the right hand in the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*), while the raised left hand holds the hem of the monastic robe. The Buddha on the right side has the right hand raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*), while the lowered left hand holds the hem of the monastic robe. Though unverified by written sources, according to Tibetan informants this gesture indicates the Buddha’s mindfulness (Tib.: *Dran pa*) and introspection (Tib.: *Shes bzhin*). The upper robes are rendered without folds in a transparent manner covering both shoulders. The lower robes are also visible.

Prior to being placed in the Li ma lha khang of the Po ta la, these two unidentified “emanational Buddhas” were in ritual use for many centuries. This is indicated by the shiny lustrous brownish surface of the almost pure copper alloy. As a result of ritual washing only traces of the original fire gilding have survived. However, the visible black stains are an indication that the two Buddhas have not been cleaned or touched for quite some time. This might relate to the practice of applying painted cold gold to the faces, something that only became fashionable in Tibet after the 16th century. Out of fear that the cold gilding might be damaged, monks in Tibetan monasteries in general abstain from unnecessarily touching painted statues, and only reluctantly agree to cleaning for photographic purposes. With the application of painted cold gold, the ancient tradition of daily ritual bathing of the sacred statues was no longer possible. The two Buddhas represent masterpieces of Newār craftsmanship. However, it is difficult to tell whether the images were cast in Tibet by Newār artisans or imported from the Kathmandu valley.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory nos. 1672/1312

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)



25A



25B

The First Sermon of Gautama Buddha in the Deer Park at Sārnāth

This exquisite image of an enthroned Buddha is one of the masterpieces of Nepalese sculpture in the Po ta la collections. He is clad in monastic garments and represents the historical Buddha Śākyamuni, also known as Gautama Buddha. As indicated by the gesture and the motifs on the pedestal, our statue commemorates the delivering of the first sermon in the deer park at Sārnāth in Northern India. This event is traditionally described as “setting in motion the wheel of the doctrine” (*dharmacakra-pravartana-mudrā*). However, such an identification depends on the presence of the “wheel of the doctrine” (*dharmacakra*) (**Plate 6**), sometimes flanked by a pair of deer (**Plates 7A, 26**) or by a group of monks (**Plate 6**). In many publications every statue of a Buddha in monastic garment displaying this gesture is identified as representing the historical “Buddha Śākyamuni delivering the first sermon”. However, if the “wheel of the doctrine” (*cakra*) is not depicted, then the Buddha statue represents “Buddha Śākyamuni in the act of preaching” (**Plates 4, 5A, 10A**). The tradition of representing the first sermon with a *dharmacakra* wheel flanked by a pair of deer and perhaps a group of monks originated in the art of Gandhāra. From there this theme spread to other parts of the Indian subcontinent, as well as the Himalayas, Nepal, Tibet, and further. In Tibet, the deer and *dharmacakra* emblems, assembled from gilt sheets of hammered copper, decorate the rooftops of many of monasteries. They can still be seen most prominently on the gilt roofs of the Po ta la palace and the Jo khang.

According to tradition the historical Buddha had at first no interest in preaching until importuned by the gods. Other hesitations were about who was worthy to hear the sermon. According to the Palī canon the first sermon of Gautama Buddha was concerned with the “four noble truths” and its practical implication of the “middle way”. The “four noble truths” are (1) the noble truth of suffering, (2) the noble truth of the origin of suffering, (3) the noble truth of the cessation of suffering (i.e. *nirvāṇa*), and (4) the noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering. This path is called the “noble eightfold path or the middle way”.

26. Buddha Śākyamuni Delivering the First Sermon Nepal (Transitional Period); 11th Century

Copper with remains of gilding; cast in four parts, partly hollow. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: (total) 50.8 cm; (Buddha) 25.2 cm.

The Buddha is shown in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāsa*), a yogic posture that signifies deep meditation and introspection. He rests on a rectangular lion throne and displays the gesture of “setting in motion the wheel of the doctrine” (*dharmacakra-pravartana-mudrā*). The upper monastic robe is rendered with broad and symmetrically distributed folds and covers both shoulders. The border of the lower robe is visible above the feet. The throne is supported at the front corners by a pair of squatting lions, with a cloth hanging down between them decorated with a geometrical design. In front of the stepped pedestal are the wheel (*dharmacakra*) with twelve spokes and a pair of recumbent deer. The Buddha sits on a cushion placed in front of an ornamented and upholstered throne-back decorated on both sides with symmetrical openwork designs composed of *kinnaras* with long scrolling tails. It is topped by mythical *śārdūla* beasts with warriors on their backs. Above the crossbeam is an arch surmounted by a Garuḍa holding in its claws and beak the tips of the scrolling tails of the two *makaras*. In this Newār work, the traditional Indian motif of an elephant supporting a lion has been replaced by the *kinnaras* supporting *śārdūlas*. The lion’s face (*kīrtimukha*) has been replaced by a Garuḍa (Tib: Khyung), which indicates that this image was probably cast for a Tibetan patron. The head of the Buddha is set against an oval nimbus decorated with rays.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 430

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 470–471, pl. 146C.



The Importance of Flower Attributes in the Process of Identification

In the Jo khang / Lhasa gTsug lag khang are two standing copper statues of Nepalese origin. Both Bodhisattva statues originally held the stalk of a flower in the left hand – lost in the case of the larger statue. The classification of the intact flower is important for the identification of the smaller statue (**Plate 27B**). The narrow petals resemble more a water lily (*utpala*) than a lotus (*padma*) with usually broader petals. The water lily endorses an identification as Mañjuśrī (Tib.: 'Jam dpal), whereas a lotus would have pointed to Padmapāṇi (Tib: Phyag na padmo), a form of Avalokiteśvara. The object held in the right hand of the smaller statue also agrees with the identification as a form of Mañjuśrī. Many of them are characterized by holding a sapling or seed of a blue water lily (*nīlotpala*). It is the sapling held as attribute in his right hand that identifies also the taller statue as a form of Mañjuśrī – in spite of the missing flower attribute in the left hand (**Plate 27A**). Moreover the boyish and slightly fat appearance reminds of Kumārabhūta, the “youthful one”, one of Mañjuśrī’s appellation. The strands of hair falling to the shoulders are an indication that both statues represent ascetic types of Bodhisattvas.

Indian Buddhist iconographic compendiums such as the *Sādhanamālā* (*SM*) and the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* (*NSP*) contain numerous descriptions of various forms of Mañjuśrī. However, none of the images described corresponds in all aspects with the two images. But the *Sādhanamālā* (*SM*) contains three descriptions of an ascetic form of Mañjuśrī identified as Siddhaikavīra displaying the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*) with the right hand and holding a water lily (*utpala*) in the left. Other features include strands of hair falling onto the shoulders and a necklace adorned with claws (*SM* 67, 71, 72). In many aspects, these two images correspond with the descriptions of Siddhaikavīra. There are also similarities with another form of Mañjuśrī described in the *Sādhanamālā* as a seated young boy named Mañjughoṣa (*SM* 50, 69, 70).⁵² The two illustrated statues likely correspond to Nepalese forms of Mañjuśrī whose *sādhana* texts remain obscure.

27A. Siddhaikavīra Form of Mañjuśrī Nepal (Transitional Period); 10th Century

Copper with faint traces of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The garment is decorated with engraved patterns. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 30.2 cm.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsug lag khang Collection; inventory no. 128

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 498–499, pls. 160B–160E.

27B. Siddhaikavīra Form of Mañjuśrī Nepal (Transitional Period); 10th/11th Century

Copper with remains of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The garment is decorated with engraved patterns. The face has remains of painted cold gold, the hair remains of a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 18.6 cm.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsug lag khang Collection; inventory no. 657

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 498–499, pls. 160F–160G.

⁵² M.-T. de Mallmann. 1964. *Étude iconographique sur Mañjuśrī*; M.-T. de Mallmann. 1975. *Introduction à l'iconographie ...*, pp. 250–257.



27A



27B

Buddhist Tārā or Hindu Devī – Problems of Identification and Dating

Of the two illustrated goddesses, the one standing holds a flower as her attribute. The identification of this flower determines whether the statue is Buddhist or Hindu. In Northern India as well as in Nepal, according to the literary references, Hindu goddesses always hold a lotus (*padma*), whereas Buddhist goddesses hold a water lily (*utpala*) and never a lotus. Concluding that the flower represents a water lily (*utpala*) rather than a lotus (*padma*), the standing goddess is identified as Buddhist. Without an identification of this flower it would be impossible to make a distinction between a Hindu and a Buddhist goddess. With regard to the age, the inset stones make a date of manufacture prior to the 11th century rather unlikely. In addition, there are no indications whatsoever that our standing goddess ever had a head nimbus, which is usually the case for Newār images of the 10th century or earlier. The position of the bracelets attached to the upper arms is another criterion for dating. Early Newār works dating from before the 10th century usually have them positioned at the armpit level with the coiled end of the bracelet reaching the shoulder. From the 10th century onwards, there is a tendency to gradually slide them lower down the arm until they were ultimately positioned at the elbows. There was also a tendency in the earlier periods to model female deities, regardless of whether Hindu or Buddhist, with heavier chests and thighs and bigger breasts than our Tārā. Taking all the arguments into consideration, the manufacture of this image took place in the 11th or the 12th century.

28A. Standing Buddhist Goddess Identified as Tārā Nepal (Transitional Period); c. 11th Century

Gilt copper; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separate cast pedestal is lost. The ornaments are inset with turquoise and lapis lazuli. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair blue. Height: 53 cm.

This gilt copper image of a Buddhist goddess is identified with the general term Tārā (Tib.: sGrol ma). She stands in a slightly bent attitude on a circular stand. Tārā extends the right hand in the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*) and holds in the raised left the stalk of a water lily (*utpala*). The goddess is clad in a decorated cloth tied around the hips by a belt. She carries a transparent broad shawl over the left shoulder and tied across the chest, the swirling ends hanging down at the back. She is adorned with bejewelled ornaments.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 111

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 488–489, pls. 155C–155E.

28B. Mahāśrī-Tārā in the Attitude of Ease Nepal (Transitional Period); c. 11th Century

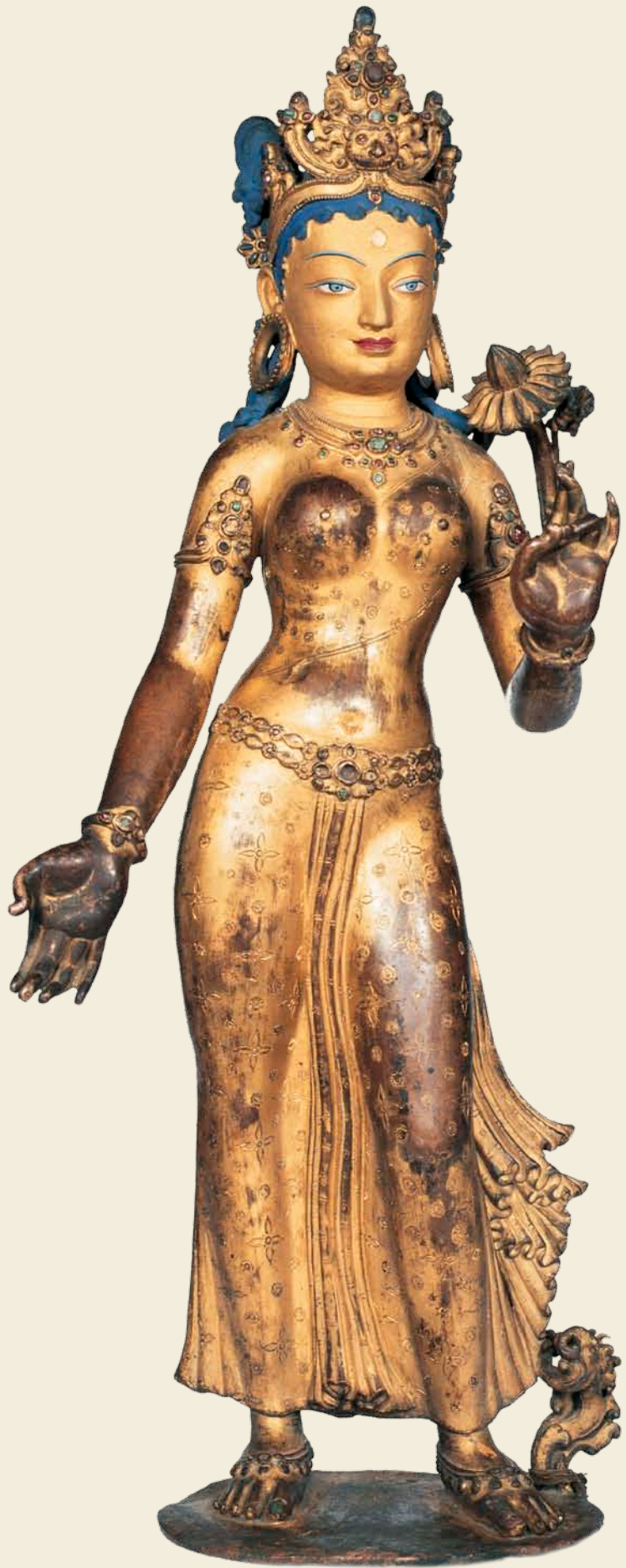
Copper with remains of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast pedestal is lost. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair blue. Height: 51 cm.

This Buddhist goddess is identified by the gesture as Mahāśrī-Tārā (Tib.: dPal ldan chen mo'i sgröl ma). She is shown in the attitude of ease (*lalitāsana*) and displays the “gesture of the wheel of the doctrine” (*dharmacakra-mudrā*). She is clad in a cloth tied around the hips and is adorned with bejewelled ornaments. Mahāśrī-Tārā is the only Tārā described in the *Sādhanamālā* to exhibit the *dharmacakra-mudrā* (SM 116).

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 282[B]

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, p. 488, pls. 155A–155B.



28A



28B

XII. Nepal: Early Malla Period (c. 1200–1482)

Plate 29

The internal conflict in Nepal following the end of the Licchavi rule in the late 9th century ended only temporarily with the accession around 1200 of Arimalla (reigned 1200–1216), the first of the kings of the Early Malla period (c. 1200–1482). The Malla rule of the Kathmandu valley is usually separated into two periods – the “Early Malla period” (c. 1200–1482) and the “Three Malla kingdoms” (1482–1769) when, after the death of Yakṣamalla (reigned 1428–1482), the kingdom was divided among his three sons and led to the establishment of three rival monarchies, at first centred at Bhatgaon, Kathmandu, and Banepa. Bhatgaon later incorporated Banepa, while Pāṭan seceded from Kathmandu in 1603. This section focuses on the copper statues cast in the Kathmandu valley during the Early Malla period (**Plate 29**). The sculptures produced presumably in Tibet by Newārs and *Kha cha ras*, descendants of mixed marriages between Newārs and Tibetan wives, are illustrated in Chapter XV, “Nepalese schools in Tibet” (**Plates 34–37**).

By the end of the 12th century, the Islamic forces had conquered the whole of Northern and North-Eastern India. This conquest led to the destruction of the Buddhist monasteries. The Muslims discriminated against Buddhists in general and almost entirely wiped out monastic Buddhism in North-Eastern India. Many monks and teachers managed to escape and found sanctuary further east or in the south of India, while others took cover in the Himalayas. Naturally, there was a great influx of refugees in the Kathmandu valley; they crowded into the Buddhist monasteries – known as *mahāvihāras*, *bahāl*, *bahīl*, and *bahā-bahī* – mostly concentrated in Pāṭan and Kathmandu, and to a lesser extent in the predominantly Hindu town of Bhatgaon (Bhaktapur). Among the Indians were many eminent Buddhist scholars who carried with them rare manuscripts, and likely also metal and stone sculptures, primarily of small size. It can be assumed that among these displaced Indians were also skilled artists and craftsmen. The Tibetan Buddhists accordingly shifted their focus from the monasteries of North-Eastern India to those of Nepal.

The political domination of the Kathmandu valley by the Mallas lasted almost six hundred years from 1200 until 1768, when the invading Gurkhas overthrew them. Their leader Pṛthivīnārāyaṇa (reigned until 1775) established the Shah dynasty of unified Nepal (1769 to present). Unlike the Mallas, the rulers of the Shah dynasty were much less inclined towards artistic patronage. This is reflected by the gradual decline in quality evident among the sculptures and paintings in the valley from the late 18th century onwards. With the opening of Nepal to foreigners in the second half of the 20th century, the trend of overall decline in the arts due to waning patronage has been reversed. Slowly but surely the Newār artists have improved the quality of their products as a result of discerning foreign customers ready to pay for improvements. Again Newār craftsmen have become proud of their fabulous artistic heritage. Great artistic achievements are the result of generous and discriminating patrons utilizing only the most creative artists who work with the finest materials available. This explains why the quality of art works often depends more on the patrons than on the artists themselves.

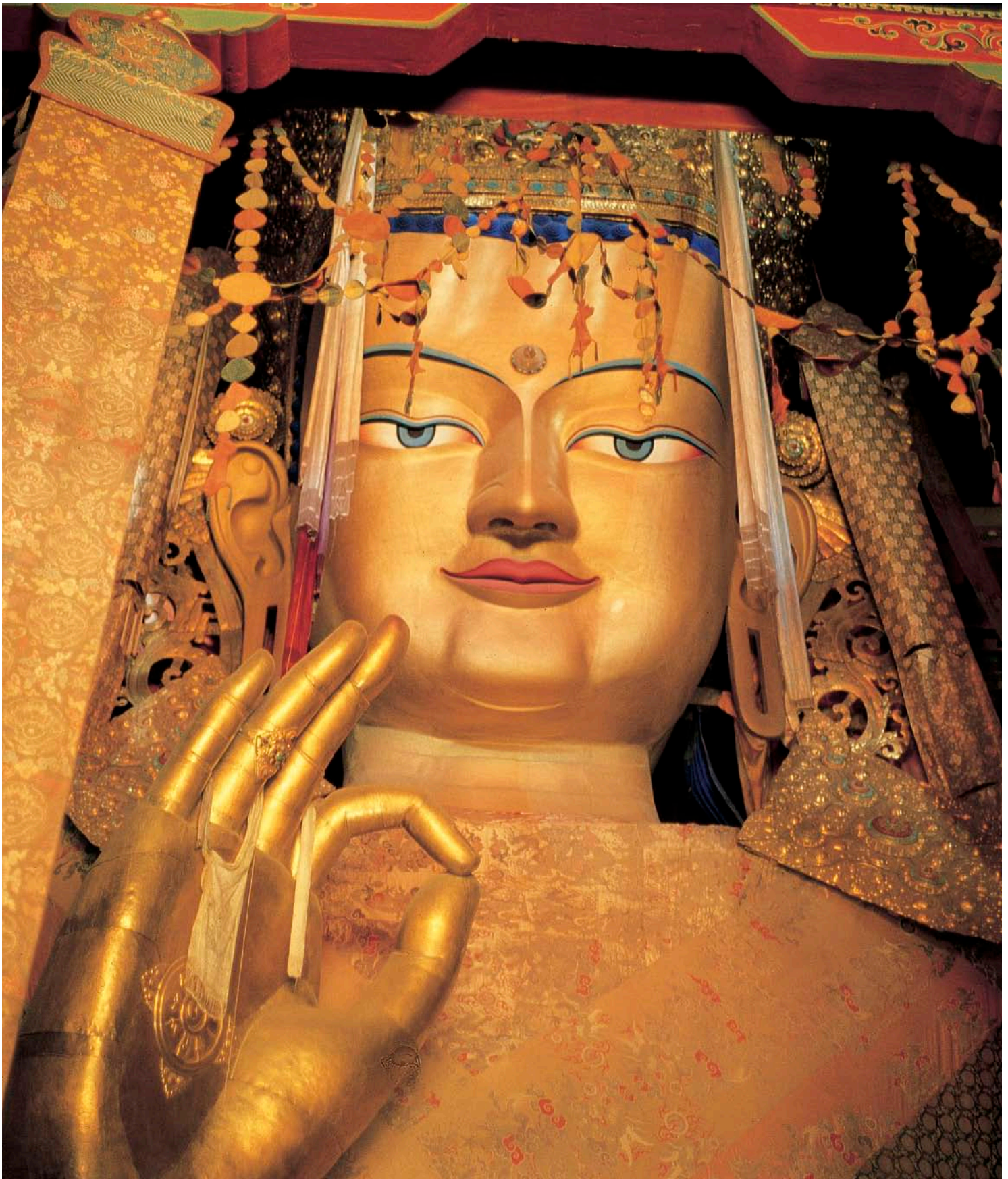


Fig. IX. Monumental image of Maitreya inside the Byams pa lha khang, or the “Maitreya chapel” of the bKra shis lhun po monastery in gZhis kha rtse, located in Southern Tibet. The Maitreya is assembled of cast and embossed parts of gilt copper and has a height of 22.4 metres; it is perhaps identical with the large Maitreya commissioned in 1461 by dGe ’dun grub (1391–1475), posthumously recognized as the First Dalai Lama. Attributed by some authors to dGe ’dun rgya mtsho (1476–1542), the Second Dalai Lama. Possibly restored in 1914 at the request of dGe legs rnam rgyal (1883–1937), the Sixth Paṅ chen Rin po che. (Photo: 1980).

Finishing Work in Search of Perfection

The distinction of a metal image depends to a large degree on the quality of the finishing work once the casting is completed. This exercise included the complete removal of the clay mould and most of the clay core, the chiselling away of the circulation pipes leading to the funnel, the eventual correction of casting errors, as well as the polishing with grinding sand and pieces of cloth, engraving, gilding, and setting with precious stones. Unalloyed copper statues require the most time-consuming of finishing work, but the malleability of this metal also allows the most rewarding effects in the course of perfecting an image. In the case of brass and bronze, the alloys are less porous and have a greater stability that permits thinner castings. The inseting of precious and imitation stones on metal images reached its culmination in Nepal, where the Newārs appear to have been in constant competition to create ever more refined techniques (**Plate 29B**).

29A. Standing Buddha Śākyamuni Nepal (Early Malla Period); c. 13th Century

Gilt copper; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately worked pedestal and aureole are lost. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment.
Height: 89 cm.

The Buddha, standing in a slightly bent attitude, was originally fixed to a separately cast lotus pedestal, now lost. His right hand is lowered in the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*); the raised left hand holds the hem of the upper monastic robe. The robe is rendered in a transparent manner with a few symmetrically distributed pleats, and covers both shoulders. The lower robe is also visible. This Buddha and the standing Mañjuśrī (**Plate 29B**) are two of the four metal statues placed near the sacred Jo bo image, after which the Jo khang is named (frontispiece).

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsug lag khang: Jo bo Rin po che Chapel
Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 466–467, pls. 144C–144E.

29B. Standing Mañjuśrī Nepal (Early Malla Period); c. 14th Century

Gilt copper with only traces of gilding left at the front; cast in one piece, partly hollow.
Inset with turquoise, coral, lapis lazuli, and other precious stones. Height: 101 cm.

Mañjuśrī (Tib.: 'Jam dpal) stands in a slightly bent attitude and was originally fixed with tenons protruding from the feet to a now-lost, separately cast lotus pedestal. Once the right hand held the stalk of the blue lily (*nīlotpala*) which blossoms above the shoulder and supports as an attribute a manuscript (*pustaka*) of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra. He extends the left hand in the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*). Mañjuśrī is clad in a cloth tied around the hips by a belt with folds draped between the legs, and wears a sash around the thighs whose ends are falling down on both sides. He is adorned with bejewelled ornaments, namely a five-leaved crown, tiny flowers above the ears, a pair of large and elaborate earrings, a necklace with pendants, the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*), bracelets on the upper arms and wrists, and anklets. As a result of frequent ritual worship, almost the entire gilding at the front has been worn off, whereas the gilding at the back of the image is intact.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsug lag khang: Jo bo Rin po che Chapel
Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 524–525, pls. 171C–171E.



29A



29B

XIII. Tibetan Imperial Period (c. 600–842): The Yar lung Dynasty of Central Tibet

Plates 30–31

Prior to the formation of the empire in the 7th century, Tibet was inhabited by many competing fiefdoms. During the late 6th century, gNam ri slon mtshan, ruler of the Yar lung valley in Central Tibet, succeeded in unifying several principalities, leading to the foundation of the Yar lung dynasty, known in ancient Tibetan texts as *sPu rgyal bod*. He was succeeded by Srong btsan sgam po (reigned c. 618–649), who used his great military superiority to incorporate into the empire large areas of Western and Eastern Tibet and, eventually, parts of Central Asia, the Chinese borderlands, and Yunnan. It was during the reign of Srong btsan sgam po, the greatest ruler of the Tibetan imperial period (c. 600–842), that Buddhism was introduced in Tibet. Interest in Buddhism was at the beginning restricted to members of the court with little effect on the life of the common Tibetans. Among the missionaries competing for influence were Indian, Nepalese, Khotanese, and Chinese priests. Srong btsan sgam po's interest in Buddhism was perhaps due to his Chinese wife Wencheng (Tib: Wun shing Kong jo). Tibetans traditionally believe that she brought the first Buddhist images to Tibet as part of her dowry. Khri btsun, also known as Bhṛkuṭī, the ruler's Nepalese wife, allegedly also brought some Buddhist statues from Nepal as part of her dowry. To house the statues brought by his Chinese and Nepalese wives, Srong btsan sgam po built the first Buddhist temples in Lhasa.

The Tibetan empire, ruled from Central Tibet, reached its peak during the reign of Khri srong lde brtsan (c. 755–797). In 763 the Tibetans captured for a short period Chang'an (Xi'an), the capital of China during the Tang dynasty (618–907). Turkestan again came under Tibetan control between about 790 and 860. It was during the reign of Khri srong lde brtsan, an inspired and devoted advocate of Buddhism, that the popularity of Buddhism gradually eclipsed the political influence of the traditional priests. Khri srong lde brtsan's greatest contribution to the spread of Buddhism was the construction of the first principal Tibetan monastery at bSam yas around the years 762 to 766. This was accomplished with the assistance of the two Indian scholars Padmasambhava and Śāntarakṣita (725–783). The three stories of the dBu rtse rigs gsum, the principal temple of bSam yas, were constructed according to the styles of India, Nepal, and China. With a short edict carved on a pillar at bSam yas, Khri srong lde brtsan declared Buddhism as the official religion of Tibet. In 781, Khri srong lde brtsan also invited Chinese Buddhist scholars to Tibet. But the different teachings of the Indian and Chinese schools of Buddhism caused interminable disagreement between the two factions. This eventually led to the great debate held in about 792 at bSam yas between Śāntarakṣita's disciple, Kamalaśīla, who represented the Indian tradition, and the Chinese master He shang Ma he yan (Hva shang Mahāyāna). The outcome of the debate was in favour of the Indian Buddhist tradition. Khri srong lde brtsan died in 797 and was put to rest in a burial mound in the 'Phyong rgyas valley guarded by a pair of stone lions (**Fig. X**). He was succeeded by Khri gtsug lde brtsan (reigned c. 815–838), better known by the name Ral pa can, whose enthusiastic support of Buddhism eventually led to his assassination in 838. Following Ral pa can's murder, gLang dar ma (reigned c. 838–842) ascended the throne with the backing of the traditional priests' faction and rebellious clans. Buddhism was officially abolished, foreign scholars banished, and monasteries and temples sealed. Tibetan Buddhist monks were forced to renounce their vows. In 842 gLang dar ma was murdered by a Buddhist monk. With his death wide-scale anarchy erupted,

which so weakened the political and military power of Tibet that most of its conquered territories were lost in the confusion caused by the ensuing chaos. The rulers of Central Tibet lost control over the eastern and western territories, including Zhang zhung. The Central Asian Tibetan territories were taken over by the Uighurs and other Turkic tribes. Due to a lack of patronage, Buddhist activities came to a halt in Southern and Central Tibet and only managed to continue circumspectly in Western and Eastern Tibet. This changed only with the “second propagation” of Buddhism (*Phyi dar*) in Tibet from the late 10th century onward.

According to Tibetan chronicles, during the initial phase of Buddhism the Tibetan rulers not only depended on foreign teachers, but on foreign craftsmen as well for the manufacture of sculptures and paintings. As has occurred with religious expansion elsewhere, the missionaries who came first were soon followed by craftsmen. The ancient ruins of fortified castles and towers illustrate the fact that the Tibetans had the ability to build temples and monasteries. But according to literary references, Nepalese, Indian, Chinese, and perhaps Central Asian craftsmen were actively involved with the artistic decoration. During this time Tibetans learned the various arts from the foreign craftsmen. The early Tibetan metal sculptures cast during the “first propagation” of Buddhism in Tibet (*sNga dar*) (c. 600–842) are known as *Chos rgyal li ma*. They can be divided into two distinct groups, namely the statues attributed to the Yar lung dynasty of Central Tibet (**Plates 30–31**) and the statues attributed to the Western Tibetan confederation known as Zhang zhung (**Plates 8–9**). During the period of the “first propagation” of Buddhism in Tibet, the art styles prevailing in the greater regions of Kashmir and Swat, together with Nepal, were the principal sources of inspiration.



Fig. X. One of a pair of stone lions guarding the burial mound of Khri srong lde brtsan (reigned c. 756–797), one of the rulers of the Yar lung dynasty of Central Tibet. 'Phyong rgyas valley, situated about 27 km south of rTse thang. (Photo 1992).

Possible Connections between the Practice of Yama and the Tibetan Cults of Death

At the time of the introduction of Buddhism there existed in Tibet a cult of divine ancestry associated with the worship of the tombs of Tibetan kings. In order for Buddhism to succeed, it was necessary to transform some of the indigenous Tibetan cults to make them compatible with Buddhist practice. One of the newly introduced practices was the cult of Yama, which was associated with death in general and perhaps also with the divine ancestry cult of the Tibetan kings. In India, Yama is also known as “lord of the ancestors”. Among the few known Yar lung period statues, two bear witness to the Yama cult (**Plates 30–31**). These copper figures are part of the oldest known group of Tibetan metal statues. Perhaps for more than a thousand years they have been in the custody of the Jo khang temple.

30. Yama with Aspects of Kubera and Hayagrīva Central Tibet (Yar lung Dynasty); 7th/8th Century

Copper with traces of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast aureole, originally inserted into the two loops attached to the back of the image, is lost. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a red pigment. The bottom is not sealed. Height: 40.5 cm.

This very heavy copper image represents a composite image incorporating aspects of several deities. The pot-bellied male deity is clad in a pleated cloth, and seated with both legs pendant (*bhadrāsana*) on a buffalo with curved horns, resting on a cushion-like stand of oval shape. With the right hand the deity holds a staff (*daṇḍa*) surmounted by a skull (*yamadaṇḍa*). This is the principal attribute of Yama (Tib.: gShin rje), the Hindu personification of death, who is usually seated upon a buffalo, and who was integrated into the Buddhist tantric traditions. A female mongoose (*nakulī*) – the attribute of the wealth-bestowing Yakṣa (Tib.: gNod sbyin) known as Kubera (Tib.: Ku be ra) – rests on the deity’s right thigh. Kubera, of Hindu origin, was later incorporated into the Buddhist tradition as Jambhala (Tib.: Dzam bha la). The raised left hand holds a lock of hair, the meaning of which remains obscure.⁵³ On top of the unruly hair is a tiny head of a horse – the principal mark of Hayagrīva (Tib.: rTa mgrin), the “horse-necked one”. Hayagrīva, who is of Hindu origin, was also integrated into the Buddhist tradition. Another aspect of Hayagrīva is the “five seals” (*pañcamudrā*), represented here by twelve anthropomorphic five-hooded snake kings or Nāgarājas (Tib.: Klu’i rgyal po) displaying the gesture of respectful salutation (*añjali-* or *namaskāra-mudrā*). The ancient pan-Indian snake cult was incorporated into Buddhism at a very early stage. The Nāgas are considered protectors of the waters and the treasures of the earth, and are mostly depicted as cobras with several heads.

On the front side of the pedestal is a single-line Tibetan inscription in *dBu can* script attributing this statue to the Tenth Karma pa Chos dbyings rdo rje (1604–1674). There can be absolutely no doubt that the inscription on this and another statue was added in the 17th century at the earliest (**Plate 31B**). The stylistic and technical characteristics, such as the unusually heavy casting and the worn surface, point to a much earlier period. However, it was this statue that inspired the Karma pa, who must have seen it during one of his visits to the Jo khang, to create a somewhat similar object (**Plate 32A**). It remains a mystery, who and why this inscription was added to a statue, which already in the 17th century was clearly recognizable as an ancient image. In this context it should be pointed out that none of the metal statues cast by Chos dbyings rdo rje appear to have been manipulated to look old. From this follows that the intention of the Karma pa was not to create “ancient statues”, but simply to create works of art with ancient stylistic features. This explains why it is absolutely impossible that Chos dbyings rdo rje himself created this statue.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 893

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 750–753, pls. 174A–174E.

53. There might be a connection with the gesture encountered among statues of the “pensive” Avalokitesvara cast in the Swat and Kashmir areas during 7th–9th century [Heidi von Schroeder].



31A. Yama – the “Lord of Death” Central Tibet (Yar lung Dynasty); 8th/9th Century

Copper with traces of gilding (?); cast in one piece, partly hollow. The whole image is covered with extensive remains of painted cold gold, the hair with remains of a blue pigment. The oval stand is not sealed at the bottom. Height: 21.5 cm.

Depicted is a male deity seated in an unconventional attitude on a horned bull buffalo, resting on an oval-shaped pedestal. With the bound hair arranged to one side, the deity is clad in a cloth or an animal skin. The only ornaments are two earrings of different shape and a pair of bracelets. The presence of the buffalo recommends an identification of this deity as Yama, the “lord of death” (Tib.: gShin rje) – one of the few deities associated with the buffalo. In the right hand the deity holds a rosary, in the left hand a flower, perhaps a lotus (*padma*). These attributes, however, would rather correspond with an image of Avalokiteśvara than with an image of Yama. The rosary and the lotus are among the attributes of Avalokiteśvara, the “Bodhisattva of Compassion” (Tib.: sPyan ras gzigs). The early Tibetan rulers were considered emanations of Avalokiteśvara, who is also regarded as the “protector of the snow land” (Tib.: *gangs can mgon po*). With regard to the identification, since not a single *sādhana* of Avalokiteśvara seated on a buffalo is known, the identification of this image as Yama is more justified.

It might also be of interest that none of the Yar lung statues resemble iconographically any known Nepalese or Indian works of art of that period. This is an indication that these works should be regarded as Tibetan creations, although as indicated stylistically, perhaps in collaboration with foreign craftsmen.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsug lag khang Collection; inventory no. 31

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 766–767, pls. 181A–181D.

31B. Hayagrīva – the “Horse-Necked One” Central Tibet (Yar lung Dynasty); 7th/8th Century

Copper with traces of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The face is painted with cold gold; the hair shows remains of a red pigment. Height: 21.5 cm.

This two-armed copper image represents Hayagrīva (Tib.: rTa mgrin), as indicated by the barely visible small head of a horse on top of the wild hair. The pot-bellied deity is squatting on an oval, rock-shaped pedestal, possibly symbolizing Mt. Mandara or Mt. Meru. With the right hand he holds a staff (*daṇḍa*) surmounted by a skull (*yamadaṇḍa*). The left hand is raised in a gesture resembling veneration (*vandanābhinaya-mudrā*). This is a characteristic gesture of both Bhṛkuṭī and Hayagrīva and synonymous with the *buddhaśramaṇa-mudrā*. Another aspect of Hayagrīva is the tiger skin (*vyāghracarma*) tied with a snake curled around his belly with its tail hanging down to the ground. Hayagrīva wears a necklace with skull pendants and is embellished with the “five seals” (*pañcamudrā*), ornaments composed of snakes (*nāga*). The composition of this statue corresponds with the descriptions contained in the *Sādhanamālā* (*SM*).

On the back of the pedestal, along the lower edge, is the same dedicatory Tibetan inscription as in the other illustrated Yar lung statue (**Plate 30**). Again, the heavy casting and the strong fire gilding, as well as the worn appearance due to worship, rule out that this statue could date from the 17th century.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsug lag khang Collection; inventory no. 169[B]

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 756–757, pls. 176A–176D.



31A



31B

XIV. Works by the Tenth Karma pa (1604–1674)

Most viewers, when encountering for the first time sculptures or paintings by the Tenth Karma pa Chos dbyings rdo rje (1604–1674), experience them as something “totally strange and weird”. People in general are at first tempted to assign his sculptures in particular to a much earlier period, usually between the 7th and 10th centuries. At a closer look they come, more often than not, to the conclusion that the image is obviously a modern replica of an ancient work of art. However, the present standard of research enables us to securely attribute sculptures in this style to the Tenth Karma pa. These attributions are backed up by his biographies, which minutely document his career as an outstanding artist, besides being the head of the *Kar ma bKa’ brgyud* sect. We know from these records that already at a young age he was a gifted painter and sculptor. His lifelong fascination with Kashmiri metal images (*Kha che’i li ma*) is reflected in his sculptures cast in metal or carved in ivory, conch-shell, and wood, etc. Chos dbyings rdo rje was obviously trying with his sculptures to capture the old art-styles of Kashmir (**Plates 3–7**). But evidently his works were also influenced by statues from the Swat region (**Plate 2**) and Tibetan images dating back to the Yar lung dynasty (**Plates 30–31**). It can safely be assumed that during his recurring visits to the Jo khang in Lhasa, which are documented in his biographies, he must have come across these statues. His paintings, on the other hand, were primarily influenced by Chinese works that he encountered first in Tibet and later during his stay in Lijiang. There he took shelter when he was pursued by the Qośot Mongolian army under Gūshri Khan (1582–1655), who assisted Blo bzang rgya mtsho, the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682), in his quest for *dGe lugs pa* supremacy in Tibet. But his paintings also contain stylistic element, inspired by sculptures from Kashmir and Swat.

32A. Avalokiteśvara Seated on a Cow

Brass; cast in four parts, partly hollow. The faces are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 28.8 cm.

This very unusual composition of Avalokiteśvara (Tib.: sPyan ras gzigs) seated on a cow is the outcome of a vision by Chos dbyings rdo rje and mentioned in one of his biographies. This might have been after one of his visits to the Jo khang (cf. **Plates 30, 31A**). Avalokiteśvara holds a flower in the right hand and a water-jar (*kuṇḍikā*) in the left. In his left hand he holds additionally the stalk of a lotus flower that blossoms above the shoulder. The feet rest on a double lotus pedestal with a constricted waist, inspired by Swat statues (**Plate 2**). A pair of donors attends both of the illustrated Avalokiteśvara statues. But it is rather unusual to depict lay donors on lotus pedestals, an honour usually reserved for deities and monks.

Po ta la Collection: Bla ma lha khang; inventory no. 545

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 814–815, pls. 192A–192E.

32B. Standing Form of Avalokiteśvara

Brass; cast in four parts, partly hollow. The faces are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: (total) 31 cm; (fig.) 27.7 cm.

The Bodhisattva, presumably intended to represent a form of Avalokiteśvara (Tib.: sPyan ras gzigs), stands in an upright attitude on a circular single lotus base, which is a later replacement. The right hand is lowered in the gesture of argumentation (*vitarka-mudrā*), the raised left hand holds a water-jar (*kuṇḍikā*).

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsug lag khang Collection; inventory no. 288

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 812–813, pls. 191A–191D.



32A



32B

Ivory Carvings by Chos dbyings rdo rje (1604–1674) – Tibet’s Greatest Artist

As mentioned earlier, most viewers in general are at first tempted to assign the sculptures by Chos dbyings rdo rje to a much earlier period than the 17th century. This is also the case with these two ivories, where the Tenth Karma pa was likely inspired by Kashmir ivories dating from the 7th or 8th centuries.⁵⁴ However, on stylistic grounds, the two illustrated ivories can be clearly attributed to the Tenth Karma pa Chos dbyings rdo rje (1604–1674). Both ivories depict events in the life of Buddha Śākyamuni, most prominently the “eight great miraculous events” (*aṣṭamahāprātihārya*): the birth at Lumbinī; Śākyamuni’s victory over Māra at Bodhgayā; Śākyamuni’s first sermon at Sārnāth; the miracles at Śrāvastī; Śākyamuni’s descent from the Trāyastriṃśa heaven at Sāṅkāśya; Śākyamuni’s taming of the wild elephant at Rājagṛha; the gift of honey at Vaiśālī; Śākyamuni’s passing away at Kuśīnagara.⁵⁵ These ivories are good examples to illustrate Chos dbyings rdo rje’s efforts to manufacture art objects that bear stylistic resemblance with ancient Kashmiri works of art.

In Tibetan art it is extremely difficult to attribute individual sculptures and paintings to any particular artist. One of the reasons for this shortcoming is the fact that only very few art objects are inscribed with the artist’s name. Within the context of Tibetan Buddhist culture, the role of the artist is reduced mostly to the position of an anonymous craftsman. Only rarely is the name of a particular artist documented by more than one work of art. Due to this situation it is difficult to come to conclusions about the oeuvre of any artist. Within this mass of anonymous Tibetan artists, Chos dbyings rdo rje stands out for several reasons. His life as an artist and as the Tenth Karma pa is minutely documented in his biographies. At least two of the known paintings are clearly attributed to him by inscriptions. And his enigmatic style is so unique that an attribution appears to be fairly easy. This applies both to his sculptures and his paintings. However, caution is recommended because his works were and still are enthusiastically copied.

33A. The “Major Events in the Life of Buddha Śākyamuni” Tibet; Carved by Chos dbyings rdo rje (1604–1674)

Ivory, carved in one piece, with remains of pigments. Height: (total) 29 cm; (ivory) 24 cm.

Po ta la Collection: Sa gsum lha khang; inventory no. 2168

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 2006)

33B. The “Major Events in the Life of Buddha Śākyamuni” Tibet; Carved by Chos dbyings rdo rje (1604–1674)

Ivory, carved in one piece, with pigments. Height: 24 cm.

Tibet Museum, Lhasa: Formerly Nor bu gling ka Collection

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: Chen Xiejun, Wang Qingzheng (chief editors). 2001. *Treasures from Snow Mountains: Gems of Tibetan Cultural Relics*, [catalogue of the exhibition held at the Shanghai Museum]. (Xueyu Cangzhen; Xizang Wenwu Jinghua); p. 108, pl. 36.

References to sculptures by Chos dbyings rdo rje, the Tenth Karma pa cf. U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 744–745, 747, 752 ff., 762, 764, 796–819; figs. XII–18–25; pls. 16D, 191–194.

54. Czuma, Stanislaw J. 1989. “Ivory Sculpture [from Kashmir]”, *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir*, edited by P. Pal, pp. 57–76, 25 illus.

55. A more detailed description will be included in the forthcoming publication about the art of the Tenth Karma pa by Ulrich von Schroeder.



33A



33B

XV. Tibetan Monastic Period (after 980): “Nepalese Schools in Tibet”

Plates 34–37

It is a well-documented historical fact that Nepalese artisans played an important role in the “first propagation” of Buddhism in Tibet (*sNga dar*) during the imperial period (c. 600–842). The disintegration of the Tibetan empire in the middle of the 9th century led to a general breakdown of organized Buddhist activities, especially in Southern and Central Tibet (gTsang/dBus). This was not only due to the scarcity of patronage, but also to the unresolved struggle between the traditional priests and the Buddhist clergy. Thus, between the reign of gLang dar ma (reigned c. 838–842) – the last ruler of the Yar lung dynasty of Central Tibet – and the “second propagation” of Buddhism (*Phyi dar*) from the 2nd half of the 10th century onward, there was in Tibet little demand for sculptors and painters of Buddhist deities. In such a situation all existing artistic expertise inevitably got lost within one generation. The situation only changed drastically from the 11th century onward when numerous monasteries were built throughout Tibet. In addition to Tibetan craftsmen, the number of which was obviously not sufficient, Newārs from the Kathmandu valley, as well as artists from North-Eastern India and Kashmir, were widely employed in Tibet. However, following the wholesale destruction of the Buddhist infrastructure in North-Eastern India at the end of the 12th century by the expanding Muslims, the active role of the North-Eastern Indian artists rapidly declined. Therefore, from the time of the Early Malla dynasty (c. 1200–1482) onward, Newārs were the principal foreign craftsmen active in Tibet. During the period of the first propagation of Buddhism the activities of Newār craftsmen had taken place mainly in Central and Southern Tibet (dBus/gTsang). The Tibetan Buddhist activities unfolding during the second propagation led in due time to the employment of Newār craftsmen also in Western Tibet (mNga’ ris), Eastern Tibet (Khams), North-Eastern Tibet (Amdo), China, and places as far away as Mongolia.

The contacts between Nepal and Tibet were not restricted to craftsmen. Newār scholars also played an important role in the transmission of Buddhist teachings to Tibet. During the “second propagation” of Buddhism in Tibet, the Newār monasteries in the Kathmandu valley were visited by many Tibetan monk scholars. The decline of Buddhism in North-Eastern India increased the prestige of the Kathmandu valley as a centre of Buddhist studies, where similar traditions were practiced as had once flourished in India.

From the earliest times, Nepalese from the Kathmandu valley were active as traders and craftsmen in Tibet. Often combining their specialized manual skills with trade activities, they were especially famous as metalworkers. In addition to their activities as goldsmiths and silversmiths, they were also sought after for the casting of sculptures, while others were active as wood and ivory carvers, painters, etc. Some worked in Tibet only for a certain period of time, whereas others settled there. The most important Nepalese communities were established in Lhasa in Central Tibet, while other groups were located at gZhis khar tse and in the lHa rtse region in Southern Tibet. However, there were many other smaller pockets of Newārs throughout Tibet. In addition to the pure Newārs known as Bal po, there were many *Kha cha ra* descendants of mixed marriages between Newārs and Tibetan wives, the *Kha cha ra*, however, being more engaged as traders than as craftsmen.

The gilt copper statues in Tibetan monasteries, which resemble more or less distinctively the Nepalese styles, have been divided into two particular groups: works cast in Nepal and exported to Tibet, and those cast by Newārs in Tibet. The Nepalese influence on the art of Tibet is not only documented by numerous surviving sculptures and paintings, but also confirmed by literary references about the activities of Newār artists patronized by Tibetans. Literary references can be found in miscellaneous sources, including written guides or eulogies of monasteries, composed for visitors and pilgrims (*dKar chag*, *gNas yig*, *Lam yig*, *mTshan byang*, etc.), as well as in the biographies and autobiographies (*rNam thar*) of eminent teachers.

The relationship between Nepal and Tibet was clouded after the Gurkhas, led by Pṛthivīnārāyaṇa, conquered the Kathmandu valley in 1768/1769. There was armed conflict between Nepal and Tibet from 1788 to 1793, during which the Gurkha army succeeded in capturing gZhis kha rtse and taking control of bKra shis lhun po monastery, which except for nine people had been completely deserted. The martial Hindu Gurkhas had few if any scruples about desecrating Tibetan Buddhist monasteries. According to the Tibetans, they even scratched off the gilt finish of images. With the help of the rulers of the Manchu Qing dynasty (1644–1911), the Tibetans finally repulsed the Nepalese, and the Gurkhas agreed to a peace treaty that stipulated the return of the plundered loot from bKra shis lhun po monastery. Probably the Tibetans, like any other inhabitants of war-torn countries, succeeded in hiding many of the portable objects, and especially those made of precious metals such as gold and silver. It should be noted that damage wreaked on temples and monasteries in Tibet was not only due to foreign invasions, but also due to the internal quarrels and feuds between factions of the different sects. Nevertheless, the wars did not seem to have any negative effect on the privileges enjoyed by Newār traders in Tibet, whereas Tibetans were not allowed to enter Nepal for any purposes of trade.



Fig. XI. Ancient copper and brass sculptures of North-Western Indian, Nepalese, and Tibetan styles and workmanship, displayed in the Li ma lha khang of the Po ta la palace in Lhasa. The brownish copper statues were cast by Newār craftsmen. (Photo: 1991).

The Different Aspirations of Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism

Theravāda (Pāli) or Sthaviravāda (Skt.), meaning the “school of the elders”, is the orthodox form of Buddhism with texts written in the Pāli language. This form of Buddhism, also known as Southern Buddhism, is still predominant in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. The followers stress the ideal of *arhattva* (“Arhatship”). An Arhat (Skt.) or Lohan (Chinese) is a “fully enlightened” saint who has attained *nirvāṇa* in this human existence. Nirvāṇa, or “extinction of suffering”, is the liberation from the cycle of rebirths by extinguishing all desire. This is the goal of every follower of the orthodox forms of Buddhism. Their worship focuses on images of the “Buddhas of the past”, which includes Śākyamuni (**Plate 34A**).

Mahāyāna Buddhism, or “great vehicle”, is the general term for the later forms of Buddhism with texts written in Sanskrit and Prākṛit. This tradition called Northern Buddhism is practiced predominantly in the Himalayas, Tibet, China, Mongolia, Korea, and Japan. The followers stress the ideal of the Bodhisattva, a “being directed toward complete enlightenment” (**Plate 34B**). For a Bodhisattva, the liberation of all beings is more important than his personal attainment of *nirvāṇa*. The Mahāyāna doctrine considers the Bodhisattva status a higher goal than the *arahatta* of the Theravādins. Mahāyāna Buddhists in general look down on the orthodox form of Buddhism by using the derogative term Hīnayāna, or “little vehicle”.

34A. Standing Buddha Śākyamuni Nepalese Schools in Tibet; c. 11th Century

Copper with traces of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast nimbus once attached to the tenon at the back is lost. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 38.2 cm.

Buddha Śākyamuni (Tib.: Śākya thub pa) stands in a slightly bent attitude on a circular double lotus pedestal. The right hand is raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*); the left hand holds the hem of the upper monastic robe. The robe is rendered without folds in a transparent manner and covers the left shoulder only. Buddha statues exist in all schools of the Mahāyāna and Theravāda traditions.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1391

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1993)

Published: von Schroeder, U. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 930–931, pls. 216C–216E.

34B. Standing Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī Nepalese Schools in Tibet; c. 11th Century

Copper with traces of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast nimbus once attached to the tenon at the back is lost. The face and crown are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 24.2 cm.

The Bodhisattva stands in a slightly bent attitude on a circular double lotus pedestal. The right hand is extended in the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*), the left hand holds a manuscript (*pustaka*), which identifies him as a form of Mañjuśrī (Tib.: ’Jam dpal). He is adorned with bejewelled ornaments. The Mahāyāna pantheon includes many forms of Bodhisattvas such as Mañjuśrī. This is in contrast to the Theravāda tradition where the only acknowledged Bodhisattva is Maitreya – the future Buddha.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1228

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: von Schroeder, U. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, p. 930, pls. 216A–216B.



34A



34B

The Importance of the Vairocana Cult in Early Tibet

The cult of Vairocana (Tib: rNam par snang mdzad) originated in India around the 6th or 7th century, and spread from there to Nepal and Tibet, and also to China and Japan. It probably reached Tibet during the reign of Khri srong lde brtsan (reigned c. 755–797). As documented through literary references, many of the early temples – of which almost none have survived – contained images of Vairocana. Other examples exist among rock-carvings, such as the one at lDan ma brag in Eastern Tibet, carved in 804 or 816. Particularly during the early periods of Tibetan Buddhism, Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi (Tib.: rNam par snang mdzad mngon par byang chub) displaying the gesture of meditation (*samādhi* or *dhyāna-mudrā*) was popular (Plate 36B). Later forms of Vairocana depict him as chief among the group of the five Tathāgatas, where he appears with the “gesture of highest enlightenment” (*bodhyagrī-mudrā*) (Plates 35A–35B).⁵⁶

35A. Vairocana – One of the Five Tathāgatas Nepalese Schools in Tibet; c. 11th Century

Copper with traces of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast pedestal is lost. The image is decorated with engraved ornaments. The crown was once inset with one precious stone. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the image is not sealed. Height: 28.7 cm.

Vairocana (Tib: rNam par snang mdzad) is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*). He displays the “gesture of highest enlightenment” (*bodhyagrī-mudrā*), holding in the right hand the outstretched index finger of the left hand. He is clad in a cloth tied around the hips, carries a shawl over the left shoulder and tied across the chest. He wears bejewelled ornaments including effigies of the five Tathāgatas in the crown and the tall knot of hair (*pañcatathāgatamakuṭa*): Vairocana (Tib: rNam par snang mdzad), Ratnasambhava (Tib: Rin chen ’byung ldan), Akṣobhya (Tib: Mi bskyod pa), Amoghasiddhi (Tib: Don yod grub pa), and Amitābha (Tib: ’Od dpag med). Among this group of five Tathāgatas only Vairocana is rendered with a crown.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 589

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 923, 932, pl. 217A.

35B. Vairocana – One of the Five Tathāgatas Pāla Schools in Tibet; c. 12th Century

Gilt copper; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast pedestal and the nimbus originally attached to the tenon at the back are lost. The eyes are inlaid with silver. The garment is decorated with engraved patterns. Height: 32 cm.

Vairocana (Tib.: rNam par snang mdzad) is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*). He displays the “gesture of highest enlightenment” (*bodhyagrī-mudrā*). He wears the bejewelled ornaments of the Tathāgatas and the beaded sacred thread (*ratnopavīta*). Note the hollowed-out pupils. This image, which bears similarities with Pāla and Nepalese works, was probably cast in Tibet by an Indian or Nepalese artist.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 860

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 942–943, pl. 222C.

56. Hugh E. Richardson. 1990. “The Cult of Vairocana in Early Tibet”, *Indo-Tibetan Studies*, edited by T. Skorupski, pp. 271–274.



35B



35A

36A. Unidentified Dharmarāja – “King of the Buddhist Doctrine” Nepalese Schools in Tibet; c. 11th Century

Copper with traces of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast lotus- or cushion-shaped pedestal and the nimbus originally attached to the two tenons at the back are lost. The crown is inset with precious stones. The robe is decorated with engraved patterns. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the image is sealed with a piece of wood. Height: 52.7 cm.

This image represents an unidentified Tibetan Dharmarāja or “king of the doctrine” (Tib.: *Chos rgyal*). He is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*) and displays the gesture of meditation (*dhyāna-mudrā*). He wears boots and is clad in a robe with a broad collar and sleeves decorated with brocade intricately ornamented with roundels decorated in the centre with bird motifs. This kind of design is of Sasanian origin and was popular all over Central Asia. He wears a prominent three-pointed crown with the hair falling in two long strands over the shoulders to the chest, a pair of earrings, two necklaces, and a belt tied around the hips. The statue resembles some of the 11th century Tibetan clay Buddha statues at g.Ye dmar, rTsis gNas gсар, Zhwa lu, and Zho nang. There are also similarities with some of the crowned donors, perhaps rendered as Dharmarāja or Cakravartin, painted on the walls of Grwa thang monastery, completed in 1093.⁵⁷ The workmanship and design of the crown suggests that a Newār artist cast this image.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1578 (?)

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 940–941, pls. 221D–221E.

36B. Bodhisattva Maitreya or Tathāgata Vairocana (?) Nepalese Schools in Tibet; c. 11th Century

Copper with traces of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast lotus pedestal and the nimbus originally attached to the tenon at the back are lost. The garment is decorated with engraved patterns. The face and the emblem attached to the hair are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 31.5 cm.

The Bodhisattva is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*) and displays the gesture of meditation (*dhyāna-mudrā*). He is clad in a garment tied around the hips and secured by a belt, and carries a shawl over the left shoulder and tied across the chest. The identification of this image as Maitreya (Tib.: Byams pa) is based on the *ratnayūpa* or Stūpa (?) attached to the knot of hair (*jaṭāmakuṭa*). Maitreya is usually not depicted in the meditation attitude (*samādhi*). The image, bare of any bejewelled ornaments with the exception of the emblem on the head, represents the “body of emanation” (*nirmāṇakāya*) aspect. The *ratnayūpa* as a symbol of keeping awake the memory of the Doctrine (*dharma*) is described in the *Bodhisattva-Avadānakalpalatā* and occurs on the forehead of several Maitreya images. Particularly during the early periods of Tibetan Buddhism, Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi (Tib.: rNam par snang mdzad mngon par byang chub) displaying the gesture of meditation (*samādhi* or *dhyāna-mudrā*) was popular.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1062

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 940–941, pls. 221B–221C.

⁵⁷ For the early clay sculptures cf. U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: pp. 832–869, figs. XIII–3 to XIII–33; pls. 197–200.



36B



36A

Groups of Bodhisattvas: “Aspirants for Enlightenment and Saviours of Beings”

Within the traditions of Mahāyāna Buddhism that developed in India, different groups of Bodhisattvas are known. Most prominent are three groups of six Bodhisattvas (*SM* 83, 280; *NSP* 26), two groups of eight Bodhisattvas (*SM* 18; *NSP* 2; *PKS*), and three groups of sixteen Bodhisattvas (*NSP* 20–22).⁵⁸ The groups are composed of Bodhisattvas with partly different names and colours attached to them. Unless a group of Bodhisattvas clearly forms part of a particular Maṇḍala, such as those described in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* (*NSP*), they cannot be identified. In the case of individual Bodhisattvas the identification is equally difficult.

37A & 37B. Vajrapāṇi and Lokeśvara – Two Out of a Group of Eight Nepalese Schools in Tibet; c. 12th Century

Gilt copper; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast lotus pedestals and aureoles are lost. The faces are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 105 cm; 103 cm.

Inside the Byams pa lha khang on the upper floor of the Tshogs chen, the “great assembly hall” of Se ra monastery, is a magnificent group of eight Bodhisattva images, seven of them cast in gilt copper by Newār craftsmen during *circa* the 12th century, and two of them are illustrated here. A Pāla statue of about the same age substitutes the missing eighth statue. The Tshogs chen was built in 1710 by lHa bzang Khan (reigned 1703–1717), ruler of the Qośot Mongols, in atonement of his killing of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705), a close protégé of the Fifth Dalai Lama Blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682), who effectively ran affairs in the decades following the Fifth’s death.

The Bodhisattva on the left side, identified here as Vajrapāṇi (?) (Tib.: Phyag na rdo rje), stands in a slightly bent attitude. With the raised right hand he displays the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*). The left hand displays the “ring hand gesture” (*kaṭaka-mudrā*) and once held the stalk of a separately cast flower, either a lotus (*padma*) or a water lily (*utpala*), attached to the support at the upper arm and which blossomed beside the left shoulder. The Bodhisattva is clad in a cloth tied by a belt around the hips and wears a sash around the thighs, the ends hanging down the side. He has bejewelled ornaments, namely a three-leaved rock-like crown ornamented in the front with a lion’s face (*kīrtimukha*), two earrings of different design, a necklace with attached pendants, the beaded sacred thread (*ratnopavīta*), bracelets on the upper arms and wrists, and anklets. The identification as Vajrapāṇi is based on the assumption that the lost flower supported a diamond sceptre (*vajra*).

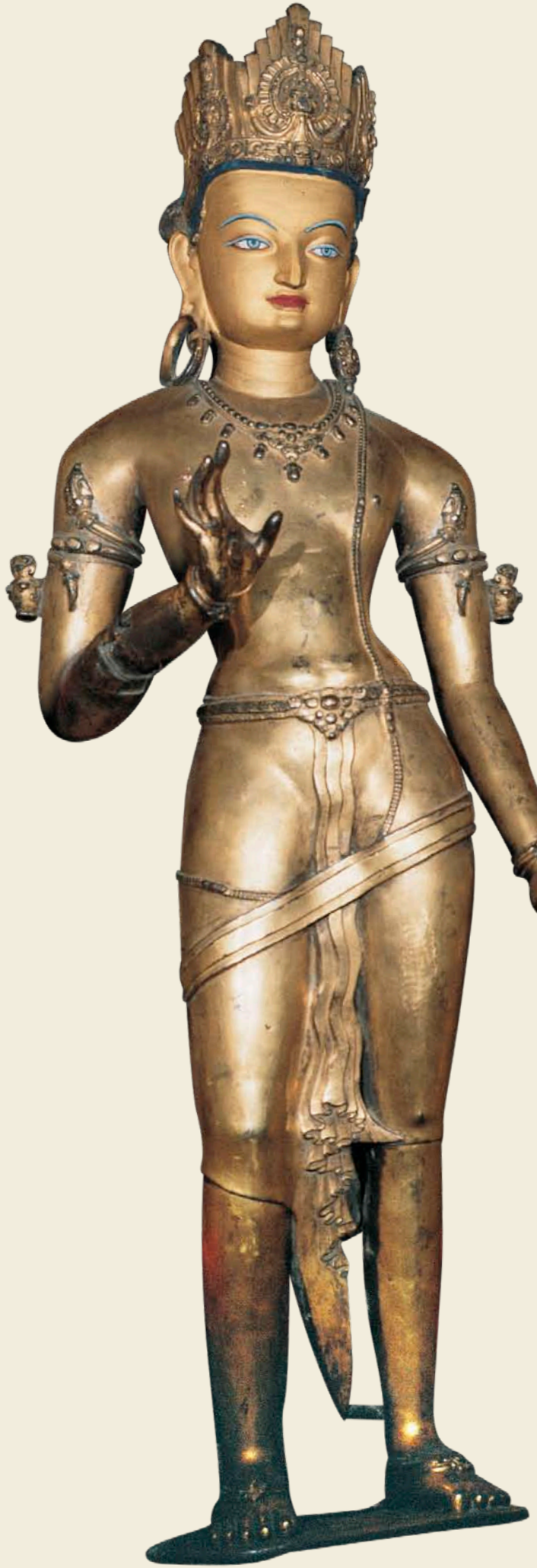
The Bodhisattva on the right side is identified here within the group of eight Bodhisattvas as Lokeśvara (Tib.: sPyan ras gzigs), and not as Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi (Tib.: Phyag na padmo), which is applied in the case of individual images. He stands in a slightly bent attitude, the right hand displaying the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*) and the left once held the stalk of a separately cast lotus flower (*padma*) which blossomed beside the left shoulder. Lokeśvara is clad in a cloth tied by a belt around the hips and wears a sash around the thighs. His bejewelled ornaments are a three-leaved crown ornamented with an effigy of Amitābha, a pair of earrings, a necklace with attached pendants, the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*), bracelets on the upper arms and wrists, and anklets. The lotus flower (*padma*), the characteristic attribute of Lokeśvara, was separately cast and is lost. The effigy of Amitābha in the crown nevertheless identifies this Bodhisattva clearly as Lokeśvara.

Se ra monastery: Byams pa lha khang on the upper floor of the “Great Assembly Hall”

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1993)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 956–957, pls. 228A–228D.

⁵⁸ M.-T. de Mallmann. 1975. *Introduction à l’iconographie du tântrisme bouddhique*, pp. 124–27: Groups of six, eight, and sixteen Bodhisattvas.



37A



37B

XVI. Tibetan Monastic Period (after 980): “Tibetan Gilt Copper Sculptures”

Plates 38–42

In the previous chapters it has been outlined how the Tibetans depended upon foreign scholars and artisans during the “first propagation” of Buddhism in Tibet (*sNga dar*) in the Tibetan imperial period (c. 600–842). In particular there has been much speculation about the extent to which Tibetan artisans participated in the decoration of the first temples. However, as long as no sculptures dating from the Tibetan imperial period were known that could be identified as Tibetan works, the discussion remained on a very hypothetical level. This situation has now significantly changed with the discovery of metal sculptures dating from the 7th–9th centuries that were manufactured in Tibet (**Plates 8–9, 30–31**).⁵⁹ These works clearly document that during the first propagation of Buddhism, the Tibetans were actively participating as sculptors and presumably also as painters, in addition to the foreign artists working there as well. However, as a result of the suppression of Buddhism during the reign of gLang dar ma (reigned c. 838–842), followed by the disintegration of the Tibetan empire, and a general lack of sponsorship, in Central Tibet local artistic activities connected with Buddhism came more or less to a standstill. Only in Western and Eastern Tibet did Buddhism managed to continue circumspectly, though its activities were also curtailed by a lack of sponsorship. This situation lasted for about one hundred and fifty years until the revival of Buddhism at the end of the 10th century.

The restoration and revival of Buddhism in Tibet from the late 10th century onward resulted in the founding of numerous monasteries, which caused a sudden demand for skilled craftsmen, especially sculptors and painters. The lack of accomplished indigenous artists forced the Tibetans once more to rely intensively on foreign assistance as they had during the first propagation of Buddhism. In Western Tibet, the majority of craftsmen and artisans were recruited from Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh, and later also from Nepal. In Southern, Central, and perhaps also Eastern Tibet, artists from North-Eastern India and Nepal were primarily responsible for the furnishing of the monasteries with sculptures and paintings. It should be remembered that at the beginning of the 11th century almost no local expertise in the making of Buddhist sculptures and paintings existed in Tibet. The Tibetan artistic expertise acquired between the 7th and the 9th century had long since disappeared due to a lack of sponsorship during the prolonged interval before the Buddhist renaissance gained momentum in the 11th century. However, the scale of the revival of Buddhism in Tibet was such that there were not enough foreign artisans at hand to undertake this enormous task, encouraging the active participation of Tibetan craftsmen. It was only natural for the Tibetan apprentice craftsmen to follow artistic patterns that were applied by the foreign artists. Unlike Western Tibet, the art of which was inspired by the traditions prevalent in Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir, Southern, Central, and Eastern Tibet were influenced by the artistic traditions of North-Eastern India and Nepal.

The most obvious distinction among Tibetan metal statues is the existence of “gilt copper sculptures” and “brass sculptures”, reflecting the different traditions employed by the foreign artisans who worked in

59. U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 721–791, pls. 174–189.

Tibet. It is therefore appropriate to divide the Tibetan metal images accordingly, one following the Newār custom of manufacturing statues in gilt copper (**Plates 38–42**), the other influenced by the North-Eastern Indian and western Himalayan tradition of casting the sculptures in brass (**Plates 47–52**). Nepalese stylistic influence in Tibet is most manifest among the gilt statues, and only to a lesser degree among the un gilt brass sculptures which stylistically are more indebted to the North-Eastern Indian and Kashmiri tradition, which also worked in brass. As has already been mentioned in the preceding chapters dealing with the Nepalese traditions in the Kathmandu valley (Chapters X–XII) and the “Nepalese schools in Tibet” (Chapter XV), the Newārs almost exclusively cast their sculptures in unalloyed copper that they subsequently fire gilded. Whereas the participation of Newār artisans continued uninterrupted until the 20th century, Indian artists disappeared from the region some time during the 13th century as a result of the devastation of the monastic Buddhist culture of North-Eastern India at the end of the 12th century at the hands of the iconoclastic Muslims.

Well-trained artists were always able to create works of art in different styles according to the particular requirement of the project. This makes it sometimes difficult to distinguish between works done by Tibetan craftsmen and those of Nepalese Newār descent, known in Tibet as *Bal po*, or the descendants of mixed marriages between Newārs and Tibetan wives, known as *Kha cha ra*. There can be no doubt that some of the images illustrated in this chapter were actually cast by Newār craftsmen, and not by Tibetans. However, it is the style and not the ethnic background of the artist that ultimately is the crucial factor in determining whether an image is to be identified as Nepalese, as belonging to the “Nepalese schools in Tibet”, or as Tibetan. The criteria for an image to be classified as belonging to the “Tibetan tradition of gilt copper sculptures” (**Plates 38–42**) – rather than to be included among the work of the “Nepalese schools in Tibet” (**Plates 34–37**) – is the extent to which the iconography and style reflect the requirements and sentiments of the Tibetans. It should always be remembered that the “Tibetan schools working in gilt copper” are entirely the result of Tibetan patronage and would otherwise not exist. Because this publication is organized according to stylistic criteria, it was inevitable that this chapter includes works by Tibetans as well as Nepalese artists working in Tibetan styles. Albeit fewer in number, it is also possible that among the statues in the chapter illustrating the “Nepalese schools in Tibet” are works done by Tibetan artists copying Nepalese styles (Chapter XV). Nevertheless, the dominant position of the Newār craftsmen in Tibet can evidently never be overestimated, at least with regard to Lhasa during the 19th century. The French Lazarist priest, Father Huc, recorded that the Newārs were the only metal workers active in Lhasa during his visit in the year 1845.⁶⁰ However, we know from literary references that the Tibetans had earlier been active as craftsmen.

The earliest statues illustrated in this chapter are two standing images of Buddha Śākyamuni and Maitreya (**Plates 38A–38B**). As is usually the case with art works made during the formative stage of a new tradition, they are not modelled in any defined style. Such statues rather reflect the struggle of the craftsmen to create a beautiful deity. It can be taken for granted that the Tibetan artists spent many hours studying and discussing the infinite stylistic variations occurring among the statues. This was part of the learning process. Among the countless statues in the monasteries, it was especially the metal sculptures (*li ma*) of Indian, Nepalese, and Kashmir origin that were held in high esteem by the Tibetans. Nowadays it is still the practice in Tibetan monasteries to proudly show visitors their collections.

60. E. F. Lo Bue, 1985. “The Newar Artists of the Nepal Valley - Part II”, *Oriental Art, New Series*, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, pp. 411–412.

Emanational “Ascetic Bodhisattva” versus Transcendental “Bejewelled Bodhisattva”

Having viewed hundreds of images of Maitreya, Avalokiteśvara, and other Bodhisattvas, a distinction between “ascetic” and “bejewelled forms” seems indispensable. The “ascetic form” is the artist’s vision of the Bodhisattva as he is engaged on earth for the welfare of all beings (**Plates 10B, 27, 38B**). This form should be clearly distinguished from the “bejewelled form”, where the artist decorates the Bodhisattva richly with jewels and envisions him residing in a transcendental abode (**Plates 7A, 11A, 12, 13, 22, 37, 39, etc.**). As in the earlier publication *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, the Bodhisattvas are here distinguished between an “ascetic form” of the emanational *nirmāṇakāya* aspect, versus the “bejewelled form” of the transcendental *sambhogakāya* aspect.

38A. Buddha Śākyamuni – the Historical Buddha Tibetan Gilt Copper Traditions; 11th Century

Copper alloy, gilding only on the front; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast pedestal is lost. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The back is only crudely worked. Height: 57 cm.

Buddha Śākyamuni (Tib: Śākya thub pa) stands upright on a circular stand. He extends the right hand downwards in the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*); the left hand holds the hem of the monastic robe. The upper robe with its transparent character is rendered almost completely without folds and covers both shoulders, as is mostly the case with standing Buddha statues.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 122[B]
Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1012–1013, pls. 246C–246D.

38B. Ascetic Bodhisattva Maitreya – the Future Buddha Tibetan Gilt Copper Traditions; 11th Century

Gilt copper; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast pedestal is lost. The garment is decorated with engraved linear and floral patterns. The face and the Stūpa on the head are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 48.5 cm.

Maitreya (Tib.: Byams pa), the future Buddha, is depicted here as an ascetic Bodhisattva in the *nirmāṇakāya* aspect. He stands in a slightly bent attitude and was originally fixed with tenons protruding from the feet to a separately cast lotus pedestal. The right hand is lifted in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*), the left extended in the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*). Maitreya is clad in a cloth tied by a belt around the hips, with folds draped between the legs, and with a sash around the thighs. He wears only a few ornaments restricted to the Stūpa attached to the front of the tall knot of hair (*jaṭāmakuṭa*), two earrings of different design, a beaded necklace, and two simple bracelets. Note the two long strands of hair falling down the back. This statue is identified as Maitreya by the Stūpa. It should be noted that this image carries neither the skin of an antelope (*ajina*) over the left shoulder nor the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*). There is a general tendency to date the ascetic types of images earlier than contemporary bejewelled ones. The fact that this image was originally inset with gemstones rules out a manufacturing date prior to the 11th or 12th century.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 119
Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, p. 1016, pls. 248A–248C.



38A



38B

Variations of Styles illustrated by Statues of Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi

These four statues all represent Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi (Tib.: Phyag na padmo) and were cast in Tibet within a span of about two hundred years. Although cast by different artists at different times, they had to follow the same basic iconographic and iconometric requirements. Nevertheless, each of the four images is distinctly different and as a group they illustrate the variations of styles. The four Bodhisattva statues were originally all attached to now-lost, separately cast lotus pedestals. The right hands of all four statues display the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*); the left hands originally all held the stalk of a lotus (*padma*) that flowered above the left shoulder, and of which in two cases only the support at the upper arms remain. They are clad in a cloth tied by a belt around the hips with folds draped between the legs. Three wear, in addition, a sash around the thighs. All wear bejewelled ornaments, namely three-leaved crowns, pairs of earrings, necklaces with attached pendants, sacred beaded threads (*ratnopavīta*), and bracelets on the upper arms and wrists. The fact that the statues are left ungilt at the back is often encountered among early Tibetan gilt statues. In correspondence with modern terminology, all Bodhisattva images with a lotus (*padma*) attribute, with or without an effigy of Amitābha in the crown or the hair, are identified in this publication as Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi (Tib.: Phyag na padmo). In traditional Indian Sanskrit literature, this deity is variously named Lokeśvara (*SM* 280; *NSP* 26), Lokeśa (*SM* 83), Avalokiteśvara (*NSP* 2), or Lokanātha (*SM* 8, 18, 19, 41).

Statues of Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi in the Jo khang

39A. Tibetan Gilt Copper Traditions; 11th Century

Copper alloy with gilding only on the front; cast in one piece, partly hollow. Inset with turquoise, coral, and rock crystal. The back is only crudely worked. Height: 50 cm.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 598

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1022–1023, pls. 251C–251D.

39B. Tibetan Gilt Copper Traditions; 13th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The necklace was once inset with a precious stone. Height: 57 cm. Note the small effigy of Amitābha in the crown.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 414

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, p. 1102, pls. 286A–286C.

39C. Tibetan Gilt Copper Traditions; 11th Century

Copper alloy with gilding only on the front; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The back of the image is only crudely worked. Height: 32.2 cm.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 143

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1022–1023, pls. 251E–251F.

39D. Tibetan Gilt Copper Traditions; 11th/12th Century

Copper alloy with gilding only on the front; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The ornaments are inset with pieces of turquoise and coral. Height: 68.5 cm.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 940

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, p. 1022, pls. 251A–251B.



39A



39B



39C



39D

Burmese Influence Upon Tibetan Art

Little information has been published about the cultural relationship between Tibet and Burma, two neighbouring Buddhist countries. The discovery in Burma of a number of metal statues that resemble not only Tibetan but also Chinese works of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) documents the existence of a cultural relationship between Tibet and Burma.⁶¹ Burmese influence is illustrated by one of the Buddha statues in the Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang, as indicated by the voluminous shape of the head and the short neck (**Plate 40B**). Similar stylistic inspiration might have radiated also from the principal Buddha statue erected in brick by the Burmese inside the sanctum of the Mahābodhi Stūpa at Bodhgayā (N.-E. India) between 1295 and 1298.⁶² The original stone Buddha dating from the 10th century had been removed prior to the Muslim invasion of northern India at the end of the 12th century, and was only reinstalled in the late 19th century. Between the 14th and 19th centuries a Burmese style clay statue had thus occupied the sanctum of the most important Buddhist temple of the whole world. This explains why numerous Tibetan and Nepalese paintings depicting Śākyamuni installed in the Mahābodhi Stūpa depict an image resembling Burmese Buddhas with short necks. The same phenomena also affected many Nepalese and Tibetan sculptures depicting the Buddha statues fashioned after the Mahābodhi image. However, not all similarities between Tibetan and Burmese art were necessarily the result of a relationship between the two countries. In the case of early paintings, it was rather due to the common influence exerted by the traditions flourishing in North-Eastern India during the Pāla period (8th to 12th centuries).

40A. Buddha Śākyamuni Commemorating the Defeat of Māra Tibetan Gilt Copper Traditions; 1350–1400

Gilt copper; cast in four parts, partly hollow. The separately cast lotus pedestal is lost.
The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 60.5 cm.

This image has been chosen as an example of a classical Tibetan Buddha Śākyamuni (Tib: Śākya thub pa).

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 94
Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1997)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1028–1029, pls. 254D–254E.

40B. Buddha Śākyamuni Commemorating the Defeat of Māra Tibetan Gilt Copper Tradition with Burmese Influence; 1350–1400

Gilt copper; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the image is sealed. Height: 51 cm.

The voluminous shape of the head and short neck of this Buddha image reflect a distinct Burmese influence.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 89[B]
Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1028–1029, pl. 254C.

61. San Tha Aung. 1979. *The Buddhist Art of Ancient Arakan*.

62. Cf. U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. One: *India & Nepal*, pp. 321–328.



40B



40A

The Concept of the “Primordial Buddha” known as Ādibuddha

The Buddhist term *trikāya* (“three bodies”) describes the three aspects of the Buddhas in Mahāyāna Buddhism: *nirmāṇakāya*, *saṃbhogakāya*, and *dharmakāya*. The *nirmāṇakāya* (“emanation body”) denotes the manner in which a Buddha appears in *saṃsāra*. This aspect includes Buddha Śākyamuni and the group of the “seven emanational Buddhas” (*sapta-buddha*). The *saṃbhogakāya* (“enjoyment body”) denotes the pure form of the five “transcendental Buddhas” or Tathāgatas, namely Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi, as well as the transcendental Bodhisattvas, goddesses, and tantric deities. The *dharmakāya* (“dharma body”) is the realm of the ultimate state personified as Ādibuddha or “primordial Buddha” who resides in the Akaniṣṭha Buddha-field. The “old translation tradition” (Tib.: *sNga bsgyur*) of the *rNying ma* order identifies the Ādibuddha with Samantabhadra; the “new translation traditions” (Tib.: *gSar ma pa*) of the *bKa’ brgyud*, *Sa skya*, and *dGe lugs* orders, with Vajradhara, a form of Vajrasattva.

41A. Ādibuddha Vajradhara United with Consort Tibetan Gilt Copper Traditions; 14th/15th Century

Gilt copper; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The left hand of Vajradhara is broken. The separately cast lotus pedestal is lost. The crown and other ornaments are inset with pieces of turquoise and rock crystal, some of which are lost. Height: 27.5 cm.

Vajradhara Naddhayuga (Tib: rDo rje ’chang yab yum) is shown in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*). The right hand holding a five-pronged diamond sceptre (*pañcasūcika-vajra*) and the left hand holding a prayer-bell (*vajraghaṇṭā*) are turned inwards and crossed over the chest (*prajñāliṅganābhinayamudrā*) to embrace his consort (*prajñā* or *śakti*). She holds a ritual chopper (*vajrakarikā*) in the right hand and a skull-cup (*kapāla*) in the left. Each figure is crowned and adorned with bejewelled ornaments.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 7

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1056–1057, pls. 268E–268F.

41B. Saṃvara United with Vajravārāhī Tibetan Gilt Copper Traditions; 15th Century

Gilt copper; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The ornaments are inset with turquoise and other precious stones. The pedestal bottom is sealed with a sheet of metal. Height: 23 cm.

The tantric Buddhist deity Saṃvara (Tib.: bDe mchog) steps to the left with the left leg bent and the right one straight (*ālīḍha*) – an attitude signifying heroism. His feet are trampling on the prostrate bodies of the Hindu deities Kālarātrī (left) and Bhairava (right) on the lotus pedestal. Saṃvara is embracing his consort Vajravārāhī (Tib.: rDo rje phag mo) who has her right leg wrapped around his hips. The pair holds the same attributes as Vajradhara and his consort (**Plate 41A**). Both deities are naked except for the “five ornaments” (*pañcamudrā*) carved of human bone, which in the case of Vajravārāhī are partly broken. Saṃvara is additionally decorated with a swirling scarf hanging down on both sides.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 168[A]

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, p. 1048, pls. 264A–264B.



41B



41A



41A

Ḍākinīs and Yoginīs – Female Empowerment of Wisdom

Indian Buddhism reached its zenith with the development of the later forms of Mahāyāna known as Vajrayāna, Tantrayāna, and Guhyamantrayāna. Every practitioner of tantric Buddhism is aware of male and female aspects. In tantrism, the principle of energy and skilful means is manifest through the aspect of the masculine Heruka deities (**Plates 14A, 15**). Within the tantric practice, Ḍākinīs and Yoginīs (**Plate 42**) represent the female quality of wisdom, which destroys obstacles and awakens insight. The different traditions practice their particular methods, but all have an identical ultimate goal. The aim of the male and female tantric practitioner is to attain the state of nonconceptual insight (Tib.: *Mi rtog pa'i ye shes*).

42A. Dancing Vajravārāhī Tibetan Gilt Copper Traditions; 15th Century

Gilt copper; cast in two parts, partly hollow. The ornaments are inset with turquoise, lapis lazuli, and coral. The faces are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is sealed with a sheet of copper. Height: 41.5 cm.

The three-eyed Vajravārāhī (Tib.: rDo rje phag mo) dances with her left foot (*pratyālīḍha*) on a corpse lying on a double lotus pedestal. She is named after the excrescence in the shape of a sow's head behind her right ear, which is not mentioned in any of the known Indian *sādhanas*, but occurs in Tibetan texts. The Ḍākinī is naked except for the *pañcamudrā* ornaments carved of human bone and a garland of severed heads (*muṅḍamālā*). In the raised right hand she brandishes a ritual chopper with a *vajra* handle (*vajrakartrikā*); in the left she holds a skull-cup (*kapāla*). The ceremonial staff (*khaṭvāṅga*) once held in the crook of the left elbow is lost. The goddess is set against swirling scarves decorated at the ends with inset precious stones.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1680

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1052–1053, pl. 266D.
Chen Xiejun, Wang Qingzheng (chief editors). 2001. *Treasures from Snow Mountains: Gems of Tibetan Cultural Relics*, [catalogue of the exhibition held at the Shanghai Museum, Shanghai], p. 92, pl. 25: Vajravahari, Ming Dynasty (1368–1644).

42B. Standing Jāṅgulī Tibetan Gilt Copper Traditions; 15th Century

Gilt copper; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The ornaments and dress are inset with pieces of turquoise and other precious stones. The three faces are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The image is sealed at the back. Height: 33 cm.

The three-headed and six-armed form of Jāṅgulī (Tib.: Dug sel ma) steps to the right with the right leg bent and the left straight (*pratyālīḍha*) on a single lotus pedestal. She holds a sword (*khadga*) in the principal right hand, and with the principal left hand, displays the gesture of threatening (*tarjanī-mudrā*), and holds a noose (*pāśa*). The other two right hands hold a five-pronged diamond sceptre (*pañcasūcika-vajra*) and the broken remains of an arrow (*śara*). The other two left hands hold a bow (*cāpa*) and the broken stalk of a poisonous flower (*viṣapūṣpaka*). Jāṅgulī is clad in a cloth decorated with beaded decorations and flower ornaments studded with turquoise and lapis lazuli. She wears bejewelled ornaments, namely crowns on each of the three faces, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and anklets. The seven-fold snake-hood is only visible from the back.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsub lag khang Collection; inventory no. 151

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1992)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, p. 1044, pl. 262A.



42B



42A

XVII. Tibetan Monastic Period (after 980): “Pāla Schools in Tibet”

Plates 43–46

The images illustrated in this chapter reflect the influence of the North-Eastern Indian Pāla traditions. The statues include works by Tibetan artists imitating Pāla styles as well as works by Indian masters working in a Pāla style modified according to Tibetan requirements. However, it is not always evident whether an image was cast by an Indian artist in Tibet in an assimilated style, or by a local craftsman working in a modified Tibetan style following the late Pāla traditions. It can also be assumed that only a few of the Tibetan craftsmen who worked in the Pāla style had actually been trained by Indian masters. It appears rather more likely that the Tibetan artists copied existing images of which there were many examples in Tibetan monasteries. As can be concluded from the following statement by the Tibetan scholar Tāranātha (1575–1635), the Tibetans distinguished metal sculptures by style and not by the ethnic origin of the artist. In his *History of Buddhism in India*, he mentions with regard to the Eastern Indian metal sculptures that “*the cast-images ... were called eastern Indian icons (rGya gar shar li), wherever these followers might have been born*”.⁶³ Whereas the participation of Newār artisans continued uninterrupted until the 20th century, Indian artists disappeared from the scene some time during the early 13th century. This was a result of the Muslim devastation of organized Buddhism in North-Eastern India at the end of the 12th century. In spite of the disappearance of Indian craftsmen, the countless statues of North-Eastern Indian origin in Tibetan temples and monasteries continued to be a source of artistic inspiration for Tibetan artists to the present day.

During the “first propagation” of Buddhism in Tibet (*sNga dar*) (c. 600–842), Buddhist sculptures of the greater regions of Kashmir and Swat, together with Nepal, were the principal sources of inspiration for the development of Tibetan art. But during the “second propagation” of Buddhism in Tibet (*Phyi dar*) from the late 10th century onward, it was especially the Buddhist centres of North-Eastern India that played an increasingly important role in the dissemination of Vajrayāna Buddhism and its art styles in Tibet. The Buddhist monasteries of Bihar, such as the ones located at Bodhgayā (Gayā district), Nālandā (Patna district), and Vikramaśīla (near modern Antichak, Bjalpur district), attracted many Tibetan scholar monks who studied there – sometimes for several years – the original Sanskrit texts of the Indian Buddhist traditions. On their return home, the Tibetans usually carried loads of palm-leaf manuscripts (*pustaka*), in addition to portable metal and stone sculptures of Buddhist deities. But there was also a steady flow of Indian scholars who visited Tibet and participated in the translation of Buddhist texts. It can be assumed that Indian teachers usually carried statues and paintings of the deities needed for daily practice.

At the outset of the second propagation of Buddhism in Tibet, from the late 10th century onward, there existed no trained local artists. Since the general breakdown of Buddhist activities in Central Tibet following the reign of gLang dar ma (c. 838–842), there had been little demand for Buddhist sculptures and paintings. For the decoration of the numerous monasteries and temples built throughout Tibet, especially during the 11th and 12th centuries, artists from Kashmir, Nepal, and North-Eastern India were thus mainly

63. D. Chattopadhyaya (transl.). 1970. *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India*, p. 348.

responsible. However, not every statue cast by artists belonging to the traditions of Kashmir, Nepal, or North-Eastern India and worshipped in Tibetan monasteries was necessarily cast in Tibet. Some of the images were commissioned abroad by Tibetans visiting India and Nepal for the purpose of pilgrimage and study. Other statues, many among those of North-Eastern Indian origin, were presumably carried to Tibet by Indian Buddhists in the later part of the 12th century to save them from the marauding Muslims.

As mentioned above, the statues illustrated in this chapter include works by Indian and Tibetan artists executed in locally modified Pāla styles. It is somehow conspicuous that none of the images illustrated in this chapter is attributed to the 11th century. One reason is that the works created by North-Eastern Indian artists during the 11th century appear to have been strictly manufactured according to the traditional Pāla styles regardless of whether commissioned by Indian or Tibetan patrons. As such, these images have been included in Chapter IX (**Plates 16–22**). As far as the Tibetan works are concerned, it appears that not until the 12th century did Tibetans artists develop the ability to manufacture brass statues sufficiently sophisticated to be classified as belonging to the Pāla style tradition. With this argument taken into consideration, it can be assumed that 11th century images in Tibetan collections, which are almost identical to Pāla style statues discovered in India, were either imported from India or made by Indian artists in Tibet. Images dating from the 12th century, which overall resemble their Indian counterparts, but differ in the design of details such as garments and jewellery, are either the work of Indian craftsmen in Tibet, or of Tibetan craftsmen who mastered the North-Eastern Indian style. The problem remains of defining characteristics that allow the differentiation between works of Indian craftsmen working in Tibet from those of Tibetan artists working in the Indian style. Whereas Pāla style statues cast in Tibet by Indian artists still retain an overall Indian character, so do Pāla style statues cast by Tibetans retain an overall Tibetan character. The question, whether an image resembling the Pāla styles was cast by an Indian or a Tibetan craftsmen, is restricted to works cast prior to the beginning of the 13th century. By that time the North-Eastern Indian artistic traditions connected with Buddhist art had disappeared due to the lack of sponsorship in North-Eastern India and thus the basic reason for the existence of trained Indian artists. Thus, from the early 13th century onwards no Eastern Indian artists were working in Tibet anymore. From this follows that all statues cast in Tibet from the 13th century onward in the Pāla style are the work of Tibetan artists.

Tibetan brass sculptures can basically be divided between those that clearly follow the Pāla tradition originating from North-Eastern India (**Plates 43–46**), and those belonging to the other Tibetan traditions, as illustrated in Chapter XVIII (**Plates 47–52**). These incorporate to various degrees recognizable stylistic elements derived from the traditions of North-Eastern India, Nepal, and the western Himalayas. As has been demonstrated in this chapter, because of the difficulty encountered in the classification of sculptures based on the ethnic background of the artists, categorization should rather be made according to the styles.

Definition of Tibetan Art Styles

The meaningfulness of classifying Tibetan Buddhist sculptures according to styles based on geographical criteria is often questionable, because it is first of all the style and not the mostly unknown place of manufacture that determines whether an art object belongs to any particular style. The same limitations of accuracy exists with regard to attributing art styles exclusively to particular ethnicities, such as Indian, Nepalese, Tibetans, or Chinese. Again it is first of all the style and not the racial background of the artist which characterizes an art object. The mobility combined with abilities of many craftsmen to work in different styles are reasons to be cautious with using style names based exclusively on geographic or ethnic attributions. Nevertheless, groups of statues with similar features need some kind of classification. But the history of art is first of all the history of the evolution of styles – something which applies also to Tibetan art.

43A. Standing Buddha Śākyamuni Pāla Schools in Tibet; 12th/13th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: *c.* 25 cm.

Buddha Śākyamuni (Tib: Śākya thub pa) stands in a slightly bent attitude on a circular, single lotus pedestal. With the right hand he displays the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*), the left hand holds the hem of the monastic robe. The upper monastic garment is rendered without folds in a transparent manner and covers the left shoulder only. The border of the lower garment is also visible. A “crest jewel” (*cūḍāmaṇi*) crowns the protuberance on the head (*uṣṇīṣa*). This Buddha forms part of a group of images distinguished by their distinctive lotus pedestals resting on the pointed petals instead of a lower rim.

’Phyong rgyas Valley: Temple on the Burial Mound of King Srong btsan sgam po
Situated south of rTse thang. (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: Lionel Fournier)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, p. 1150, pl. 302A.

43B. Standing Mañjuśrī Pāla Schools in Tibet; 13th/14th Century

Brownish brass; cast in two parts, partly hollow. The garment is inlaid with silver and brass emblems decorated with dotted marks. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 24 cm.

The Bodhisattva, identified as Mañjuśrī (Tib.: ’Jam dpal), stands in a slightly bent attitude on a separately cast, circular, lotus pedestal. The right hand is lowered in the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*), and the raised left hand holds the stalk of the blue water lily (*nīlotpala*) blossoming beside the left shoulder. The Bodhisattva is clad in a cloth tied by a belt around the hips with the upper section of the cloth hanging down to the knees. He carries over the left shoulder the skin of an antelope (*ajina*) that is tied across the chest. He wears bejewelled ornaments, namely a five-leaved crown fastened with a ribbon with swirling ends in front of the knot of hair (*jaṭāmakuṭa*), a pair of earrings, a beaded necklace with an attached pendant, and bracelets on the upper arms and wrists.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 781
Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1152–1153, pls. 303C–303D.



43A



43B

Buddha Vajrāsana often Confused with Tathāgata Akṣobhya

Images of Buddha wearing monastic garments and touching the earth with the right hand (*bhūmisparśa-mudrā*) usually represent the historical **Buddha Śākyamuni (Plate 44B)**. Depicted is his defeat of the negative forces represented by Māra, at Bodhgayā, a location known to the Tibetans as rDo rje gdan, a translation of *vajrāsana* or “*vajra seat*”. Buddha images seated on a pedestal marked with a diamond sceptre (*vajra*) represent **Buddha Vajrāsana** (Tib.: Thub pa rdo rje gdan) (*SM* 3–5) (**Plate 44A**). The *vajra* emblem relates here to the stone seat upon which the historical Buddha attained enlightenment and which is known as *vajra-seat* (*vajrāsana*). In Western literature Buddha images seated on a throne marked with a *vajra* are often wrongly identified as **Akṣobhya** (Tib.: Mi bskyod pa) – one of the five Tathāgatas or “transcendental Buddhas”. They are usually shown in the jewelled “enjoyment body”, the *sambhogakāya* aspect (**Plates 48B, 49A**), and are not clad in the monastic garments of an “emanational Buddha” such as Śākyamuni. The *Sāadhanamālā* (*SM*) contains the following description of **Buddha Vajrāsana** (*SM* 5): “*The worshipper should meditate himself as (Vajrāsana) who displays the bhūmisparśa mudrā with his right hand while the left rests in his lap. He is dressed in red [monastic] garments and sits on the vajra-marked double lotus ...*”. It is important to know that the *sādhana* of **Akṣobhya** does not mention any *vajra* emblem on the lotus.⁶⁴

44A. Buddha Vajrāsana Pāla Schools in Tibet; 12th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is sealed. Height: 25 cm.

Buddha Vajrāsana (Tib: Thub pa rdo rje gdan) is seated in the diamond attitude on a double lotus pedestal bearing a *vajra* (*vajrāsana*). The left hand rests in the lap while the right hand is extended in the gesture of touching the earth (*bhūmisparśa-mudrā*). The upper monastic garment is rendered without folds in a transparent fashion and covers the left shoulder only. A “crest jewel” (*cūḍāmaṇi*) crowns the protuberance on the head (*uṣṇīṣa*). At the back of the lotus pedestal is a *Śāradā* inscription of the Sanskrit Buddhist creed (*Pratītyasamutpāda gāthā*): [*siddham (symbol)*] *ye dharmā hetu-prabhavā hetuṃ teṣāṃ tathāgato hy avadat teṣāṃ ca yo nirodha evaṃvādī mahāśramaṇaḥ* | (G. Bhattacharya). The *Śāradā* script is an indication that this image was cast in the western Himalayas, presumably Western Tibet, and not in North-Eastern India.

Po ta la Collection: Sa gsum lha khang; inventory no. 866

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1997)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, p. 1160, pl. 307A.

44B. Buddha Śākyamuni Pāla Schools in Tibet; c. 12th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The throne is decorated with linear engravings. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the lotus pedestal is not sealed. Height: 20.5 cm.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 623

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, p. 1148, pl. 301B.

64. B. Bhattacharyya. 1958. *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, pp. 77–78; B. Bhattacharyya. 1958. *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, pp. 40–41.



44B



44A

Indian Artists Working in Tibet

The two brass statues of Vajrasattva and Tārā resemble very much Pāla style works made in North-Eastern India during the 11th–12th centuries. But when compared with works undoubtedly cast in India (cf. **Plates 18B, 20**) it becomes evident that they were rather cast in Tibet. However, in the case of Tibetan Pāla style statues it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between works by Indian artists working in Tibet and those imitated by Tibetans. But the arrival of Indian artists in search of work in Tibet ceased at the beginning of the 13th century as a result of the downfall of Buddhism in North-Eastern India. This leads to the conclusion that all Tibetan statues imitating Pāla styles cast from the 13th century onward are the products of Tibetan artists.

45A. Vajrasattva – the “Holder of the Diamond Sceptre” Pāla Schools in Tibet; 1150–1250

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. Some of the ornaments are inset with glass backed with red foil, with some of the settings being lost. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 35.1 cm.

Vajrasattva (Tib.: rDo rje sems dpa’), bent at the hip and neck, is seated in the attitude of ease, with the left leg hanging down (*vāmārdhaparyāṅka*), on a double lotus pedestal with a tall decorated rim. The right hand holds a five-pronged diamond sceptre (*pañcasūcika-vajra*); the left hand the stalk of a water lily (*utpala*) blossoming at the shoulder and supporting a prayer-bell (*vajraghaṅṭā*). Another water lily rises from the pedestal and blossoms at the right shoulder. Vajrasattva is clad in a cloth tied around the hips by a decorated belt and carries a shawl over the left shoulder and tied across the chest. The bejewelled ornaments consist of a three-pointed crown in front of a tall knot of hair (*jaṭāmakuṭa*) with a jewelled tip, a pair of earrings, necklace, bracelets at the upper arms and wrists, and anklets. There are a few insets with pieces of glass backed by red foil, a technique widely used by Indian artists. Tibetans preferred turquoise and coral instead.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 383

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1994)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1089, 1094, fig. XVII-3, pl. 282A.

45B. Śyāma-Tārā – the “Green Tārā” Pāla Schools in Tibet; 1150–1250

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The necklace is inset with one piece of turquoise. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is sealed with a plain sheet of metal. Height: 22.9 cm.

This image depicts a form of Śyāma-Tārā (Tib.: sGrol ljang), the “dark Tārā” erroneously translated as “green Tārā”. She rests in the attitude of ease with the right leg pendant (*lalitāsana*), which signifies beauty and serenity. The right hand performs the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*) while the left hand is raised. Both hands originally held the stalks of the flowers that would have blossomed above the shoulders. According to the *sādhana* texts they are blue water lilies (*nīlotpala*). Tārā wears a cloth tied around her hips, and a shawl over the left shoulder and tied across the chest. Her adornments includes a crown with beaded strands in front of the tall jewelled knot of hair, a pair of earrings, two necklaces, and bracelets on the upper arms and wrists.

’Bri gung mthil monastery: gSer khang lha khang.

Located in the ’Bri gung valley. Central Tibet. (Photo: 1994).

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1106–1107, pl. 288C.



45B



45A

Transformation of the Indian Pāla Style in Tibet

The two standing brass statues identified as Avalokiteśvara and Tārā are attributed to the “Pāla Schools in Tibet” (Plates 43–46). The modelling of these two large brass images have been inspired by images of the late Pāla period, of which there were numerous examples in Tibetan monasteries. But unlike the other six illustrated statues they retain only a little influence of the Indian Pāla styles. As a result of the downfall of Buddhism in North-Eastern India at the end of the 12th century, Indian artists did not remain active for long in Tibet. From this follows that these two statues dating from the 13th century are the products of Tibetan artists. The statues are examples of how Tibetan artists succeeded in blending Pāla styles with local genius.

46A. Standing Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi (?) Pāla Schools in Tibet; c. 13th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast lotus pedestal is lost. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 74 cm.

The Bodhisattva is identified cautiously as a form of Avalokiteśvara (Tib.: sPyan ras gzigs). He stands in a slightly bent attitude on a circular stand. The right hand performs the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*) while the left hand is raised. Both hands originally held the stalks of flowers that would have blossomed above the shoulders. According to the *sādhana* text, Avalokiteśvara holds white lotus flowers (*padma*). He is clad in a cloth tied around the hips by a belt with beaded strands attached. He wears a five-pointed crown in front of the tall jewelled knot of hair, earrings and necklaces, bracelets on the upper arms and wrists, and anklets. At the back is a Sanskrit inscription in Tibetan *dBu can* script of the Buddhist creed (*Pratītyasamutpāda gāthā*). A positive identification of this image as Avalokiteśvara would require lotus flowers and as member of the “lotus family” (*padmakula*) preferably an effigy of Amitābha in the crown or behind on the tall knot of hair.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 942

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1100–1101, pl. 285B.

46B. Standing Buddhist Goddess Identified as Tārā Pāla Schools in Tibet; 13th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The face has remains of painted cold gold, the hair traces of a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 49 cm.

The Buddhist goddess is identified in general terms as Tārā (Tib.: sGrol ma). She stands in a slightly bent attitude on a circular double lotus pedestal. According to intact statues, the right hand presumably performed the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*) and the left hand held the stalk of a water lily (*utpala*) (Plate 28A). The broken fragments on the pedestal and the shoulders is all that remains of the two flowers originally rising from the pedestal to the shoulders. Tārā is clad in an intricately decorated cloth tied around the hips with a beaded belt. She is adorned with ornaments, namely a three-leaved crown in front of the dressed hair, circular earrings and necklaces with attached pendants, bracelets, and anklets. The “beaded sacred thread” (*ratnopavīta*) draped around the belt buckle is unusual for a goddess, and usually only worn by male deities. The jewelled ornaments clearly follow Eastern Indian proto-types (Plates 20, 22B).

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 599

Located in the 'Bri gung valley. Central Tibet. (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1100–1101, pl. 285C.



46A



46B

XVIII. Tibetan Monastic Period (after 980): “Tibetan Brass Sculptures”

Plates 47–52

Of all the chapters in this publication, it is the present one about the “Tibetan brass sculptures” which is perhaps the most complicated with regard to the definition and classification of styles. The brass statues of this chapter illustrate a few examples of Tibetan art styles developed as a result of the assimilation of an amalgam of stylistic influences received from all the surrounding Buddhist cultures. There seems to be no limitation regarding the stylistic variations in Tibetan art. The range of styles is far greater than can be documented here with a the few illustrations of sculptures in Tibetan collections.⁶⁵

As already pointed out in earlier chapters, the most obvious distinction among Tibetan metal sculptures is the existence of “Tibetan gilt copper sculptures” and “Tibetan brass sculptures”. They follow the traditions practiced by the foreign artists and documented by imported statues. Newār craftsmen, who since ancient times had a preference for gilt copper statues, introduced in Tibet the tradition of casting copper statues that would be subsequently fire gilded. The gilt copper statues manufactured by Newār artisans in Tibet are illustrated in Chapter XV as “Nepalese schools in Tibet” (**Plates 34–37**). The other gilt statues produced in Tibet have been attributed to the “Tibetan gilt copper sculptures” in Chapter XVI (**Plates 38–42**).

The tradition of casting statues in brass alloys entered Tibet from two sources, namely the greater area of Kashmir in North-Western India and the dominions of the Pāla rulers of Bihar and Bengal in North-Eastern India. The influence of the art of Kashmir was especially felt in the Zhang zhung and sPu rangs-Gu ge kingdoms of Western Tibet where many artists from Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh were active (**Plates 8–15**). The influence of the Pāla traditions had mainly affected the development of the artistic traditions of Central and Southern Tibet (dBus/gTsang), where the Nepalese influence was also felt very strongly.

As mentioned earlier, the suppression of organized Buddhism in the middle of the 9th century, followed by the disintegration of the Tibetan empire and a lack of sponsorship, curtailed the manufacturing of Buddhist sculptures and paintings. About one hundred and fifty years passed until Buddhist activities did surface again as a result of the “second propagation” of Buddhism. It started in Western Tibet in the late 10th century, and reached in the early 11th century also Central and Southern Tibet. However there was a serious shortage of Tibetans artists with experience in the manufacturing of Buddhist sculptures and paintings. All skills acquired during the “first propagation” of Buddhism (c. 600–842) had disappeared and the Tibetans were forced to rely once more almost exclusively on foreign artists. In any society unfamiliar with the artistic conception of sculpture and painting, the process of developing the crucial skills usually takes several generations to mature. Therefore it is not surprising that many of the brass statues cast by Tibetan craftsmen during the 11th to 12th centuries are artistically or technically not as sophisticated as their counterparts produced by Indian and Nepalese artists. The almost endless variations in style among Tibetan metal sculptures are best illustrated by the seated representations of Buddha Śākyamuni (**Plates 48–50**). They manifest the talent of the Tibetan artists in the creation of distinct Tibetan styles as an amalgam of foreign influences and local genius. Distinct influence by any particular foreign tradition can only be detected

⁶⁵ For a publication on metal sculptures in public and private collections located outside Tibet see U. von Schroeder. 1981. *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*. Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications, Ltd.; reprinted 2008.

among a few of the statues illustrated in this chapter. In most of the sculptures, stylistic influences of several traditions have been absorbed and transformed into a style fully adjusted to the Tibetan requirements.

Among the early Tibetan brass statues are a considerable number of triads known as *Rigs gsum mgon po*, or “protectors of the three spiritual families”. The two illustrated examples manifest an amalgam of foreign art styles blended according to Tibetan sentiments. Nevertheless, they give the impression of rather naive artistic quality in search of a mature style, as is usually the case with archaic works made during the formative stage (**Plate 47**). Another characteristic of these early Tibetan metal statues is that they usually are not very carefully modelled at the back, and little effort was undertaken to compensate for this during the finishing. There is also evidence that many of the earlier images made by Tibetans were manufactured with the help of reusable matrices which simplified the wax modelling process. Some of the most important Tibetan brass statues are inside the “Tārā chapel” of sNye thang, the monastery where the famous Indian Paṇḍita Atiśa (982–1054) died. Among the statues in sNye thang is perhaps the largest surviving early Tibetan brass image of Buddha Śākyamuni (**Plate 48A**). Inside the same temple is also the most important existing Tibetan group of the five Tathāgatas, of which Akṣobhya has been selected for illustration (**Plate 48B**).

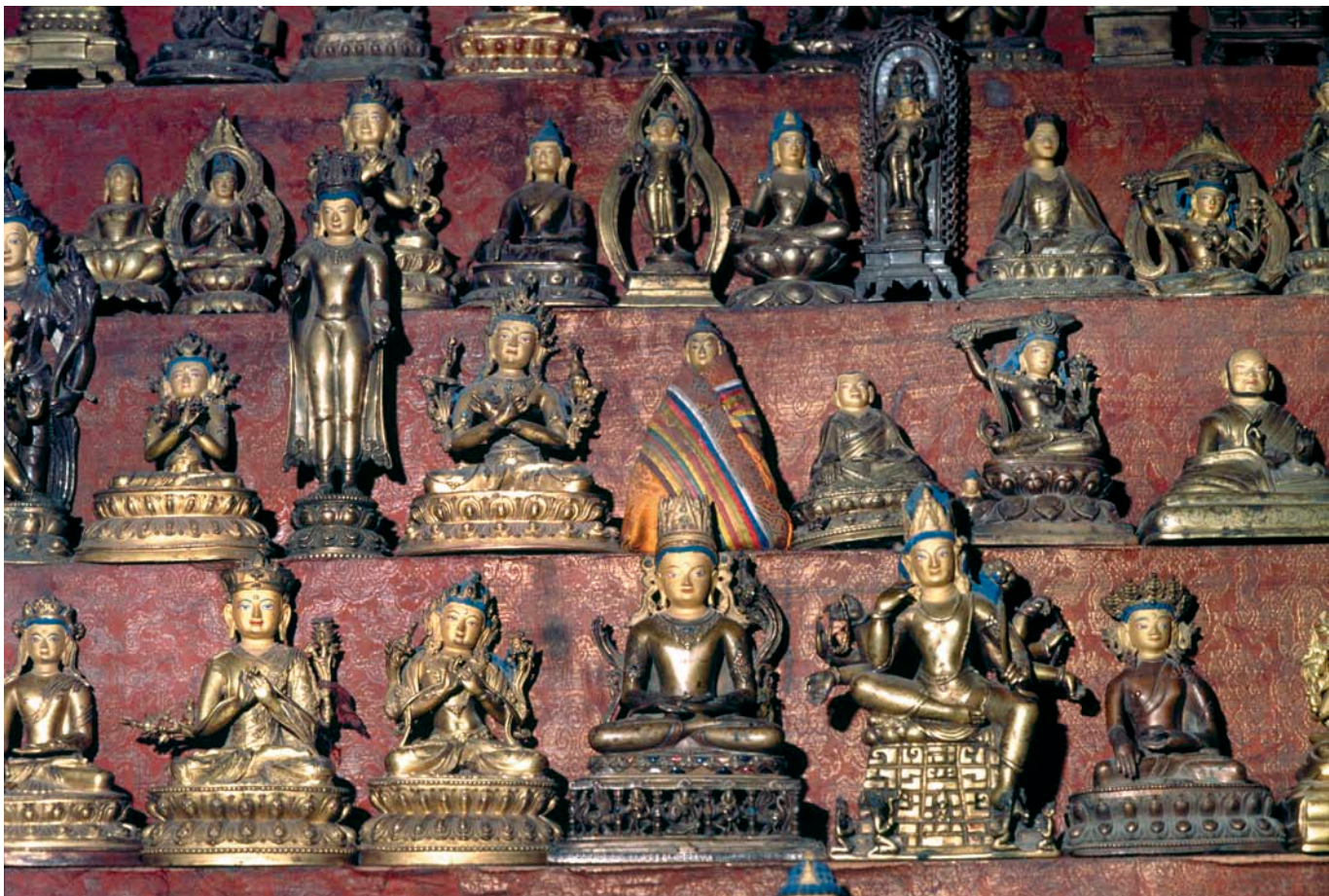


Fig. XII. Ancient metal statues of various Buddhist deities dating between the 7th and the 16th centuries. Originating from North-Eastern and North-Western India, Nepal, Tibet, and China. Displayed in the Li ma lha khang of the Po ta la. (Photo: 1991).

“Protectors of the Three Spiritual Families”

Among the early Tibetan brass statues are a large number of triads of rather naive artistic quality known as *Rigs gsum mgon po*, or “protectors of the three spiritual families”. They are composed of Mañjuḥoṣa (Tib.: ’Jam pa’i dbyangs), Avalokiteśvara (Tib.: sPyan ras gzigs), and Vajrapāṇi (Tib.: Phyag na rdo rje) – being the same as Vajrasattva (Tib.: rDo rje sems dpa’). Such groups represent the most sacred triad in Tibetan Buddhism. These statues manifest an amalgam of western Himalayan, Nepalese, and North-Eastern Indian art styles blended according to Tibetan sentiments. The engraved linear design, including the clusters of dots, is one of the typical characteristics of Tibetan manufacture during the 11th and 12th centuries.

47A. Vajrasattva / Mañjuḥoṣa / Avalokiteśvara Tibetan Brass Traditions; 12th Century

Brass; cast in four parts, partly hollow. The separately cast aureole is lost. The garments are decorated with linear engravings and clusters of dots. The faces are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. The back of the image is only crudely worked. Height: 27.3 cm.

This group is composed from left to right of Vajrasattva, Mañjuḥoṣa, and Avalokiteśvara. The deities stand in a somewhat-awkwardly-executed, very slightly bent attitude on single lotus pedestals placed on a rectangular stand supported by one squatting lion and four guardians. Vajrasattva holds a diamond sceptre (*vajra*) and a prayer-bell (*vajraghaṅṭā*). Mañjuḥoṣa holds the sword (*khadga*) of “wisdom” (*prajñā*), while Avalokiteśvara extends the right hand in the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*). All three deities hold in their left hand the stalk of their particular flower which blossoms beside the left shoulder. The deities reflect a distinct Pāla influence, whereas the guardians and the lions point to western Himalayan influence.

Po ta la Collection: Tshe dpag med lha khang or “Amitāyus Temple”; unnumbered.

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1142–1143, pl. 298D.

47B. Mañjuḥoṣa / Vajrasattva / Avalokiteśvara Tibetan Brass Traditions; 11th/12th Century

Brass; cast in several parts, partly hollow. The garments are decorated with linear engravings and clusters of dots. The faces are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The back of the image is only crudely worked. Height: 30.7 cm.

This group is composed from left to right of Mañjuḥoṣa, Vajrasattva, and Avalokiteśvara. The deities stand in a somewhat-awkwardly-executed, slightly bent attitude on crudely modelled lotus pedestals placed on a rectangular stand, supported in the front by a pair of atlantes or guardians. In the raised right hand Mañjuḥoṣa holds a sword (*khadga*). In the centre is Vajrasattva, whose superiority is indicated by his larger size. Although his two traditional attributes, the prayer-bell and the diamond sceptre, are not represented, it is the position of the arms that are characteristic of Vajrasattva. To his proper left is Avalokiteśvara, displaying the gesture of charity (*varada-mudrā*), and holding in the left hand the stalk of a lotus flower (*padma*).

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 798

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1140–1141, pl. 297C.



47A



47B

48A. Monumental Statue of the Historical Buddha Śākyamuni Tibetan Brass Traditions; 13th Century

Brass; hollow cast one piece. The pedestal and the nimbus are made of wood. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 145 cm.

The Buddha is depicted in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*). He is placed on a single lotus supported by a rectangular pedestal carved of wood. The Buddha rests the left hand in the lap, while the right hand is extended in the gesture of touching the earth (*bhūmisparśa-mudrā*). The upper monastic garment is rendered without folds in a transparent manner and covers the left shoulder only. The image is set against a nimbus carved in wood and decorated with rays and arabesque designs and some painted decorations above the shoulders. This image is one of the largest Tibetan metal images of a seated Buddha to have survived. It represents the historical Buddha Śākyamuni (Tib: Śākya thub pa) and commemorates the defeat of Māra (*māravijaya*) at Bodhgayā (Bihar, N.-E. India). This statue is an example that in earlier times not all pedestals were necessarily made of the same medium as the statues. A large proportion of statues surviving without pedestals might originally have been mounted upon a wooden stand. According to tradition, this image was brought from India, where it had supposedly been cast in 1288.⁶⁶ It is rather doubtful that this image was cast at that time in India, where organized Buddhism had ceased to flourish by the end of the 12th century. Furthermore, this statue bears no particular stylistic resemblance with Indian images.

sNye thang monastery: sGrol ma lha khang

Situated 17 km west of Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1997)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1164–1165, pl. 309C.

48B. Monumental Statue of the Transcendental Buddha Akṣobhya Tibetan Brass Traditions; 1150–1250

Brass; cast in two parts, partly hollow. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is sealed. The ornaments are inset with lapis lazuli, turquoise, and coral. Height: (Buddha statue) 112 cm; (total) 130 cm.

The bejewelled Buddha in the *saṃbhogakāya* aspect is identified by the gesture as Akṣobhya (Tib: Mi bskyod pa) – one of the five Tathāgatas. He is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*) on a double lotus pedestal. The left hand rests in the lap while the right hand is extended in the gesture of touching the earth (*bhūmisparśa-mudrā*). The Buddha is clad in a cloth tied around the hips. He wears the bejewelled ornaments of the Tathāgatas in the *saṃbhogakāya* aspect, namely a five-leaved crown in front of the tall knot of hair with a jewelled tip, a pair of circular earrings, two necklaces, bracelets on the upper arms and wrists, and anklets. The crown bears uncrowned representations of the five Tathāgatas clad in monastic garments.

In the sGrol ma lha khang – or “Tārā chapel” – of sNye thang monastery, one finds the largest and most important existing group of Tibetan-made Tathāgatas. They represent Ratnasambhava, Vairocana, Amogha-siddhi, Amitābha, and Akṣobhya (**Plate 48B**). All the crowns are of a distinctly different fashion. The fact that each Buddha has a different crown, as well as jewellery and pedestal, cannot have been by accident, but must symbolize that each of the Tathāgatas is of a different character.

sNye thang monastery: sGrol ma lha khang

Situated 17 km west of Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1166–1167, pl. 310E.

⁶⁶ G. Tucci. 1956. *To Lhasa and Beyond*, p. 70; V. Chan. 1994. *Tibet Handbook*, p. 474.



48B



48A

“Emanational Buddha” or “Transcendental Buddha”: Problems with Identification

All three Buddhas are depicted in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*) and display the identical gesture of touching the earth (*bhūmisparśa-mudrā*). Nevertheless, they represent three different Buddhas. Uncrowned images of Buddha wearing monastic garments and touching the earth usually represent the historical Buddha Śākyamuni and commemorate the defeat of the evil forces represented by Māra at Bodhgayā (Tib.: rDo rje gdan) in North-Eastern India (**Plate 49B**). In Western literature such images are sometimes wrongly identified as Akṣobhya (Tib.: Mi bskyod pa), who displays the same gesture. Akṣobhya is one of the five Tathāgatas or “transcendental Buddhas”. Instead of being clad in the monk garments of the “emanational Buddhas” in the *nirmāṇakāya* aspect, Tathāgatas are usually shown in the jewelled “enjoyment body”, the *saṃbhogakāya* aspect (**Plate 49A**). The third image depicts a crowned Buddha that represents the historical Buddha Śākyamuni, identified as such by the monastic garment (**Plate 49C**). Such images represent the Cakravartin aspect of Buddha Śākyamuni, but are often mistakenly identified as Akṣobhya.

49A. Tathāgata Akṣobhya – the “Transcendental Buddha” Tibetan Brass Traditions; c. 13th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The ornaments are not inset with precious stones. The face has traces of painted cold gold, the hair remains of a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 34.2 cm.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 869

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1178–1179, pl. 316C.

49B. Buddha Śākyamuni – the “Emanational Buddha” Tibetan Brass Traditions; 13th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The eyes are inlaid with silver, the lips with copper. The borders of the garment are inlaid with copper and decorated with engraved ornaments. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 36 cm.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 235

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1172–1173, pl. 313D.

49C. Crowned Buddha Śākyamuni – the “World-Sovereign” Tibetan Brass Traditions; 13th/14th Century

Brass; cast in two parts, partly hollow. The separately cast aureole once attached to the back is lost. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is sealed with a sheet of copper. Height: 27 cm.

Khra ’brug Monastery

Yar lung valley, situated about 7 km south of rTse thang (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1154–1155, pl. 304B.



49C



49B



49A

Did the Artist really follow the written Rules of Proportions?

The development of an artistic style depends on the observation of a certain proportional conformity as written down in the *śilpaśāstra* texts. However, there remains the question of whether the artists really follow the proportions laid down in the texts, or instead worked according to their own inner perimeter of proportions.

This plate illustrates three Buddhas that are similar in many aspects. They all date from the 13th century and depict Buddha Śākyamuni (Tib: Śākya thub pa) seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāsa*). The left hands rest in the lap, while the right hands are extended in the gesture of touching the earth (*bhūmiśparśa-mudrā*). The upper monastic garments are rendered in a transparent manner with only a few folds, and cover the left shoulders only. A “crest jewel” (*cūḍāmaṇi*) crowns the protuberance on all the heads (*uṣṇīṣa*). The faces are painted with cold gold and the hair with a blue pigment. When comparing the three Buddha images, one notices differences in the design of compositional elements, where the artist was not bound by strict rules. Variations could therefore well occur within the same workshop. The freedom in artistic execution extended to the shapes of the lotus pedestals, the draping of the monastic garments in plain or pleated fashion, or the shape of the hair and the cranial protuberance (*uṣṇīṣa*). The differences between statues of the same style and date nevertheless appear mostly to be of a very subtle nature.

50A. Buddha Śākyamuni Commemorating the Defeat of Māra Tibetan Brass Traditions; 13th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The pedestal is lost. Height: 43.5 cm.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 93

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1997)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1190–1191, pls. 322C–322D.

50B. Buddha Śākyamuni Commemorating the Defeat of Māra Tibetan Brass Traditions; 13th Century

Brass; cast in two parts, partly hollow, the head separately cast. The borders of the garment and the fingernails are inlaid with copper. The pedestal is lost. Height: 54.7 cm.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 88

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1997)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1188–1189, pls. 321C–321D.

50C. Buddha Śākyamuni Commemorating the Defeat of Māra Tibetan Brass Traditions; 13th Century

Brass; cast in two parts, partly hollow. The fingernails and the borders of the upper monastic garment are inlaid with copper. The bottom of the pedestal is sealed with a modern sheet of copper. Height: (total) 60.2 cm; (Buddha) 47 cm.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 86

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1997)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, p. 1190, pl. 322A.



50C



50B



50A

Remembering the Teacher – Portrait Sculptures of the “Spiritual Friend”

In all religious traditions, including Buddhism, teachers are of essential importance in preserving a particular tradition and handing it down from one generation to the next. This is also the case in Tibetan Buddhism, where the teacher is regarded as the fourth and highest refuge. Thus he incorporates the three other refuges, the Buddha (the initial teacher), the Dharma (his teaching), and the Saṅgha (his community). Although it is recorded that teachers were held in high esteem throughout the Buddhist world, it was in Tibet where, in addition, portrait sculptures of them were manufactured. Naturally it is somehow a paradox to create portrait statues of great masters who upheld a tradition directed to the dissolution of the ego and believed in the impermanence of all manifestations. Nevertheless, for individual students, the portrait images of the “spiritual friend” (*kalyāṇamitra*), as teachers are called, are a great help in the visualization process during *guru-yoga* practice, involving sometimes entire lineages of teachers and divine beings. For a practitioner it is not unusual to experience visions of his teachers being transformed into particular deities. Unfortunately, few of the early portrait statues, such as founders of important monasteries or religious orders, are identified by inscriptions. With regard to the manufacturing of such portrait statues, the artists were restricted by few conventions.

51A. Portrait Image of a Lay Tantric Practitioner Tibetan Brass Traditions; 13th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The cushion is inlaid with rhomboid segments of copper that is an indication that the painted eyes are perhaps inlaid with silver and the lips with copper. The garment and the cushion are decorated with engraved patterns and clusters of dots. The face has remains of painted cold gold, the hair of a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is not sealed. Height: 18.1 cm.

The unidentified image of a lay tantric practitioner with a facial expression of a strong-minded personality is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*) on a decorated cushion covered with a blanket placed on a double lotus pedestal, with a cloth hanging down in front. The left hand rests in the lap, the right hand is extended in the gesture of touching the earth (*bhūmiśparśa-mudrā*). He is clad in the cotton robe of a tantric practitioner, decorated with floral patterns, leaving the chest and fat stomach uncovered.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 883[A]

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 19996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1172–1173, pl. 313E.

51B. Portrait Image of the Great Translator Mar pa (1012–1097) Tibetan Brass Traditions; 13th Century

Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The face has remains of painted cold gold, the hair remains of a black pigment. The pedestal is not sealed. Height: 17.6 cm.

This image with curly hair and a facial expression of a portrait-like nature possibly represents Mar pa (1012–1097), the principal teacher of Mi la ras pa (1040–1123). He is seated on a stepped pedestal, and rests his hands on the knees. The lay tantric master is clad with voluminous garments consisting of a long coat and a cloak worn over both shoulders. The proposed identification as Mar pa is based on similar, inscribed images.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 391

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1997)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, p. 1186, pl. 320B.



51B



51A

Early Rulers of Tibet – “Kings of the Buddhist Doctrine”

The three Tibetan rulers Srong btsan sgam po (reigned c. 618–649), Khri srong lde brtsan (reigned c. 755–797), and Ral pa can (reigned c. 815–838) are traditionally revered as the three great “kings of the doctrine” (*dharmarāja*) (Tib.: *Chos rgyal*). Srong btsan sgam po is traditionally regarded as an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara (Tib.: sPyan ras gzigs), an emanation of Amitābha. Representations of this ruler usually carry a head of this Buddha on the top, as is the case with images of the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara.

The seated image is clearly identified as Srong btsan sgam po by the head of Amitābha crowning the tall turban. This image forms part of a group of Srong btsan sgam po attended by the standing representations of his two ministers, mGar sTong brtsan and mThon myi 'Bring po rgyal btsan nu (Thon mi Sambhoṭa). mGar sTong brtsan was sent to the Chinese Tang court with gifts to renew the request for a marriage alliance. Thon mi Sambhoṭa, was allegedly sent to India to study Sanskrit, and upon his return devised the Tibetan script. Images of the two ministers are always shown together with Srong btsan sgam po, whereas the ruler can also be shown instead as part of a group of the three great “kings of the doctrine”.

Representations of the three great Tibetan “kings of the doctrine” are difficult to date because the design follows a standardized and idealized model. The design of the Chinese embroidery is not necessarily contemporaneous with the casting of the image, because Tibetan monasteries were famous storehouses of Chinese fabrics since the imperial period. However, it is of interest that the dragon was a traditional motif of a Chinese emperor’s robes. The most popular representations of Srong btsan sgam po and his entourage of wives and ministers are those made of clay inside the Chos rgyal sGrub phug (“dharma king meditation cave”) of the Po ta la palace in Lhasa, dating at the earliest from the 14th century and latest from the 17th century.⁶⁷

52A–C. King Srong btsan sgam po with two Ministers Tibetan Brass Traditions; Earliest 14th Century (?)

Srong btsan sgam po: Brass; cast in two parts, partly hollow. The garment is decorated in high relief. The faces of the king and of Amitābha are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is sealed with a sheet of copper. Height: 46.5 cm.

Ministers: Brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The garments are decorated with patterns. The faces are painted with cold gold, the beards with a blue pigment, the turbans red. The pedestals of both statues are sealed with sheets of copper. Height: 32 cm; 31 cm.

King Srong btsan sgam po is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*) on a cushion and displays the meditation gesture (*dhyāna-mudrā*). He is clad in a heavy robe with a broad collar of Sasanian-influenced Chinese embroidery with roundels decorated with dragon motifs, and he wears a tall turban with the head of Amitābha (Tib.: 'Od dpag med) looking out from the top. His long hair falls in two strands in front, and he wears a pair of beaded earrings, a beaded necklace, and a belt tied around the waist. Inside the same temple are two standing statues of dignitaries. It can be assumed that they form a group depicting King Srong btsan sgam po (reigned c. 618–649) and his two ministers, namely mGar sTong brtsan and Thon mi Sambhoṭa. The ministers stand upright on circular, single lotus pedestals. Both wear boots and tall turbans, and are clad in heavy robes with broad cape-like collars. Although making different gestures, the ministers have no attributes that would allow for more specific identification.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory nos. 841; 1081; 1047

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photos: 1995; 1997)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1170–1171, pls. 312C–312E.

⁶⁷ U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 852–859, pls. 197–198.



52B



52C



52A

XIX. China: Northern Wei and Tang Dynasties

Plates 53–54

From the 6th/5th century BC when the Indian Prince Gautama Śākyamuni achieved enlightenment and became the Buddha, until the 3rd century BC, Buddhist practice was confined to Northern India. From about the middle of the 3rd century BC onward Buddhism expanded south to Sri Lanka and north-west to Kashmir and Gandhāra. This expansion was primarily due to the personal faith and efforts of Aśoka (reigned c. 269–232 BC), emperor of the Maurya empire (c. 320–185 BC), whose territories embraced most of the Indian subcontinent. By the 1st century BC, Buddhism had extended into Central Asia and was firmly established in Kucha and Khotan. The infiltration of Buddhism into these areas had occurred along two important trade routes – known as the northern and southern Silk Roads – which connected the Middle East and North-Western India with China. The northern route follows the northern fringe of the Taklamakan desert and passes from Kashgar through Kucha, Karashar, and Turfan. The southern route passes from Kashgar along the southern fringe of the Taklamakan desert through a series of oasis centres of which Khotan was the most important. The two routes converge at Dunhuang on the North-Western frontier of China. Due to its axial location, Dunhuang developed over time into an important Buddhist centre. It is now famous for the several hundred caves decorated with numerous sculptures and paintings dating from the 5th to the 14th centuries AD, that were carved out of a cliff face south-east of the town. It was through the oases along the Silk Roads that China came into contact with Buddhism some time towards the end of the 1st century BC. During the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220 AD) Buddhism gradually extended its hold on China in spite of opposition from the adherents of Confucianism and Daoism, two philosophical systems firmly established in Chinese society.

The establishment of the Northern Wei dynasty (385–534) towards the end of the 4th century by the Tobas originating from Central Asia created a favourable atmosphere for the propagation of Buddhism in China. These alien rulers were great patrons of Buddhism and, except for a short period during the middle of the 5th century, Buddhism was the official state religion throughout the Northern Wei empire extending over the northern half of China. Also, from this time an increasing number of Chinese Buddhist scholars travelled to India in search of the original teachings of the Buddha, as most of their Sūtras had been translated from texts with a Central Asian origin. Among the more illustrious Chinese pilgrims were Fa Xian (Fa-Hsien, travelled 399–414), Xuan Zang (Hüan Chwang, Hsüan-tsang, travelled 629–645), and Yi Jing (I-tsing, travelled 673–685). Their recorded narratives have been handed down through the centuries and represent very important literary testimony on the changing conditions of Indian Buddhism. Fa Xian spent two years in Tāmralipti (Southern Bengal) copying *sūtra*-texts and making drawings of images. Among his various acquisitions, Xuan Zang brought back from India numerous manuscripts as well as six images: “*One golden statue of Buddha from the area of Magadha and also a glittering pedestal 3 ft. 3 in. high. This figure resembles the image of Buddha as he is turning the wheel of the doctrine in the deer park at Sārnāth [Vārāṇasī district, Uttar Pradesh, N. India]; a sandalwood statue of Buddha with a shining pedestal 3 ft. 5 in. high, after the model of the sandalwood figure made according to King Udayāna of Kauśāmbī [modern Kosam, west of Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, Northern India]; a figure of Buddha with a shining pedestal 2 ft. 9 in. high; a silver figure of Buddha with a translucent pedestal, 4 ft. high, after the*

*model of the figure of Buddha delivering the Saddharmapūṇḍarīka and other Sūtras on the Gṛdhrakūṭa mountain in Magadha; a figure of Buddha with a translucent pedestal, 3 ft. 5 in. high; and a sandalwood figure of Buddha with a translucent pedestal, 1 ft. 3 in. high.*⁶⁸ There can be no doubt that the evolution of the early Chinese Buddhist sculptures, regardless of whether carved of wood or stone, or cast in metal, was influenced by works carried to China from the western Himalayas and Northern India. To house the many manuscripts carried back home from India by Xuan Zang (travelled 629–645), the Dayanta – or “big wild goose pagoda” – was built in 652 at Chang’an (modern Xi’an, Shaanxi province), the capital of China during the Tang dynasty (618–907). This still-extant pagoda was damaged on several occasions. The first time was in 763 when the Tibetans, ruled at that time by King Khri srong lde brtsan (reigned c. 755–797), once more defeated the Chinese on the battlefield and succeeded in capturing the capital of China. This is just one episode from the many conflicts between Tibet and China during the Tibetan imperial period (c. 600–842), when they fought endless wars, with changing allies, over the control of Central Asia.

When compared with the numerous sculptures of North-Eastern Indian, Nepalese, and western Himalayan origin, it is at first surprising that there are so few examples of Chinese metal sculptures older than the 10th century in Tibetan monasteries. The struggles between the Tibetan empire (Yar lung dynasty) and the Chinese Tang empire between the 7th and 9th centuries restricted the impact of China on Tibetan Buddhism. This explains why only relatively few Chinese sculptures seem to have reached Tibet during this period. Although Khri srong lde brtsan had invited Buddhist scholars from China to visit Tibet in 781, their influence did not last long. In 792, a great debate was held at bSam yas in Central Tibet to determine whether the Indian or the Chinese form of Buddhism should become the model for Tibet. Following the Indian scholar Kamalaśīla’s defeat of the Chinese delegation led by He shang Ma he yan (Hva shang Mahāyāna), who was added later to the original group of sixteen arhats, the impact of Chinese Buddhism on Tibet diminished rapidly. The outcome in favour of the Indian Buddhist tradition must have also been tempered by political considerations in view of the enduring military conflicts between Tibet and China.

68. S. Beal (transl.). 1911. *The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang by the Shaman Hwui Li*, pp. 213–214.

The Oldest Buddha Statues Discovered in Tibet

The oldest Buddha statues discovered in Tibet are Chinese bronze sculptures cast during the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534). Although they look identical, one of them is identified by inscription as Buddha Maitreya (Ch: Mile Fo) dated to 462/463 (**Plate 53A**). The other image is identified as Buddha Śākyamuni (Ch: Shijia Fo) dated by inscription to 473 (**Plate 53B**). They are seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāsa*) on a rectangular seat, mounted on an elaborately decorated four-legged throne. Both Buddhas have the right hand raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*), while the left hand holds the hem of the monastic robe. The upper robe is pleated, covering both shoulders, and part of the lower robe is also visible covering part of the chest. It's only because of the inscriptions that one is identified as Śākyamuni and the other as Maitreya. A separately cast aureole of pointed shape was originally attached to the back of both images. It is reasonable to assume that the two statues are the products of the same workshop. Although there is a time gap of 10 years in their production, they are very similar in style and size. Such similarities can only be explained by the employment of reusable matrices, a technique employed in China since ancient times. The circumstances of how these images reached Tibet will remain a secret. Were they brought by Chinese missionaries or were they part of an exchange of gifts between Chinese and Tibetans, or loot from wars?

53A. Enthroned Buddha Maitreya

China: Northern Wei Dynasty (386–534); Dated 462/463

Gilt bronze; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast aureole is lost. The image is decorated with engraved ornaments. The face and the unclothed part of the chest are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 28 cm.

The Buddha, identified by the inscription as Maitreya (Tib.: Byams pa; Ch: Mile Fo), was donated by the Buddhist monk Huixiang of Songgong monastery in the Yuyang prefecture. At the back of the pedestal is a dedicatory inscription dated to the 21st day of the 1st month of the 3rd year of the Heping era (460–465) of the Northern Wei dynasty, i.e. 462/463 (reign of Emperor Wencheng, reigned 452–465).

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1280

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1224–1225, pls. 337A–337C.

53B. Enthroned Buddha Śākyamuni

China: Northern Wei Dynasty (386–534); Dated 473

Gilt bronze; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast aureole is lost. The image is decorated with engraved ornaments. The face and the uncovered part of the chest are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 28.5 cm.

The Buddha, identified by the inscription as Śākyamuni (Tib.: Śākya thub pa; Ch.: Shijia Fo), was donated by the nun Zengxiang and the monk Huiwen. At the back of the pedestal is a dedicatory Chinese inscription dated to the 21st day of the 5th month in the 3rd year of the Yanxing era of the Northern Wei dynasty, i.e. 473 (reign of Emperor Xiaowen, reigned 471–500).

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 91

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1226–1227, pls. 338A–338C.



53B



53A

Popularity of the Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara in China

The cult of the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara originated in India during the 6th or 7th century. Although only a few Chinese images of the eleven-headed form of Avalokiteśvara are known, it appears that the cult of Ekādaśamukha Avalokiteśvara was very popular in China during the 7th and 8th centuries. The Sanskrit Sūtra *Avalokiteśvara Ekadaśamukhadhāranī* is possibly the oldest surviving description of Avalokiteśvara with eleven heads. Yaśogupta translated this text between 561 and 577 into Chinese. Atigupta translated a shortened version in 653, and the Chinese pilgrim Xuan Zang did another one in 655.⁶⁹

54A. Six-Armed and Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara China: Tang Dynasty (618–907); c. 8th Century

Bronze with remains of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast pedestal and the nimbus, originally attached to the back of the statue, are lost. The faces are painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. Height: 36.4 cm.

The six-armed form of Avalokiteśvara known as Ekādaśamukha Avalokiteśvara or “eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara” (Tib.: sPyan ras gzigs bcu gcigs zhal) stands upright. The symmetrically distributed six arms do not hold any attributes. The principal head was originally surmounted by an additional ten heads, of which one has broken off. The first tier of seven heads consists of two groups of three at the front side, and a single head at the back. The next higher tier is made up of two heads, whereas the eleventh one at the top is lost.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 490

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1234–1235, pl. 342D.

54B. Buddha Śākyamuni China: Tang Dynasty (618–907); 7th/8th Century

Bronze with remains of gilding; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The separately cast pedestal is lost. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the image is sealed with a plain sheet of copper, which conforms to Tibetan practice. Height: 24.2 cm.

Śākyamuni (Tib.: Śākya thub pa; Ch.: Shijia Fo) is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*) on a seat that was probably originally mounted on an octagonal plinth with a circular lotus pedestal. The right hand is held in the gesture of touching the earth (*bhūmiśarśa-mudrā*), the left hand is raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya-mudrā*). The upper monastic robe, which drapes over the seat, is rendered with pleats and covers both shoulders. The chest is partly covered by the lower robe, decorated with engraved linear patterns. This Buddha image was possibly originally part of an altar group.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 953

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1232–1233, pl. 341D.

⁶⁹ *Avalokiteśvara Ekadaśamukhadhāranī*, Nanjio no. 328; Daizō XX; *Dhāranī-samuccaya*, Nanjio no. 363; Daizō XVIII; Nanjio no. 328; Daizō XX.



54A



54B

XX. China: Ming Dynasty

Plates 55–57

The powerful Mongolian tribes, whose military superiority threatened all the surrounding areas, including China and Tibet, dominated the politics of Central Asia during the 13th century. After Chinggis Khan (reigned 1206–1227) had succeeded in subjugating the adjacent regions of Tibet in 1207, the frightened Tibetans dispatched a delegation that offered Tibet's total submission to the Mongols. However the Tibetans were able to establish a special relationship with the Mongol ruler that guaranteed the survival of Buddhism in Tibet. The Tibetans acted as teachers of Buddhism and the Mongolians as patrons. In 1247 the Mongols installed Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251) as regent of Tibet. During the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), the Mongol rulers established a number of Buddhist centres mainly in Northern China. Some Chinese emperors of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) also showed interest in Tibetan Buddhism. They reactivated the “patron and priest” relationship that had earlier existed during the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) between the Mongol rulers of China and the Tibetan Buddhist monks. During the reigns of the Yongle emperor (reigned 1403–1424) and the Xuande emperor (reigned 1426–1435), countless missions were exchanged between China and Tibet. On a number of occasions, Buddhist statues formed part of the gifts presented to Tibetan visitors at the Ming court. Other Buddhist statues were taken to Tibet by Chinese missions. This explains the presence in Tibetan monasteries of numerous gilt brass statues inscribed with the six-character Yongle reign mark “Da Ming Yongle nian shi” meaning “*donated in the Yongle era of the great Ming*”.⁷⁰ But there can be no doubt that this patronage of Tibetan Buddhism was primarily motivated by political considerations. The Chinese rulers of the Ming dynasty, and later also the Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), hoped to govern the Tibetans and Mongols with the assistance of the Tibetan Buddhist clergy, who exercised great authority over their Tibetan and Mongolian followers. The Ming emperors, through their affiliation with Tibetan Buddhist leaders, had therefore some political influence over the Tibetan and Mongolian populace. The latter had become so preoccupied with religious affairs that they gradually lost their war-like nature that had earlier been such a threat to China.

The relationship between Tibet and China resulted in an exchange of religious and cultural ideas. With regards to the art styles, it is evident that this was a mutual influence, and not limited in one direction or the other. However, in most publications, any image incorporating the stylistic traits of both cultures is labelled Sino-Tibetan. This term is applied regardless of whether a Tibetan piece of art reflects Chinese influence, or a Chinese object reflects Tibetan influence. As Heather Stoddard stated: “*in general the term Sino-Tibetan art implies Tibetan art strongly influenced by China, or Chinese art strongly influenced by Tibet*”.⁷¹

As already explicitly stated in earlier publications, these two distinct influences should be distinguished by using different terms, namely Tibeto-Chinese and Sino-Tibetan.⁷² The term Tibeto-Chinese thus applies to sculptures and paintings manufactured in China whose iconography, and to a lesser degree also style, reflects a distinct Tibetan inspiration. The term Sino-Tibetan, on the other hand, refers to sculptures and paintings manufactured in Tibet whose style reflects a distinct Chinese inspiration, but where the iconography is Tibetan. Especially during the early part of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), the influence of Tibetan art

70. For a detailed study of the relationship between Tibet and China cf. H. Karmay [-Stoddard], 1975. *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*.

71. H. Karmay [-Stoddard], 1975. *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, p. 1.

72. U. von Schroeder. 1981. *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, p. 510.

styles is very prominent. A gradual assimilation of the art styles led later to the production of images still based on Tibetan iconography but entirely Chinese in style. This was especially the case with the Chinese sculptures related to the Tibetan form of Buddhism made during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Among them is a set of almost eight hundred brass statues manufactured during the reign of the Qianlong emperor (1736–1795), and which is preserved in the Bao Xiang Lou, a Tibetan Buddhist temple in the garden of the Ci Ning Gong, a palace in the Forbidden City (Zijin Cheng) in Beijing.⁷³ It appears that the Chinese influence upon Tibetan sculpture was more felt in Eastern Tibet (Khams) bordering the Chinese province of Sichuan, and in North-Eastern Tibet (Amdo) adjacent to the Chinese province of Gansu. In those areas it can be expected that the proportion of images that can be attributed to the Sino-Tibetan tradition is considerably larger than in Southern and Central Tibet (gTsang/dBus).

The Tibeto-Chinese gilt brass statues inscribed with the Yongle reign mark (1403–1424) are the products of the Chinese imperial workshops during the reign of the Yongle emperor. There is still very little known about the origin of this artistic tradition, which has little in common with Chinese Buddhist art of the period. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the Tibetan form of Buddhism was never popular among the majority of Chinese. The Buddhist statues bearing the Yongle reign mark also cannot be explained as a continuation of the tradition established by A ni ko (1244–1306) and his entourage of Nepalese and Tibetan artists during the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) some two hundred years earlier. The Yongle statues instead appear to be part of a new tradition that developed at the beginning of the 15th century under the influence of Tibetan and Nepalese art as practiced in Central and Southern Tibet during this same period. This Ming emperor's interest in the Tibetan forms of Buddhism led to the construction of new temples and monasteries in addition to those which had been built during the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368). For the decoration of these temples, paintings and sculptures were needed, and they had to conform to the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon. Tibetan and Nepalese craftsmen played an active part in the development of this new Tibeto-Chinese school. However, in spite of the stylistic similarities with contemporary Tibetan and Nepalese images, the Yongle period statues display an indisputable Chinese character.

The statues that date from the Yongle period (1403–1424) and the Xuande period (1426–1435) were all cast in a thirty-two year period of time. The statues are characterized by exquisite workmanship and uniformity in style. Another feature is that they are as beautifully worked at the back as they are at the front. Whereas the benevolent deities are all placed on double lotus stands, the tantric and wrathful representations, as well as Mahāsiddhas, have only one row of lotus petals, which in both cases always encircle the pedestals. Unlike contemporary Nepalese and Tibetan sculptures, the Chinese works are not inset with precious stones. The consistency in modelling encountered with Chinese metal sculptures could only be achieved through the employment of reusable matrices, a characteristic of Chinese metal statuary of all periods. The stylistic conformity of the Yongle and Xuande statues is also the result of the strict organization of the imperial workshops, where only images of approved quality were inscribed with the six-character reign marks. In spite of the application of wax matrices, stylistic modifications can still be recognized. The most distinct variations can be noticed in the shape of the lotus pedestals with petals of either narrow or broad shape.

73. Cf. W. E. Clark. 1937. *Two Lamaist Pantheons: From Material Collected by the late Baron A. von Staël-Holstein*. 2 Vols.

Consistency of Style Enforced by Reusable Matrices

When comparing Chinese metal statues of the Yongle period, it becomes evident that images of the same iconography are sometimes very similar in style and size. This consistency in modelling could only be achieved through the employment of the same reusable matrices, which is a characteristic of Chinese metal statuary of all periods. This was the custom in China since at least the early 1st millennium BC. The stylistic conformity of the Yongle and Xuande statues is also the result of the strict organization of the imperial workshops, where only images of approved quality were inscribed with the six-character reign marks. However, not all statues depicting the same deity were necessarily modelled with the help of the same set of wax matrices. This can only be explained by the existence of more than one set of wax matrices of the most popular subjects. Other differences may also be due to the fact that they were cast several years apart.

55A. Ṣaḍakṣarī-Lokeśvara

China (Ming Dynasty: Yongle Period); Dated 1403–1424

Gilt brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is sealed with a red-painted sheet of brass marked with a *viśvavajra*. Height: 18.4 cm.

This image depicts the four-armed form of Avalokiteśvara (Tib.: sPyan ras gzigs) known as Ṣaḍakṣarī (Tib.: Yi ge drug ma). He is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*) on a double lotus pedestal with beaded borders, and displays with the principal pair of hands the gesture of respectful salutation, with the hands slightly held apart (*añjali-mudrā*). In the upper right hand he holds a rosary (*akṣamālā*) made of silver beads, and in the upper left a lotus flower (*padma*). Note the effigy of Amitābha attached to the tall crown of hair. The pedestal is inscribed with the six-character Yongle mark: “*Da Ming Yongle nian shi*”.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsub lag khang Collection; inventory no. 257[B]

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1996)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1274–1275, pls. 355B–355C.

55B. Tikṣṇa-Mañjuśrī

China (Ming Dynasty: Yongle Period); Dated 1403–1424

Gilt brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is sealed with a plain sheet of metal. Height: 21.4 cm.

This four-armed form of Mañjuśrī (Tib.: 'Jam dpal) can be identified as Tikṣṇa-Mañjuśrī (Tib.: 'Jam dpal rnon po). He is seated in the diamond attitude (*vajraparyāṅkāśana*) on a double lotus pedestal with beaded borders. The upper right hand holds a sword (*khaḍga*), the lower right hand originally held an arrow (*śara*). The inner left hand originally held the stalk of a blue water lily (*nīlotpala*), which blossomed above the left shoulder and supported a manuscript (*pustaka*) of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. The outer left hand holds a bows (*cāpa*). The pedestal is inscribed with the six-character Yongle mark: “*Da Ming Yongle nian shi*”.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsub lag khang Collection; inventory no. 77

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1992)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, p. 1272, pl. 354B.



55B



55A

Transition of Tibeto-Chinese Art Styles from Yuan Dynasty to Ming Dynasty

Much of the Buddhist art made in the imperial workshops during the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) was produced under the supervision of the Nepalese A ni ko (1244–1306) and his entourage of Nepalese and Tibetan artists. The gilt brass statues of deities forming part of the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon manufactured in the Chinese Imperial workshop during the Yongle and Xuande periods (1403–1435) bear no similarities with the art produced during the Yuan dynasty and cannot be explained as a continuation of that tradition. The Yongle statues instead appear to be part of a new tradition that developed under the influence of Tibetan art.⁷⁴

56A. Caturbhuja Mahākāla – Four-Armed Form of Mahākāla China (Ming Dynasty: Yongle Period); Dated 1403–1424

Gilt brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a red pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is sealed with a plain sheet of metal, a substitute of the original gilt brass plate marked with a *viśvavajra*. Height: 19.5 cm.

This rare Yongle statue is of the four-armed (*caturbhuja*) Mahākāla (Tib.: mGon po phyag bzhi pa). He is seated on two unidentified Hindu deities on a single lotus pedestal with beaded borders. In the upper right hand Mahākāla holds the sword (*khaḍga*) of “wisdom” (*prajñā*) for the purpose of cutting through “the roots of ignorance”, in the upper left a trident (*triśūla*) as a symbolic weapon against evil energy. With the principal hands Mahākāla holds a chopper with a *vajra* handle (*vajrakarikā*) and a skull-cup (*kapāla*). The top of the pedestal is inscribed with the six-character Yongle mark: “*Da Ming Yongle nian shi*”.

Jo khang / Lhasa gTsong lag khang Collection; inventory no. 124

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1997)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1243, 1258, fig. XX–8; pls. 347A–347B.

56B. Pañjaranātha Mahākāla – Two-Armed Form of Mahākāla China (Ming Dynasty: Yongle Period); Dated 1403–1424

Gilt brass; cast in one piece, partly hollow. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a red pigment. The image is sealed at the back with a gilt brass plate, the bottom of the pedestal with a gilt brass plate marked with a *viśvavajra*. Height: 22.8 cm.

The two-armed form of Mahākāla, known as Pañjaranātha Mahākāla (Tib.: Gur gyi mgon po), is three-eyed with a fierce expression, and tramples with spread legs on a corpse prostrate on a single lotus pedestal with beaded borders. With the right hand he holds a ritual chopper with a *vajra* handle (*vajrakarikā*), and with the left hand a skull-cup (*kapāla*). He carries a wooden implement (*gaṇḍi*) across the crooks of his elbows. Mahākāla wears a five-leaved crown decorated with skulls, is adorned with jewellery and snake ornaments and wears a garland of skulls (*muṇḍamālā*). He also wears an animal skin and the sacred thread in the shape of a snake (*nāgopavīta*). There is an effigy of Akṣobhya behind the crown. The top of the pedestal is inscribed with the six-character Yongle mark: “*Da Ming Yongle nian shi*”.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1219

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1995)

Published: Liu Hongxiao (editor-in-chief). 1999. “*Gems of the Potala Palace*”, p. 138: Bodhisattva (Nepalese style).
U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1239, 1260, fig. XX–3; pls. 348A–348B.

74. Cf. U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1237–1291.



56B



56A

Eccentric Tantric Practitioners known as Siddhas

The siddhas were a class of eccentric unconventional ascetics who practiced outside the monasteries and their strict discipline. Most renowned among these Indian tantric practitioners, who lived mostly between the 9th and 12th centuries, are the Mahāsiddhas, the “great perfected ones endowed with supernatural faculties”. Most popular among them is the group of eighty-four Mahāsiddhas. Instead of metaphysical speculation, they practiced an eccentric way of life, often with eroticized tantric practices. With regard to the social background, there existed no limitations about who could become a Mahāsiddha. In addition to Brahmin priests, monks and nuns, there were also lay practitioners, kings, ministers, merchants, farmers, servants, beggars, and thieves. Each Mahāsiddha had a teacher who initiated and instructed him into the practice of meditation of a particular tantric lineage. The scholastic tantric Buddhism was taught and practiced in the monasteries of North-Eastern India such as Nālandā, Vikramaśīla, and Odantapurī. This was in contrast to the Mahāsiddha movement that could be practiced anywhere with no restrictions, including cremation grounds. The metaphysical content of the siddhas’ practice was based on texts known as *tantras*. About the origin of the *tantras* one can only speculate, but they seem to have their roots in very ancient ritual magic associated with fertility cults. After being transmitted orally, sometimes for hundreds of years, the *tantras* were only written down later. In Tibet it was Virūpa who became the most famous among the Mahāsiddhas.

57. Mahāsiddha Virūpa – the “Great Tantric Practitioner” China (Ming Dynasty: Yongle Period); Dated 1403–1424

Gilt brass; cast in two parts, partly hollow. The face is painted with cold gold, the hair with a blue pigment. The bottom of the pedestal is sealed with a brass plate painted red and marked with a *viśvavajra*. Height: 22.2 cm.

Mahāsiddha Virūpa (Tib.: Grub chen Bir wa pa) is shown here in a cheerful mood. He is seated in the attitude of royal ease (*rājalīlāsana*) on the skin of a tiger (*vyāghracarma*) placed on a single lotus pedestal with beaded borders. He holds a skull-cup (*kapāla*) in the right hand and arrests with the left hand the sun in its course. He is dressed with an exquisitely ornamented cloth tied below the protruding belly. Virūpa wears a set of beaded jewellery consisting of two necklaces, earrings, and bracelets at the arms, ankles, and the feet. In addition, he wears a garland of flowers on the head and another one worn over the left shoulder and arranged across the chest. Although Virūpa is not always depicted with a skull-cup, the presence of the flower garlands and the gesture with the raised left hand support such an identification.

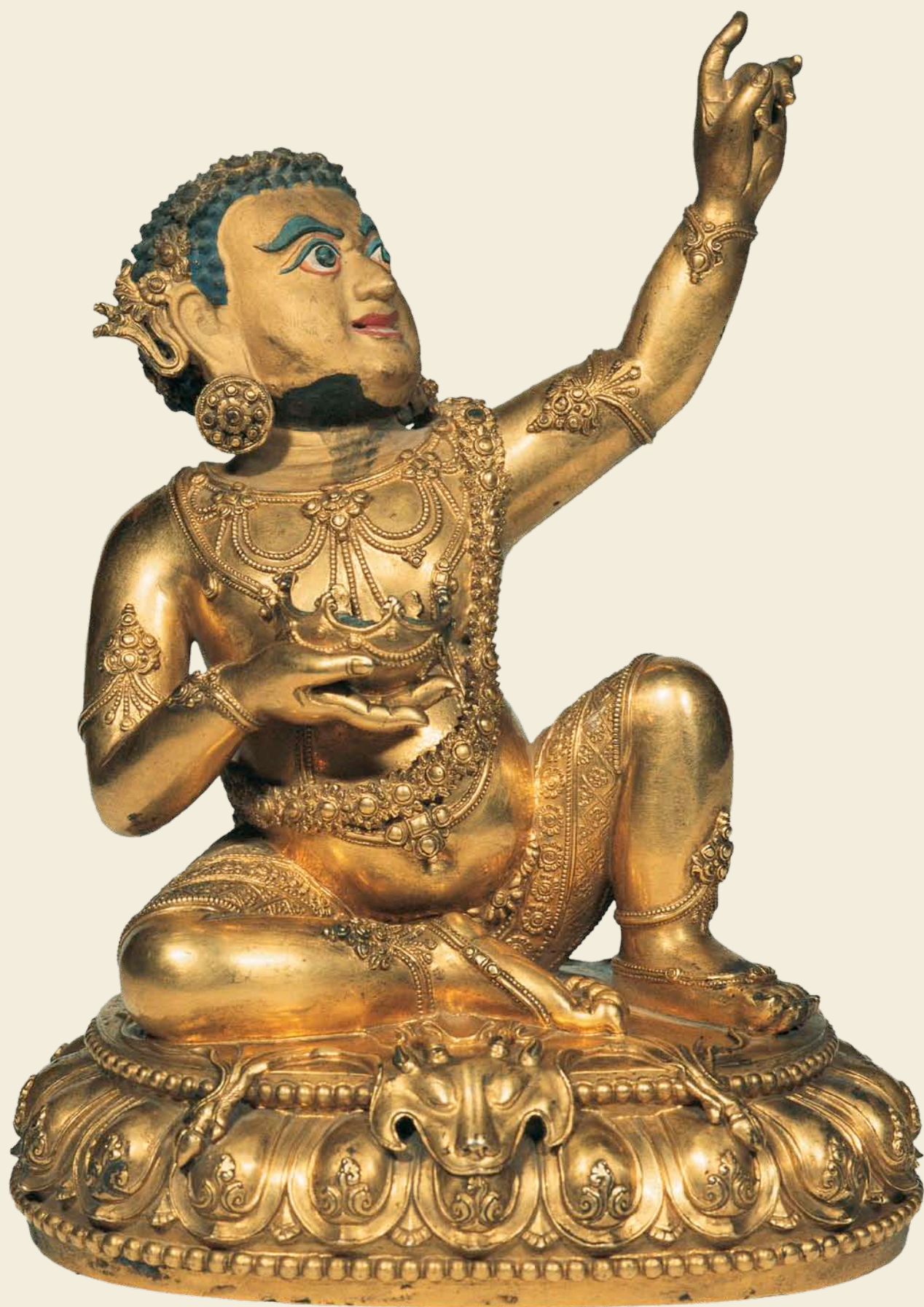
Mahāsiddha Virūpa was born in India and lived during the first half of the 9th century. With regard to the gesture of pointing upwards, the following narrative has been recorded. At one time, a thirsty Virūpa had drunk all the wine in a tavern. When asked by the keeper to settle the bill, Virūpa offered to pay when the shadow on the ground reached a certain point. Then by pointing with his hand he arrested the sun in its course. After the sun had been prevented from moving for two days and one night, the perplexed king of the region made enquiries. Hearing that a Yogin had stopped the sun in its path, the king settled the debt. Virūpa left and the sun continued its course. Virūpa, who is especially popular with the *Sa skya* order, when portrayed as “arresting the sun in its course”, is either shown in the uncommon (*thun mong ma yin pa*) position – signified by the raised right hand, or the common (*thun mong ba*) position – signified by the raised left hand. As a teacher he displays the “gesture of the wheel of the doctrine” (*dharmacakra-mudrā*).

On top of the pedestal, beside the right knee, is inscribed the six-character Yongle mark: “*Da Ming Yongle nian shi*”.

Po ta la Collection: Li ma lha khang; inventory no. 1372

Lhasa (Central Tibet; P.R. China) (Photo: 1993)

Published: U. von Schroeder. 2001. *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, Vol. Two: *Tibet & China*, pp. 1290–1291, pls. 363B–363C.



GLOSSARY

The Sanskrit terminology used for the descriptions of attitudes (*āsana*), gestures (*mudrā*), and attributes are, with few exceptions, those used by Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann in *Introduction à l'iconographie du tantrisme bouddhique* (1975). They are identical with the terms used in the Sanskrit iconographic compendiums *Kriyāsaṃgraha (KS)*, *Niṣpannayogāvalī (NSP)*, *Piṇḍīkrama-Sādhana (PKS)*, and *Sādhanamālā (SM)*.

Direction:	south	east or centre	centre or east	west	north
“Transcendental Buddha”:	Ratnasambhava	Akṣobhya	Vairocana	Amitābha	Amoghasiddhi
Gesture (<i>mudrā</i>):	<i>varada</i>	<i>bhūmisparśa</i>	<i>bodhyagrī</i>	<i>dhyāna</i>	<i>abhaya</i>
Attribute:	<i>ratna</i>	<i>vajra</i>	<i>cakra</i>	<i>padma</i>	<i>khaḍga</i>
Mount (<i>vāhana</i>):	horse	elephant	lion/leogryph	peacock	<i>garuḍa</i>
“Emanational Buddha”:	Kāśyapa	Kanakamuni	Krakucchanda	Śākyamuni	Maitreya
Bodhisattva:	Ratnapāṇi	Vajrapāṇi	Samantabhadra	Avalokiteśvara	Viśvapāṇi

A

ābhaṅga	(Skt.) – a Sanskrit term referring to one of the three standing positions, namely <i>ābhaṅga</i> , <i>samabhaṅga</i> , and <i>atibhaṅga</i> , which as a group of three is called <i>tribhaṅga</i> or “three <i>bhaṅgas</i> ”. These three terms described different variations of height reductions
abhaya-mudrā	(Skt.) – <i>sKyabs sbyin phyag rgya</i> (Tib.) («kyabjin chagya»): “gesture of reassurance, fearlessness, protection”; the characteristic gesture of Tathāgata Amoghasiddhi
Ādibuddha	(Skt.) – Dang po’i sangs rgyas (Tib.) («dangpo sangye»): “Primordial Buddha”, the <i>dharmakāya</i> aspect of a Buddha
ajina	(Skt.) – “skin”; the skin of an animal, such as an antelope
akṣamālā	(Skt.) – <i>bGrang phreng</i> (Tib.) («drangtreng»): “garland made of <i>akṣa</i> fruits, wreath of <i>akṣa</i> fruits”; rosary composed of a various number of beads made of different materials such as pearls, coral, wood, bone, or fruits, etc.
ālīḍha	(Skt.) – signifying heroism; standing attitude of stepping to the left with the left leg bent and the right one straight or dancing attitude on the right leg with the left leg raised and bent; [for stepping to the right see <i>pratyālīḍha</i>]
añjali-mudrā	(Skt.) – Sanskrit literary meaning “two handfuls gesture”. <i>Thal mo sbyar ba</i> (Tib.) («talmo jarwa»): gesture of respectful salutation and adoration with the two hands joined palm to palm, but slightly held apart, held before the chest
aṅkuśa	(Skt.) – <i>lCags kyu</i> (Tib.) («chakyu»): “hook”
ardhaparyāṅka	(Skt.) – “half-throne attitude”: attitude of which sitting, standing, and dancing variations exist; synonymous with <i>pratyālīḍha</i>
aṣṭamahāprātihārya	(Skt.) – “the eight great illusory displays” or “the eight great miraculous events”; title of a Buddhist text known only through a 10th century Chinese translation, relating to the “major events in the life of Śākyamuni” which took place at the “eight great places” (<i>aṣṭamahāsthāna</i>)
aṣṭamahāsthāna	(Skt.) – “eight great places”; the eight great places in Śākyamuni’s life; namely Lumbinī, Bodhgayā,

āśva	(Skt.) – <i>rTa</i> (Tib.) («ta»): “horse”
atibhaṅga	(Skt.) – a Sanskrit term referring to one of the three standing positions, namely <i>ābhaṅga</i> , <i>samabhaṅga</i> , and <i>atibhaṅga</i> , which as a group of three is called <i>tribhaṅga</i> or “three <i>bhaṅgas</i> ”. These three terms described different variations of height reductions
B	
bhadrāsana	(Skt.) – “auspicious posture”, signifying sovereignty; posture of Vaśyādrikāra-Tārā (<i>SM</i> 92). Used to describe the sitting attitude with both legs pendent, also known as “European sitting posture”
bhaṅga	(Skt.) – the Sanskrit term “ <i>bhaṅga</i> ” often wrongly interpreted as “ <i>bent</i> ” actually means “ <i>lowering or shortening</i> ” of the height of a statue [see also <i>ābhaṅga</i> , <i>atibhaṅga</i> , <i>dviḥbhaṅga</i> , <i>samabhaṅga</i> , and <i>tribhaṅga</i>]
bhūmisparśa-mudrā	(Skt.) – <i>Sa gnon phyag rgya</i> (Tib.) («sanön chagya»): “gesture of touching the earth”; resting the left hand in the lap, extending the right hand in the gesture of touching the earth; the characteristic gesture of Tathāgata Akṣobhya
bodhi	(Skt.) – “awakening, enlightenment”
Bodhisattva	(Skt.) – <i>Byang chub sems dpa’</i> (Tib.) («changchub sempa»): “a being directed toward complete enlightenment”. The Mahāyāna doctrine considers the Bodhisattva status a higher goal than that of the <i>arahatta</i> (P.) of the Theravādins. For a Bodhisattva, the liberation of all beings is more important than his personal attainment of <i>nirvāṇa</i> . Bodhisattva is a Sanskrit masculine noun. Female Bodhisattvas don’t exist in Indian Buddhist literature. Tibetan Buddhism does distinguish between male and female Bodhisattvas
bodhyagrī-mudrā	(Skt.) – <i>Byang chub mchog gi phyag rgya</i> (Tib.) («chang chub chog chagya»): “gesture of highest enlightenment”; holding in the right hand the outstretched index finger of the left hand; gesture of Tathāgata Vairocana; often wrongly named <i>bodhyaṅgī-mudrā</i>

Glossary

Bon	(Tib.)	<i>Bon</i> is a religious tradition of Indian origin. Later and different <i>Bon</i> in its monastic form has many similarities to Buddhism			with the <i>dharmacakra-mudrā</i> ; should exclusively be used in the context of Śākyamuni commemorating the first sermon at Sārnāth and not in the case of every image of Śākyamuni in the teaching pose, and never for other deities!
brass		metal alloy of copper and zinc			
bronze		metal alloy of copper and tin			
brahma-muṇḍa	(Skt.) –	head of Brahmā		dharmakāya	(Skt.) – <i>Chos sku</i> (Tib.) («chöku»): “dharma body”; name of one of the “three bodies” (<i>trikāya</i>); name of the ultimate state, represented by the “primordial Buddha”, also known as the Ādibuddha; [see also <i>nirmāṇakāya</i> and <i>saṃbhogakāya</i>]
buddhapāda	(Skt.) –	“foot mark of the Buddha”; stone slab carved with the sacred imprint of Buddha’s feet decorated with auspicious symbols		dharmapāla	(Skt.) – <i>Chos skyong</i> [srung ma] (Tib.) («chögyong [sung ma]»): “protector of the <i>dharmā</i> ”; protector of the Buddhist doctrine
buddhaśramaṇa-mudrā	(Skt.) –	“gesture (of salutation) of a Buddhist renunciant (monk)”; holding usually the right hand level with the head, all fingers stretched with the palm up		dharmarāja	(Skt.) – <i>Chos rgyal</i> (Tib.) («chögyal»): “king of the doctrine”; King Srong btsan sgam po (reigned c. 618–649) together with Khri srong lde brtsan (reigned c. 755–797) and Ral pa can (reigned c. 815–838) are traditionally regarded as the great Tibetan Buddhist kings (<i>dharmarājas</i>)
C					
cakra	(Skt.) –	<i>’Khor lo</i> (Tib.) («korlo»): “wheel, disc”; Symbol associated by the Buddhists with the “wheel of the doctrine” (<i>dharmā-cakra</i>); for the Hindus a discus as a warrior symbol and the symbol of the sun		dhyāna-mudrā	(Skt.) – <i>bSam gtan gyi phyag rgya</i> (Tib.) («samten gyi chagya»): “gesture of meditation”; symbolizing mental unfolding; position of hands during certain meditation methods; a term to be used only if both hands are placed in the lap; the characteristic gesture of Amitāyus and Tathāgata Amitābha; synonymous with <i>samādhi-mudrā</i> ; [N.B. the left hand alone cannot display the <i>dhyāna-mudrā</i>]
Cakravartin	(Skt.) –	<i>’Khor lo bsgyur ba’i rgyal po</i> (Tib.) («korlo gyurwey gyalpo»): “world-sovereign”		dhyānāsana	(Skt.) – “attitude of meditation”; sitting attitude with crossed and interlocked legs with both soles of the feet upwards. The term <i>dhyānāsana</i> is not encountered in the Sanskrit <i>sādhanas</i> , where <i>vajraparyāṅkāśana</i> is used instead. [N.B. many art historians wrongly call this posture <i>padmāsana</i> , which is used in Hindu iconography only]
channavīra	(Skt.)	“crossband”; two beaded chains worn across the chest and attached in front and back to a circular ornament		“Dhyānibodhisattva”	(Skt.) – “Meditation Bodhisattva”; this term, which does not exist in traditional Buddhist texts, was invented in 1828 by Hodgson to describe the <i>saṃbhogakāya</i> aspect of the Bodhisattva emanations of a Tathāgata
cūḍāmaṇi	(Skt.) –	<i>cūḍāmaṇi</i> (P.): “crest jewel”; name of a jewel worn on top of the head; perhaps shown as a flame on the head of Buddha		“Dhyānibuddha”	(Skt.) – “Meditation Buddha”; this term, which does not exist in traditional Buddhist texts, was invented in 1828 by Hodgson to describe the <i>saṃbhogakāya</i> aspect of “transcendental Buddhas”, Jinās, or Tathāgatas
D					
Ḍākinī	(Skt.) –	mKha’ ’gro ma (Tib.) («khandroma»): “she who goes through the sky”; female embodiment of intrinsic awareness, often serving as a muse or messenger of the tantric practitioner		dvārapāla	(Skt.) – <i>sGo srung</i> (Tib.) («gosung»): “doorkeeper”
ḍamaru	(Skt.) –	<i>Cang te’u, Ḍa ma ru</i> (Tib.) («changdeu, ḍamaru»): “double drum”; attribute in the shape of a small drum shaped like an hourglass		dviḥaṅga	(Skt.) – “two <i>bhaṅga</i> ”, namely <i>ābhaṅga</i> and <i>sambhaṅga</i> ; usually wrongly interpreted as a standing position bent at hip and neck [see also <i>tribhaṅga</i>]
daṇḍa	(Skt.) –	<i>dByug pa</i> (Tib.) («yukpa»): “staff, club”; in Tibet often surmounted by a skull or a <i>vajra</i> ; attribute of fearsome deities		E	
Devanāgarī, Nāgarī	(Skt.) –	script used for writing Sanskrit and Hindi in Northern India		“emanational Buddha” – describes the <i>nirmāṇakāya</i> aspects during the worldly existence of a Buddha such as Buddha Śākyamuni and the group of “seven emanational Buddhas” (<i>sapta-buddha</i>) [see <i>trikāya</i>]	
devī	(Skt.) –	<i>lHa mo</i> (Tib.) («lhamo»): “goddess”; general attribution for minor female deities		G	
dhāraṇī	(Skt.) –	“the act of holding, bearing, maintaining”; a mystical verse or charm, a conglomeration of syllables used as a charm or prayer, especially in Buddhism		gadā	(Skt.) – <i>Be con</i> (Tib.) («pechön»): “mace, club”; attribute of Tantric manifestations, called the “emblem of destruction”
dharmā	(Skt.) –	<i>Chos</i> (Tib.) («chö»): “doctrine, law, practice, justice, religion”; name for the Buddhist teaching		gajacarma	(Skt.) – “elephant skin”; one of the attributes of the male Buddhist deity Cakrasaṃvara
dharmacakra	(Skt.) –	<i>Chos kyi’ khor lo</i> (Tib.) («chökyi korlo»): “wheel of the doctrine”; symbol of Buddha’s teachings		gaṇḍī	(Skt.) – <i>Gaṇḍī</i> (Tib.) («gandi»); attribute laid across the
dharmacakra-mudrā	(Skt.) –	<i>Chos’ khor phyag rgya</i> (Tib.) («chökor chagya»): “gesture of the wheel of the doctrine”; variously depicted gesture combining two hands held before the chest; [see also <i>dharmacakra-pravartana-mudrā</i>]			
dharmacakra-pravartana-mudrā	(Skt.) –	<i>Chos’ khor bskor ba’i phyag rgya</i> (Tib.) («chökor korwey chagya»): “gesture of setting in motion the wheel of the doctrine”; depicted identically			

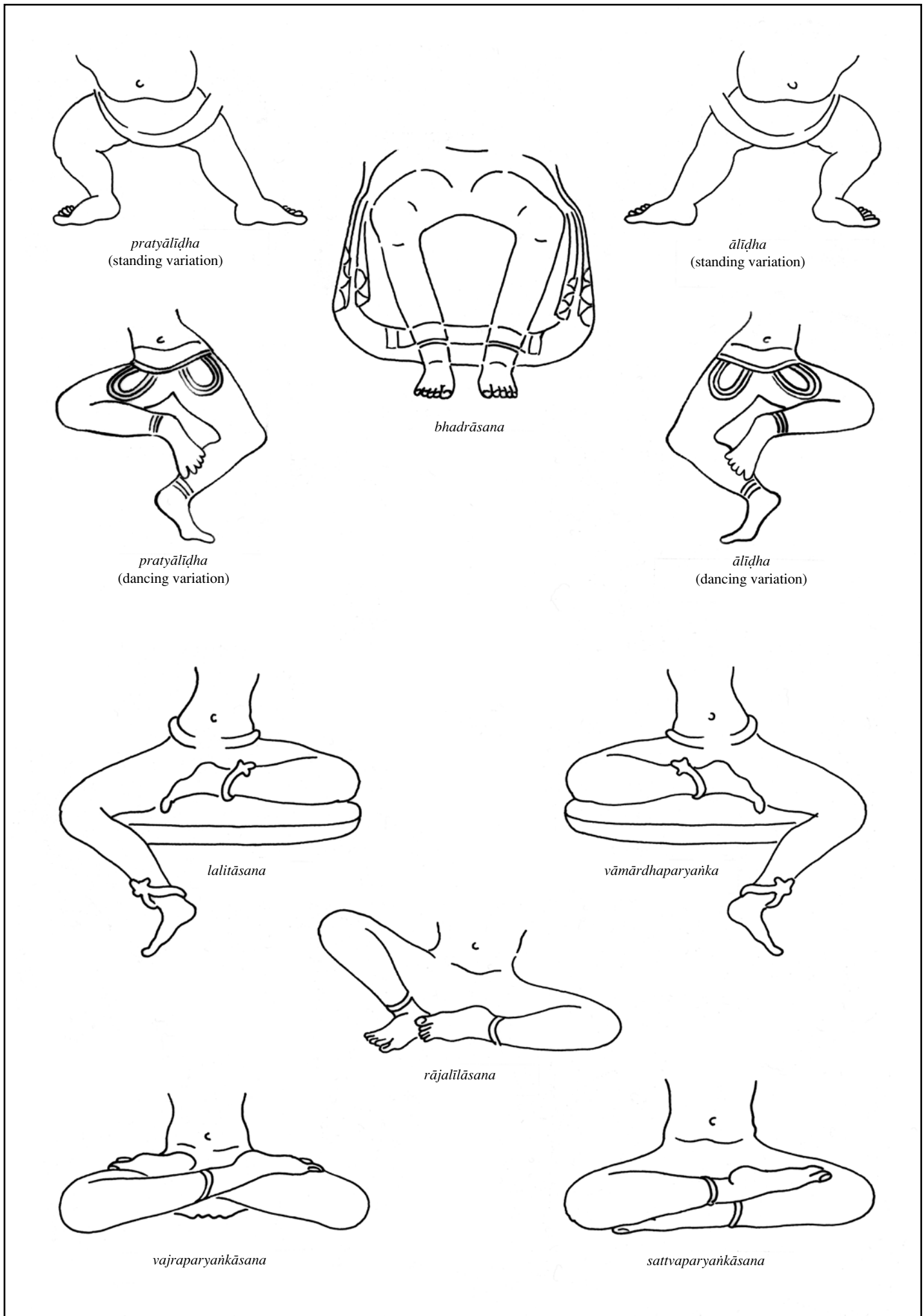
		arms of Pañjaranātha Mahākāla (Tib.: Gur gyi mgon po or Gur mgon) is not the pole of a tent but a wooden implement used to announce the hour in a Buddhist monastery. [N.B. the term <i>gaṇḍi</i> does not occur in the <i>Sādhanamālā</i>]			
Garuḍa	(Skt.) –	Khyung (Tib.) («kyung»): interpreted as “devourer”; mythical bird. Vehicle (<i>vāhana</i>) of Tathāgata Amoghasiddhi, Vajrapāṇi, and the Hindu god Viṣṇu; originally regarded as a kind of bird; later half bird, half man; chief enemy of the snakes (<i>nāga</i>); [the meaning of Khyung in the Tibetan context and of Garuḍa in the Indian mythology is very similar, but in Tibetan art the Khyung is often horned]		karaṇa-mudrā	(Skt.) – “skilful gesture”; gesture of exorcism with index finger and small finger erect, while the thumb presses the two remaining fingers against the palm of the hand
				karaṇḍamakuṭa	(Skt.) – “basket crown”; head-dress decorated with pots or baskets turned upside down
				kartrikā, kartri	(Skt.) – <i>Gri gug</i> (Tib.) («trigug»): “chopper”; ritual chopper, attribute of mainly wrathful deities, often shown together with a skull-cup (<i>kāpala</i>)
				kaṭaka (-hast)-mudrā	(Skt.) – “ring hand gesture”; fingers held in a way that an attribute such as the stalk of a flower can be inserted
ghaṇṭā	(Skt.) –	<i>Dril bu</i> (Tib.) («dribu»): “bell, prayer-bell”; female principle of the transcendent void as a symbol of absolute wisdom; [see also <i>prajñā</i>]. [N.B. when the bell is surmounted by a <i>vajra</i> , it is called <i>vajraghaṇṭā</i>]		khaḍga	(Skt.) – <i>Ral gri</i> (Tib.) («raltri»): “sword”; attribute, especially of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and Tathāgata Amoghasiddhi, which in Buddhism signifies “pure knowledge” and symbolizes the “destruction of or cutting through of ignorance”; sometimes shown in a pair with a shield (<i>kheṭaka</i>)
guru	(Skt.) –	<i>Bla ma</i> (Tib.) («lama»): “master”; a title given to a respected teacher		khakkhara	(Skt.) – <i>'Khar gsil</i> (Tib.) («karsil»): “beggar’s staff, alarm staff”; attribute, especially of the two favourite disciples of Buddha, Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana
H					
Hinayāna	(Skt.) –	Theg dman (Tib.) («tekmen»): the “Little Vehicle”; derogative term used by the followers of Mahāyāna Buddhism or “Great Vehicle” for the orthodox form of Buddhism with texts in Pāli, stressing the ideal of <i>arhatva</i> (“Arhatship”), predominant in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam; synonymous with the terms Theravāda (P.) and Sthaviravāda (Skt.) (“School of the Elders”); [see also Mahāyāna]		khaṭvāṅga	(Skt.) – <i>rTse gsum, Kha twaṃ ga</i> (Tib.) («tseum, khatwamga»): “limb of a cot”, a ceremonial staff surmounted by a water-jar (<i>kalaśa</i>), two crossed diamond sceptre (<i>viśvavajra</i>), three human heads in an increasing state of decay with a skull at the top with a half- <i>vajra</i> finial or a trident (<i>triśūla</i>); an attribute of which several variations exist. The <i>khaṭvāṅga</i> is an attribute of male and female deities as a substitute for an image of the consort of the opposite sex
J					
jambhara	(Skt.) –	also <i>jambhīra, jambīra</i> ; “citron”; attribute of various Buddhist and Hindu deities; synonymous with <i>mātuluṅga</i> which is used in the <i>sādhanas</i>		kheṭaka	(Skt.) – “shield” often shown in a pair with a sword (<i>khaḍga</i>)
jaṭā	(Skt.) –	“knot of matted hair”; applied in the case of undecorated hair		kīla	(Skt.) – <i>Phur pa, Phur bu</i> (Tib.) («purpa, purbu»): “ritual dagger”; [see also <i>vajrakīla</i>]
jaṭāmakuṭa	(Skt.) –	“crown of matted hair”; applied in the case of the hair fashioned with a tall knot		kinnara	(Skt.) <i>kinnarī</i> (fem.): literally “what sort of man”; name of a kind of hybrid semi-divine being earlier with a human body and a horse head, later with a bird’s body and a human head playing a lute
K					
kālacakra	(Skt.) –	<i>Dus kyi 'khor lo</i> (Tib.) («dügyi korlo»): “wheel of time”. The <i>Kālacakra Tantra</i> , developed during the 11th or 12th century, represents the last stage of esoteric Buddhism in North-Eastern India		kīrtimukha	(Skt.) – “fame-face”; decorative motif with the face of a grinning lion from whose mouth issues forth beaded tassels or other elements
kalaśa	(Skt.) –	<i>Bum pa</i> (Tib.) («bumpa»): “water-pot, water-jar”; filled with the elixir of immortality (<i>amṛta</i>); associated with fertility		kuṇḍikā	(Skt.) – or kuṇḍī ; <i>sPyi blugs</i> (Tib.) («chilug»): “water-jar”; attribute in the shape of a water-jar with a narrow neck or a pitcher with a pipe; characteristic attribute of Maitreya, Avalokiteśvara, Kurukullā. [N.B. not to be confused with <i>kamaṇḍalu</i>]
kalpalatā	(Skt.) –	“creeper of a world period” or “wishing creeper”; decorative element in the shape of a winding plant		L	
kamaṇḍalu	(Skt.) –	“water-jar, vessel”; attribute in the shape of a gourd or vessel made of wood or earth used for water by ascetics. [N.B. not to be confused with a tight-necked flask or a pitcher with a pipe (kuṇḍī or kuṇḍikā)]		lalitāsana	(Skt.) – “attitude of ease”, signifying beauty and serenity; sitting attitude with the bent left leg flat on the pedestal and the right leg hanging down; not to be confused with <i>rājalīlāsana</i> , where neither of the legs is hanging down. [N.B. with the left leg hanging down see <i>vāmārdhaparyāṅka</i>]
kāpala	(Skt.) –	<i>Thod pa</i> (Tib.) («tōpa»): “skull-cup, alms bowl of the tantric practitioners”; attribute of tantric deities		lokapāla	(Skt.) – <i>'Jig rten skyong</i> (Tib.) («jikden gyong»): “regent” or “guardian” of a quarter of the universe; also known as <i>caturmahārājikas</i> , namely Dhṛtarāṣṭra (east), Vaiśravaṇa (north), Virūdhaka (south), and Virūpākṣa (west)

M

mahāparinirvāṇa	(Skt.) – <i>Yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa</i> (Tib.) («yongsu nyangen ley depa»): “the passing away into final <i>nirvāṇa</i> ” of the Buddha Śākyamuni at Kuśīnagara (Kasia, Uttar Pradesh, N. India); [see also <i>nirvāṇa</i>]
mahārājatilāsana	(Skt.) – “attitude of great royal ease”; sitting attitude with one knee raised and the other flat on the pedestal; not to be confused with <i>lalitāsana</i> , where one leg is hanging down; synonymous with <i>rājatilāsana</i>
Mahāsiddha	(Skt.) – Grub chen (Tib.) («trubchen»): “great perfected one, endowed with supernatural faculties”; name of a historical group of Indian Tantric adepts, of which traditionally eighty-four are listed
Mahāyāna	(Skt.) – Theg pa chen po (Tib.) («tekpā chenpo»): the “Great Vehicle”; form of Buddhism with texts in Sanskrit, stressing the ideal of the Bodhisattva and predominant in the Himalayas and Tibet; [see also Hīnayāna and Theravāda]
makara	(Skt.) – <i>Chu srin</i> (Tib.) («chusin»): name of a mythical creature, half crocodile and half dolphin
mālā	(Skt.) – <i>Phreng ba</i> (Tib.) («trengwa»): “wreath, garland, rosary”; used during the recitation of prayers and mantras
Maṇḍala	(Skt.) – <i>dKyil 'khor</i> (Tib.) («kyilkor»): “circle”; psycho-cosmic diagram, mystic diagram of the cosmos; Maṇḍalas are used in all Indian religions
maṇi	(Skt.) – <i>nor bu</i> (Tib.) («norbu»): “jewel”; [see also <i>ratna</i>]
mantra	(Skt.) – <i>sNgags</i> (Tib.) («ngag»): “formula, invocation”; used in all varieties of Indian religions including Buddhism
“Mānuṣibuddha”	(Skt.) – “human or mortal (<i>mānuṣya</i>) Buddha”; this term, which does not exist in traditional Buddhist texts, was invented in 1828 by Hodgson to describe the <i>nirmāṇakāya</i> aspect of Buddhas [see also “Dhyāni-buddha” and “Dhyānibodhisattva”]
“Mortal Buddha”	– translation of the term Mānuṣibuddha, “human or mortal (<i>mānuṣya</i>) Buddha”; a term, which does not exist in traditional Buddhist texts, invented in 1828 by Hodgson to describe the <i>nirmāṇakāya</i> aspect of Buddhas
Māra	(Skt.) – <i>bDud</i> (Tib.) («dü»): “destroyer, tempter”; personification of evil and death; synonymous with <i>kāma</i>
mudrā	(Skt.) – <i>Phyag rgya</i> (Tib.) («chagya»): “joy to give”; gesture with a ritual and symbolic meaning. Each of the five fingers is associated with a natural element as follows: thumb with water; index finger with ether; middle finger with earth; ring finger with fire; little finger with wind (air)
muṇḍamālā	(Skt.) – “skull garland”: attribute of wrathful deities
N	
nāga	(Skt.) – <i>Klu</i> (Tib.) («lu»): “snake”; snake-like demigods, protectors of the waters and the treasures of the earth; mostly depicted as theriomorphic cobra with several heads [<i>nāga</i>

= male; *nāgā* and *nāginī* = female]

nāgakeśara	(Skt.) – nāgavṛkṣa (Tib.) <i>Klu shing</i> («lushing»): “snake wood”; name of a tree (Lat.: <i>Mesua Roxburghii</i>). The Bodhisattva Maitreya often holds as an attribute a branch or a flower of this tree, which is actually Maitreya’s Bodhi tree
nāgopavīta	(Skt.) – “sacred thread in the form of a snake”
nakulī, nakulikā	(Skt.) – <i>Ne’u le</i> (Tib.) («neuley»): “mongoose”; jewel-spewing female mongoose, attribute of Kubera, Vaiśravaṇa, Jambhala, and other deities of prosperity
namaskāra-mudrā	(Skt.) – <i>Thal mo sbyar ba</i> (Tib.) («talmo jarwa»): “salutation gesture”: gesture of respectful salutation and adoration with the two hands firmly joined palm to palm held before the chest. [N.B. If the palms are slightly hollowed, this gesture is known as <i>añjali-mudrā</i>]
navasūcika-vajra	(Skt.) – “nine-pronged vajra”; [see also <i>vajra</i>]
nīlotpala	(Skt.) – <i>utpal sngon po</i> (Tib.) («utpal ngönpo»): “blue water lily” (Lat. <i>Nymphaea stellata</i>); blue water lily with narrow petals; synonymous with the blue <i>utpala</i> ; attribute of most forms of Mañjuśrī and the green and white forms of Tārā and their assistant deities. [N.B. the water lily (<i>utpala</i>) is a flower of the night and related to the moon; whereas the lotus (<i>padma</i>) is a flower of the day and thus related to the sun]; [see also <i>padma</i>]
nirmāṇakāya	(Skt.) – <i>sPrul sku</i> (Tib.) («tulku»): “emanation body”; name of one of the three bodies (<i>trikāya</i>); denoting the manner in which a Buddha appears in <i>samsāra</i> (“worldly existence”); the “Emanational Buddhas” such as Buddha Śākyamuni and the group of “seven emanational Buddhas” (<i>sapta-buddha</i>) [see also <i>dharmakāya</i> and <i>saṃbhogakāya</i>]
nirvāṇa	(Skt.) – <i>Mya ngan las 'das pa</i> (Tib.) («nyangen ley depa»): “extinction of suffering”; liberation from the cycle of rebirths by extinguishing all desire; [see also <i>mahāparinirvāṇa</i>]
Niṣpannayogāvalī	(Skt.) – collection of <i>sādhana</i> s describing the appearance of 26 Maṇḍalas [Vajravālī transmitted in versions containing 28, 42, 45, 55, etc. Maṇḍalas]; compiled by Mahāpaṇḍita Abhayākaragupta of the Vikramaśīla monastery during the early 12th century
P	
padma	(Skt.) – <i>Padma</i> (Tib.) («pema»): lotos (Greek and German); lotus (Latin and English) (Lat. <i>Nelumbium speciosum</i> , <i>Nelumbo nucifera</i>); a particular water flower with rather broad petals; can be of any colour except blue; associated with purity and creative fertility; for white lotus see <i>puṇḍarīka</i> ; for blue flowers see <i>nīlotpala</i>
padmāsana	(Skt.) – “attitude of the lotus position”; sitting attitude with crossed thighs and bent knees used only for the descriptions of Hindu gods; [see also <i>dhyānāsana</i> and <i>vajraparyāṅkāśana</i>]
Pāli	(P.) (Skt.) – the language of the Theravāda Buddhist scriptures
pañcakulajīna-makuṭa	(Skt.) – <i>rGyal ba rigs lnga’i dbu rgyan</i> (Tib.) («gyalwa rig ngey ugyen»): “five <i>jina</i> families crown”; on statues: the crown is decorated with effigies of the five <i>jinās</i> , Tathāgatas; for rituals: a crown assembled from five decorated panels



Glossary



vitarka



dharmacakra



abhaya



bhūmiśparśa



dhyāna / samādhi



varada



añjali



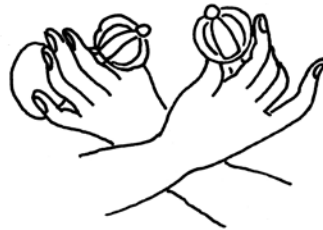
kaṭaka



namaskāra



*buddhaśramaṇa /
vandanābhinaya*



prajñāliṅgābhinaya



karaṇa



bodhyagrī



trailokyavijaya / vajrahūmkāra



tarjanī

pañcamudrā	(Skt.) – “five seals”: ornaments of numerous male and female tantric deities comprising a diadem (<i>cakrī</i>), often in the shape of a vajra finial symbolizing Akṣobhya; earrings (<i>kuṇḍala</i>) symbolizing Amitābha; necklace (<i>kañṭhī</i>) symbolizing Ratnasambhava; bracelets (<i>rucaka</i>) symbolizing Vairocana; apron (<i>mekhalā</i>) symbolizing Amoghasiddhi	in the <i>Bodhisattva-Avadānakalpalatā</i> composed in the 11th century by Kṣemendra
pañcasūcika-vajra	(Skt.) – “five-pronged vajra”	
pañcatathāgata-makuṭa	(Skt.) – <i>bDe bzhin gshegs pa lnga’i dbu rgyan</i> (Tib.) («dezhin shekpa ngey ugyen»): “five Tathāgata crown”; on statues: the crown is decorated with effigies of the five Tathāgatas; for rituals: a crown assembled from five panels	
paraśu	(Skt.) – <i>dGra sta</i> (Tib.) («drada»): “axe, hatchet”; attribute of mainly wrathful deities to destroy the enemies of Buddhism	
pāśa	(Skt.) – <i>Zhags pa</i> (Tib.) («zhagpa»): “noose, fetter”; attribute of mainly wrathful deities	
prajñā	(Skt.) – <i>Shes rab</i> (Tib.) («sherab»): “wisdom”; the quiescent female principle in tantric Mahāyāna Buddhism; [see also <i>upāya</i>]	
prajñā-liṅganābhinaya-mudrā	(Skt.) – “embracing the <i>prajñā</i> gesture”; gesture with the hands turned inwards and crossed before the chest, the right hand holding the <i>vajra</i> , the left holding the <i>ghaṇṭā</i> , sometimes embracing the consort. Symbolizes fusion of polarities (<i>nirvāṇa/saṃsāra</i>), of the sexes (<i>prajñā/upāya</i>)	
pratyāhīdha	(Skt.) – <i>g.Yas bskum g.Yon brkyang</i> , etc. (Tib.) («yegum yumgyang»): “standing as in violent fight”, signifying fierceness and destructive mood: attitude of which sitting, standing and dancing variations exist. Standing variation: stepping to the right with the right leg bent and the left one straight. Dancing variation: on the left leg with the right leg raised and bent; synonymous with <i>ardhapaṇḍita</i> ; [for stepping to the left, see <i>ālīdha</i>]	
“primordial Buddha”	Describes the “ <i>dharmakāya</i> aspect of a Buddha [see <i>trikāya</i> , Ādibuddha]	
pūjā	(Skt.) – <i>mChod pa</i> (Tib.) («chöpa»): “ritual worship and ritual offering”	
puṇḍarīka	(Skt.) – “white lotus”; attribute characteristic of Candra, Kālacakra, Kṣitigarbha, Mahāsaravati, Sarasvatī, and Vairocana	
puṣpamālā	(Skt.) – <i>Me tog ’phreng ba</i> (Tib.) («metog trengwa»): “garland of flowers”; an attribute	
pustaka	(Skt.) – <i>Glegs bam</i> (Tib.) («legpam»): “manuscript, book”: in the case of some images representing the manuscript (<i>pustaka</i>) of the <i>Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra</i>	
R		
rāja	(Skt.) – <i>rGyal po</i> (Tib.) («gyalpo»): “king”	
rājatilāsana	(Skt.) – “attitude of royal ease”; sitting attitude with one knee raised and the other flat on the pedestal; not to be confused with <i>lalitāsana</i> where the right leg is hanging down	
rājamahāvihāra	(Skt.) – “great royal (Buddhist) monastery”	
ratna	(Skt.) – <i>Rin chen</i> (Tib.) («rinchen»): “jewel”	
ratnayūpa	(Skt.) – “sacrificial post of gems”; Maitreya’s association with the <i>ratnayūpa</i> as a symbol of keeping awake the memory of the doctrine (<i>dharmā</i>) is described	
ratnopavīta	(Skt.) – “beaded sacred thread made of jewels”	
S		
sādhana	(Skt.) – <i>sGrub thabs</i> (Tib.) («druptab»): “method for realization”; name of a practice of worship used for the invocation of deities of Buddhist- and Hindu Tantrism	
Sāghanamālā	(Skt.) – “Garland or string of <i>sāghanas</i> ”; collection of texts describing the appearances of deities. Collection of 312 <i>sāghanas</i> compiled by Mahāpaṇḍita Abhayākara-gupta of the Vikramaśīla monastery during the early 12th century	
Śākyamuni	(Skt.) – Sakyamuni (P.): “the sage of the Śākya-clan”; name of the historical Buddha	
śakti	(Skt.) – <i>Nus ma</i> (Tib.) («nüma»): “energy”; the active female principle in Tantric rituals; a term used in Hinduism and more rarely in Buddhism; [see also <i>prajñā</i>]	
sambhaṅga	(Skt.) – a Sanskrit term referring to one of the three standing positions, namely <i>ābhaṅga</i> , <i>sambhaṅga</i> , and <i>atibhaṅga</i> , which as a group of three is called <i>tribhaṅga</i> or “three <i>bhaṅgas</i> ”. These three terms describe different variations of height reductions	
samādhi	(Skt.) – <i>Ting nge ’dzin</i> (Tib.) («ting nge dzin»): “meditation, concentration of the thoughts”: highest stage of <i>yoga</i>	
samādhi-mudrā	(Skt.) – <i>Ting ’dzin gyi phyag rgya</i> (Tib.) («tingdzin gyi chagya»): “meditation gesture”; see <i>dhyāna-mudrā</i>	
samapāda[sthānaka]	(Skt.) – “resting feet”; upright, symmetrical, standing attitude with straight legs	
sambhogakāya	(Skt.) – <i>Longs spyod rdzogs pa’i sku</i> , <i>Longs sku</i> (Tib.) («longjō dzogpeku, longku»): “enjoyment body”; name of one of the three bodies (<i>trikāya</i>); denoting the manner in which a Buddha appears beyond <i>saṃsāra</i> in a pure form; for example as the five “transcendental Buddhas”, the Tathāgatas; [see also <i>dharmakāya</i> and <i>nirmāṇakāya</i>]	
saṃsāra	(Skt.) – <i>’Khor ba</i> (Tib.) («korwa»): “worldly existence”	
saṅgha	(Skt.) – <i>dGe ’dun</i> (Tib.) («gendun»): “assemblage, community” of Buddhist monks or nuns	
śaṅkha	(Skt.) – <i>Dung</i> (Tib.) («dung»): “conch, conch-shell”	
Sanskrit	(Skt.) – ancient Indo-Aryan language; the sacred scriptures of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Hinduism are written in Sanskrit and Prakrit	
sapta-buddha	(Skt.) – <i>Sangs rgyas rabs btun</i> (Tib.) («sangye rabdün»); namely Vipaśyin, Śikhin, Viśvabhū, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, and Śākyamuni	
saptaratna	(Skt.) – <i>Rin chen sna bdun</i> (Tib.) («rinchen nadun»): “seven jewels” characterizing a “world sovereign”	
śara	(Skt.) – <i>mDa’</i> (Tib.) («da»): “arrow”	
sattvaparyāṅkāśana	(Skt.) – “noble [posture]”: particular meditation attitude with the right leg placed upon the left leg with only the sole of the right foot visible. Common in Southern India, Sri Lanka and South-East Asia, but rarely encountered in Northern India,	

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		the Himalayas, or Tibet. Earliest occurrence was found at Amarāvati and dates around 150–200 . [N.B. not to confused with the Hindu term <i>virāsana</i>]			<i>sambhogakāya</i> , and <i>nirmāṇakāya</i>
siṃha	(Skt.)	– <i>Seng ge</i> (Tib.) («senge»): “lion”	triratna	(Skt.)	– <i>dKon mchog gsum</i> (Tib.) («könchog sum»): “triple gem”; describes the threefold refuge of Buddhism: <i>buddha</i> , <i>dharma</i> , <i>saṅgha</i>
Stūpa	(Skt.)	– mChod rten (Tib.) («chöden»): “crest, top, summit”; structure of a more or less hemispherical shape and erected over relics; mostly associated with the <i>mahāparinirvāṇa</i> of Buddha Śākyamuni at Kuśinagara (Kasia, Uttar Pradesh, N. India); synonymous with <i>caitya</i>	trisūcika-vajra	(Skt.)	– “three-pronged <i>vajra</i> ”; [see also <i>vajra</i>]
śūla	(Skt.)	– “spear”	triśūla	(Skt.)	– <i>rTse gsum</i> (Tib.) («tse sum»): “trident”; attribute of great antiquity used as a symbolic weapon against evil energy; often attached to the top of a <i>khaṭvāṅga</i>
śūnyatā	(Skt.)	– <i>sTong pa nyid</i> (Tib.) («dongpanyi»): “emptiness”; certain state of mind	Tuṣita	(Skt.)	– <i>dGa’ ldan</i> (Tib.) («ganden»): “joyful”; name of the heaven where the future Buddhas like Maitreya temporarily live
U					
T			upāya	(Skt.)	– <i>Thabs</i> (Tib.) («tab»): “method”; the active male principle in Tantric Mahāyāna Buddhism; [see also <i>prajñā</i>]
tantra	(Skt.)	– <i>rGyud</i> (Tib.) («gyü»): “warp, net”: magic formula of ritualistic character in Hinduism and Buddhism. There exists four classes of Buddhist Tantras: 1. Kriyā Tantras; 2. Caryā Tantras; 3. Yoga Tantras; and 4. Anuttarayoga Tantras	ūrṇā	(Skt.)	– <i>mDzod spu</i> (Tib.) («dzöpu»): tuft of hair between the eyebrows; one of the thirty-two auspicious signs of Buddha
Tantrayāna	(Skt.)	– “ <i>tantra</i> vehicle”: name of a Tantric form of Mahāyāna Buddhism; synonymous with Vajrayāna	uṣṇīṣa	(Skt.)	– <i>gTsug tor</i> (Tib.) («tsuktor»): “turban”; cranial protuberance on the top of the head; one of the thirty-two auspicious signs of Buddha
tarjanī-mudrā	(Skt.)	– <i>sDig ’dzub</i> (Tib.) («dikdzub»): “threatening finger gesture”; the index finger is erect, the remaining fingers form a fist. [PS: Not to be confused with the <i>karaṇa-mudrā</i> where both the index finger and the small finger are erect]	utpala	(Skt.)	– “water lily”: water flower of various colours [see also <i>nilotpala</i>]
Tathāgata	(Skt.)	– bDe bzhin gshegs pa (Tib.) («dezhin shekpa»); term referring to the group of the five “transcendental Buddhas” in the <i>sambhogakāya</i> aspect: Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi. Also an honorary title of Śākyamuni and other “emanational Buddhas”	V		
Theravāda	(P.) (Skt.)	– for Sthaviravāda (Skt.); “School of the Elders”; the only surviving school of early Buddhism, with texts written in Pāli; practiced in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam; synonymous with Hīnayāna (“Little Vehicle”)	vāhana	(Skt.)	– <i>bZhon pa</i> (Tib.) («zhönpa»): “mount”
trailokyavijaya-mudrā	(Skt.)	– <i>Khams gsum rnam rgyal phyag rgya</i> (Tib.) («kamsum namgyal chagya»): “gesture of conquering the three worlds”; gesture with the [principal] hands turned outwards and crossed before the chest, sometimes with the right hand holding the <i>vajra</i> and the left holding the <i>ghaṇṭā</i> ; synonymous with <i>vajrahūmkāra-mudrā</i> . [N.B. if the hands are turned inwards, the gesture is known as <i>prajñāliṅganābhinaya-mudrā</i>]	vajra	(Skt.)	– <i>rDo rje</i> (Tib.) («dorje»): generally interpreted as “diamond sceptre”; male principle; the transcendent diamond which cannot be destroyed
“transcendental Buddha”		– Describes the <i>sambhogakāya</i> aspect of a Buddha [see <i>trikāya</i> , Tathāgata]	vajraghaṇṭā	(Skt.)	– <i>rDo rje dril bu</i> (Tib.) («dorje trilbu»): “ <i>vajra</i> -bell, <i>vajra</i> -prayer-bell”; female principle of the transcendent void
tribhaṅga	(Skt.)	– “three <i>bhaṅga</i> ”: according to the <i>śilpaśāstra</i> literature the term <i>tribhaṅga</i> is not the name of a particular standing position but is used to describe the group of the “three <i>bhaṅgas</i> ”, namely <i>ābhaṅga</i> , <i>samabhaṅga</i> , and <i>atibhaṅga</i> . Cf. Varma, K. M. <i>Myth of the So-called “Tribhaṅga” as a “Pose”</i> . (Santiniketan, 1983)	vajrahūmkāra-mudrā	(Skt.)	– “ <i>vajra hūm</i> syllable gesture”; gesture with the [principal] hands turned outwards and crossed in front of the chest, sometimes with the right hand holding the <i>vajra</i> and the left holding the <i>ghaṇṭā</i> ; synonymous with <i>trailokyavijaya-mudrā</i> . [N.B. if the hands are turned inwards, the gesture is known as <i>prajñāliṅganābhinaya-mudrā</i>]
trikāya	(Skt.)	– <i>sKu gsum</i> (Tib.) («kusum»): “three bodies”; describes three aspects of the Buddhas in Mahāyāna Buddhism: <i>dharmakāya</i> ,	vajrakartrikā	(Skt.)	– <i>rDo rje gri gug</i> (Tib.) («dorje trigug»): “ <i>vajra</i> ritual chopper”; ritual chopper with a handle of a half <i>vajra</i> , attribute of mainly wrathful deities, often shown together with a skull-cup (<i>kāpala</i>)
			vajrakīla	(Skt.)	– <i>rDo rje phur pa</i> (Tib.) («dorje purpa»): name of an important meditation deity of the <i>rNying ma</i> school. Also the name of a ritual dagger called “ <i>vajra</i> dagger” (Tib.: <i>rDo rje phur bu</i> (Tib.) («dorje purbu»))
			vajraparyāṅkāsa	(Skt.)	– “ <i>vajra</i> posture” signifying deep meditation and introspection: sitting attitude with crossed and interlocked legs with both soles of the feet upwards; synonymous with the term <i>dhyānāsana</i> , which, how-ever, is never used in the <i>Sādhanamālā</i>
			vajrāsana	(Skt.)	– “having a seat with a <i>vajra</i> ”: seated on a throne supporting a <i>vajra</i> ; the stone seat under the Bodhi tree at Bodhgayā
			vāmārdhaparyāṅka	(Skt.)	– “left half throne”; sitting attitude with the

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		bent right leg flat on the pedestal and the left leg hanging down; more or less restricted to Mañjuśrī. [N.B. with the right leg hanging down see <i>lalitāsana</i>]		
varada-mudrā	(Skt.) –	<i>mChog sbyin gyi phyag rgya</i> (Tib.) («chokjin gyi chagya»): “gesture of charity or gift-bestowing”; the characteristic gesture of Tathāgata Ratnasambhava	vyāghracarma	(Skt.) – “tiger skin”; the skin of a tiger worn by some of the male fearsome deities, whereas female deities are clad in a leopard skin; [see also <i>ajina</i>]
vīrāsana	(Skt.) –	“hero posture”: particular meditation attitude with the right leg placed upon the left leg with only the sole of the right foot visible. Hindu synonym of the Buddhist term <i>sattvaparyāṅkāśana</i> ; rarely used in traditional Buddhist literature, although it occurs in the <i>Sādhanamālā</i>	vyākhyāna-mudrā	(Skt.) – <i>Chos 'chad kyi phyag rgya</i> (Tib.) («chöche gyi chagya»): “gesture of teaching, explanation, argumentation”; [synonymous with <i>vitarka-mudrā</i>]
viśvavajra	(Skt.) –	<i>rDo rje rgya gram</i> (Tib.) («dorje gya tram»): “all- <i>vajra</i> , <i>vajra</i> with prongs pointing in the four directions”: two crossed diamond sceptres	vyāla or vyālaka	(Skt.) – “horned lion, leogryph”
vitarka-mudrā	(Skt.) –	“gesture of argumentation”; the <i>Sādhanamālā</i> uses <i>vyākhyāna-mudrā</i>	Y	
			yajñopavīta	(Skt.) – “sacred thread”
			yakṣa	(Skt.) – <i>gNod sbyin</i> (Tib.) («nōjin»): “spirit”; male semidivine dwarf-like guardian spirit
			yamaṇḍa	(Skt.) – “staff, club surmounted by a skull”; attribute of fearsome deities
			Yoginī	(Skt.) – <i>rNal 'byor ma</i> (Tib.) («naljorma»): Term used for female Yoga practitioners

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108 Buddhist Statues in Tibet

