

**SHORT DESCRIPTION
OF
GODS, GODDESSES
AND RITUAL OBJECTS
OF
BUDDHISM AND HINDUISM
IN NEPAL**



Published by
Handicraft Association of Nepal
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NEPAL

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Compiled by
Jnan Bahadur Sakya

Handicraft Association of Nepal
P. O. Box 784, Kathmandu
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FORE WORD

Every handicraft businessman felt due need of a book which contains the descriptions of Gods, Goddesses and Ritual objects of Buddhism and Hinduism of Nepal. Hence the Handicraft Association of Nepal has decided to publish this sort of book which will enable to help and assist the business communities. Similarly, it enhances the promotion and development of dying away handicraft and metal craft industries.

We are grateful to UNDP and ESC whose moral and continuous support made this programme a grand success.

We are thankful to Mr. Jnan Bahadur Sakya of Nagbahal, Patan for his help in preparing this book in an efficient way.

We would be very happy to receive your valuable suggestions on its development.

We remain,

Handicraft Association of Nepal
P.O.Box 784
Kathmandu, Nepal,
Tel. : 244231, 245467

PREFACE

The Handicrafts Association of Nepal has decided to publish a book with short description of Buddhist and Hindu Gods, Goddesses and ritual objects. The association gave me the opportunity to undertake this task. With the help of different scholars, publications and advice I could prepare this small book.

As I am not a scholar in this subject, there may be some mistakes. If anybody finds the mistake I would be much grateful for the notice to me so to make correction in future. Though small, I hope that it will be helpful to some extent and, if, one finds it helpful I feel it a great success.

Lastly, I express my deep gratefulness to Mr. Tara Bahadur Sakya, President of the Handicrafts Association of Nepal for the opportunity given to me to undertake this task.

JNAN B. SAKYA

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Introduction of Buddhism and Hinduism

For two and a half thousand years, people have followed a religion based on the teachings of a man they called the Buddha, meaning the Enlightened One.

The starting point in Buddhism is mankind and the way in which they suffer not just physical pain but the general feelings of dissatisfaction with life, the craving to achieve or have something more, the fear of change and death. It seeks to give a person peace of mind and to encourage and develop loving compassion towards all living beings.

Buddhism is not a dogmatic religion in the sense that it does not require a person to accept fixed beliefs and ideas. It does not concern itself by debating whether or not there is a God. It regards all such beliefs as secondary importance. The main thing is to help people overcome suffering and to achieve a full life.

The goal of Buddhist religion is enlightenment which means to be fully awake to the reality of life, to have an understanding of why there is suffering in the world and how it may be overcome. Buddhists claim that in the teaching of the Buddha they find a path which will eventually lead them to achieve this enlightenment for themselves.

There is a great variety within Buddhism. There are two main Branches of the religion - Theravada or Hinayana Buddhism in the South and Mahayana Buddhism in the North. Nevertheless there is a common basis to all Buddhism expressed in what is called the Triple Jewel (Tri Ratna). The Buddha (the enlightened one), the Dharma (teaching) and the Sangha (community of monks.)

HINAYANA BUDDHISM

Difference of opinions and arguments arising from time to time caused the formation of new sects. Finally there arose two sects of thought which are known as Hinayana and Mahayana.

The Hinayana adhered more to the concept of four noble truths and eightfold paths which were primarily a philosophy with rules of conducts and ethics. For them the worship of deities was secondary. The conception of Nirvana was the freedom from the cycle of rebirth.

Hinayana got its name because this doctrine is meant for the individual salvation where each person has to work out his own destiny. comparatively few are able by their own efforts to obtain emancipation and achieve Nirvana. Hinayana Buddhism is also called Theravada Buddhism.

MAHAYANA BUDDHISM

Early Buddhism stressed that the goal of each individual was to seek freedom from the chain of rebirth and thus from all sufferings and death. The word used to describe this goal was Nirvana. Although there were many different philosophical schools, the religion centered around the institution of the monastery, with its ordained monks and a lay congregation that supported the monastery. The rituals were simple and minimum. Meditation and introspection were encouraged. Each individual sought his own Nirvana. Whereas in Mahayana Buddhism the concept of Bodhisattva, the being who desired highest enlightenment for the welfare of others and his practice of six Paramita (Dana, Sila, Kshanti, Birya, Dhyana, Prajna) is emphasised. The function of the Bodhisattva was to postpone his own final leap into Nirvana and to remain in the round as long as a single sentient being remained undelivered from suffering. This form of Buddhism came to be known as Mahayana (the great way) or the Bodhisattwayana.

The goal of Mahayana is to attain Buddhahood. The method of attaining was modified. Buddhism changed through Mahayana into an altruistic faith-oriented system in which in addition to meditative practices, devotion to a Bodhisattva was regarded as an equally valid way to reach Buddhahood. The goal was now characterised as the state of Tatatha, emptiness and nonduality.

VAJRAYANA BUDDHISM

Mahayan which is dominated by Mantras is known as Mantrayana, Tantrayana or Vajrayana. It is characterised as the path which leads to perfect enlightenment. Vajrayana literally means the adamant path or vehicle, but its technical meaning is the 'Sunya Vehicle' where Sunya is used to a special sense to represent vajra. Vajra also means 'Thunderbolt' or 'diamond' and Yana means 'Path, Way or Vehicle'.

Bajra, connoting diamond, was chosen as the name of the tantric Buddhist tradition because of the diamond's indestructability as well as of its physical ability to cut through all substances. Vajrayana constitutes the last major stage in the development of Buddhism.

Vajrayana Buddhism accepts all assumptions of Mahayana, but expands and elaborates them further adding a few of its own. The goal is now characterised as Bodddhi Nature (the matrix of Enlightenment). Every sentient being is a potential Buddha, but he or she is unaware of it because of the dense fog of ignorance that clouds the mind. The fog is said to be discursive thought, which discriminates and polarises all concepts. Once it is moved Bodddhi nature will emerge like a clear light. This state of reality is achieved by combining "Prajna" (Knowledge, wisdom or insight) with "Upaya" (means of fitness of action which is the same as karuna or compassion). Thus, both literally and figuratively, Vajrayana is the belief in the twin principles of insight and compassion and in their "Sahaja" (co-emergence) which leads one to the state of Mahasukha (greatbliss).

HINDUISM

Hinduism is a multi disciplinary religion called Sanatana Dharma based on writings and experiences of age old sages. They assert the view that a permanent, partless, independent self does exists.

There are endless divisions of Hindu systems; briefly, however, they are widely known to consist of six fundamental schools, Vaisesika, Naiyayika, Samkhya, Mimamsaka, Nirgrantha, and Lokayat (Carvaka). The first five of these hold views of eternalism (Sasvatavada) and the last holds view of nihilism (Echchedavada).

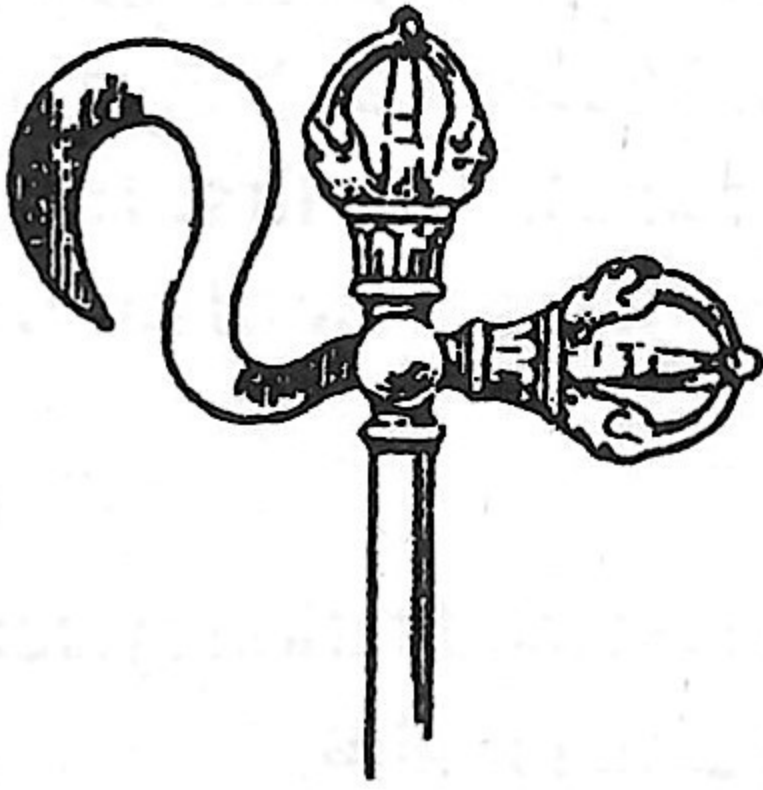
Hinduism also advocates different ethical systems and meditation systems. By practicing these systems one can take rebirth in Brahma realm.

Ritual Objects



AGNI (Flame)

It is used as weapon of war and as an important component of offerings. It is often carried by Shiva. It may be held by the fire god Agni or may issue from his body.



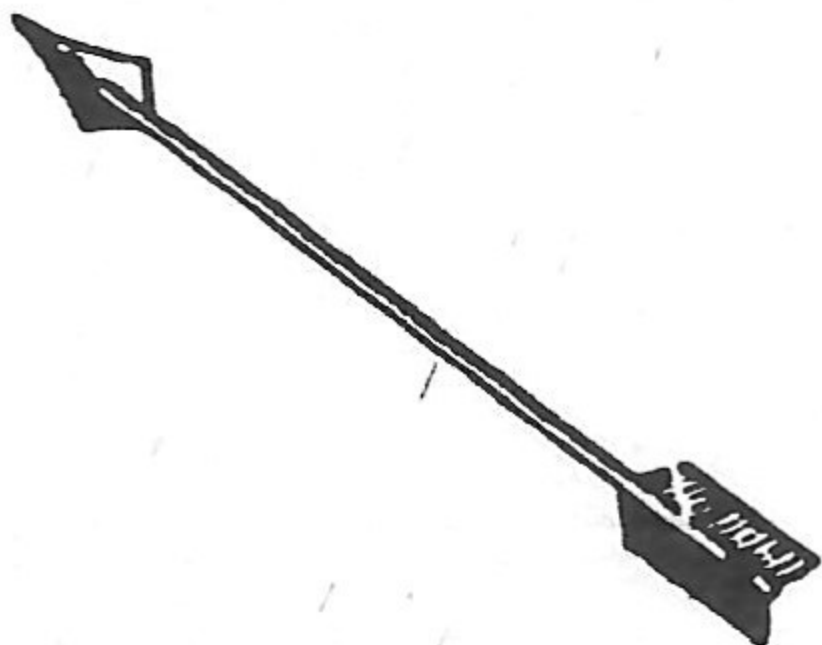
ANKUSH (Goda)

It is made of small wooden handle topped by a strong and sharp metal hook. The handle is sometimes in the form of Vajra. It is the attribute of many tantric deities. When the goad is surmounted by a Vajra, it is called Vajrankush.



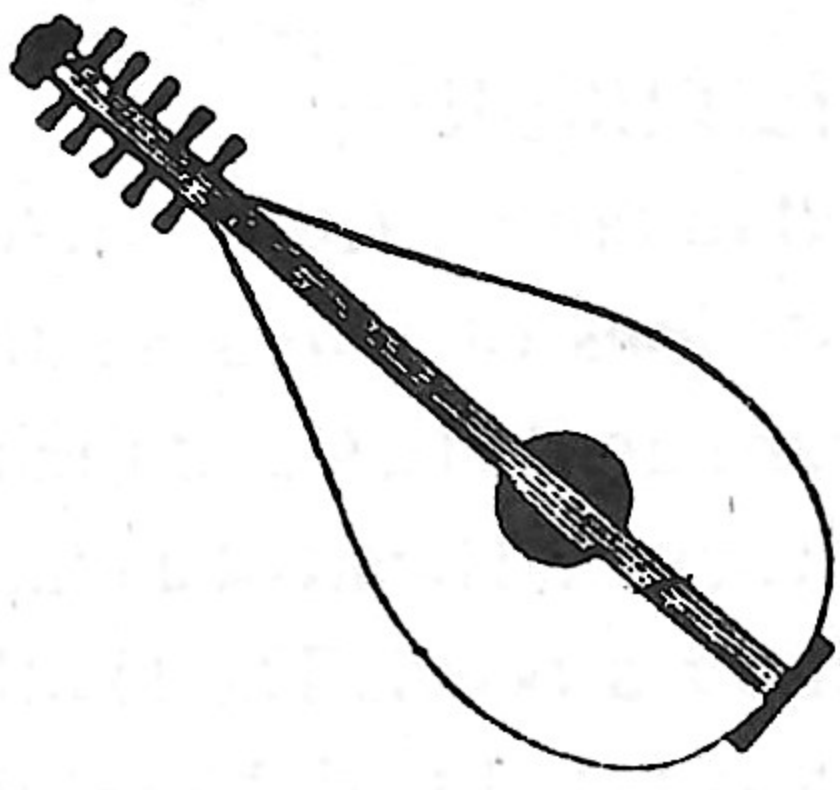
AKSHAMALA (Rosary)

It is a symbol of the never ending cycle. It is a string of beads. The beads are of a kind of seed of dried fruit. It may be made of other material also such as crystal. In Buddhist Tradition, it is a special symbol of Avalokiteswar. It is also a symbol of Prajnaparmita, Chunda, Vasundhara. In Hindu tradition, Brahma, Shiva, Ganesh and Saraswati also carry it.



BANA (Arrow)

Bana is an arrow. It is the symbol of awareness appears with tantric deities Marici, Kurukulla.

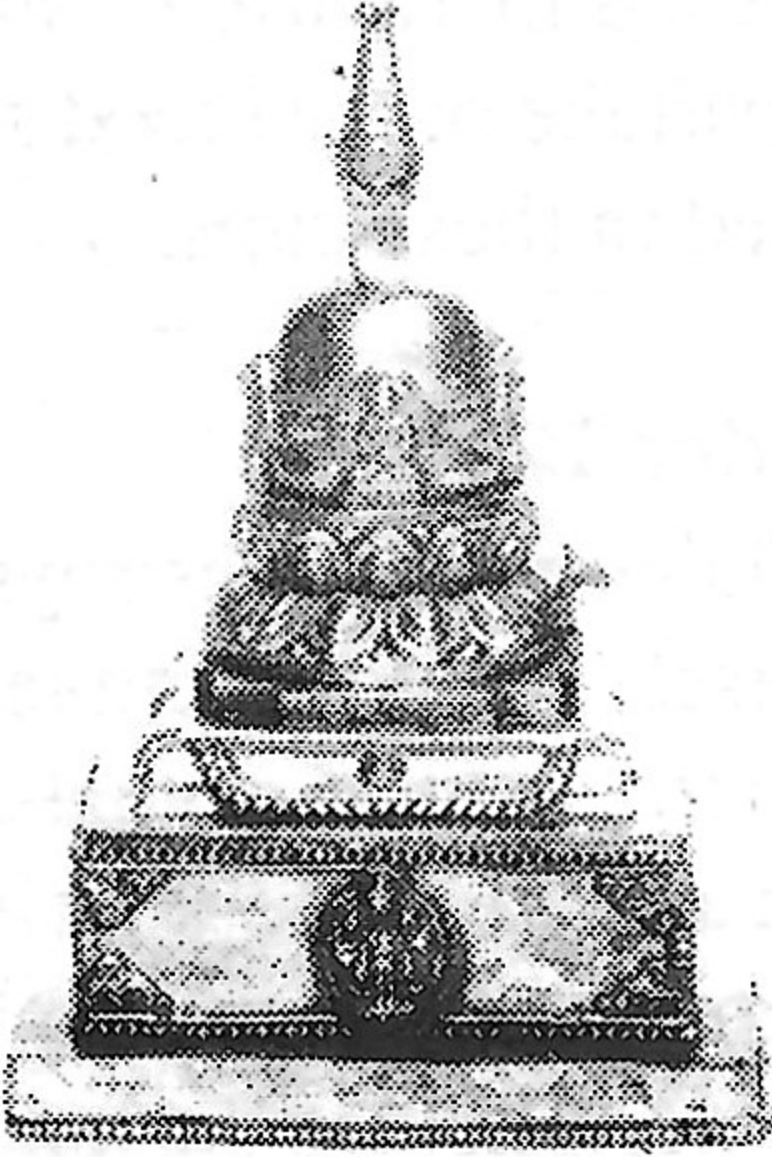


BINA (LUTE)

It is a stringed musical instrument. It is a favourite instrument of Saraswati, goddess of wisdom, learning and arts.

CHAITYA (Stupa)

Chaitya or the Stupa, which represents the Buddhist Universe, is the Buddhist sanctuary, sometimes square and sometimes round, with spires or steps on the capital. Each spire or step represents a heaven, the uppermost portion being a point which is supposed to be the highest peak of Mount Sumeru, a mythical mountain whence the Boddhichitta loses itself in sunya. On the four sides of the chaitya the figures of four Dhyani Buddhas Akshobhya, Ratna sambhav, Amitabha, Amoghasiddhi are placed. The place of Vairochana is in the centre. In some Chaitya Vairochana is placed to the east along with Akshobhya.



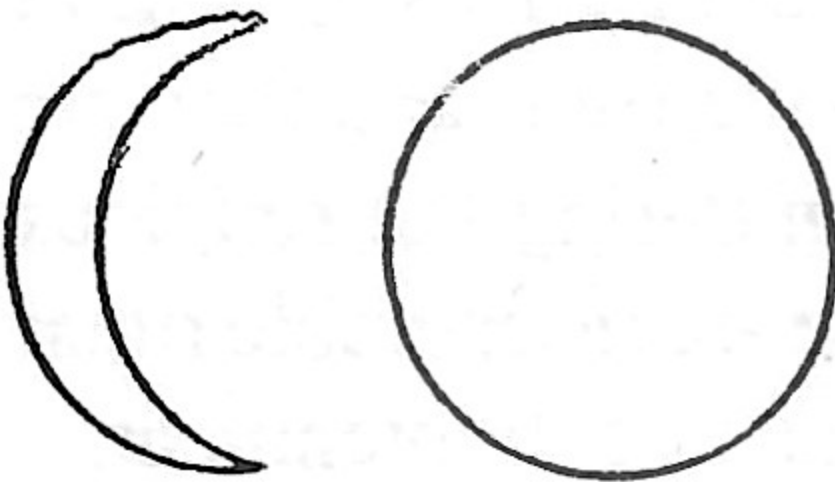
CHAKRA (Wheel)

Wheel is a symbol of absolute completeness. In the vedic times the wheel was symbolical of occult powers and symbol of Hindu god Vishnu or Krishna. In Buddhism, it symbolizes the wheel of the law which turns twelve times or three revolutions for each of the four noble truths. It is represented with eight spokes indicating the eight fold path of salvation.



CHANDRA (Moon)

It appears often above the image of deities. In Buddhist Vajrayana tradition symbolizes complementary of opposites. Both Sambar and Shiva have the crescent moon as their hair dress.



KAPALA (Half Skull)



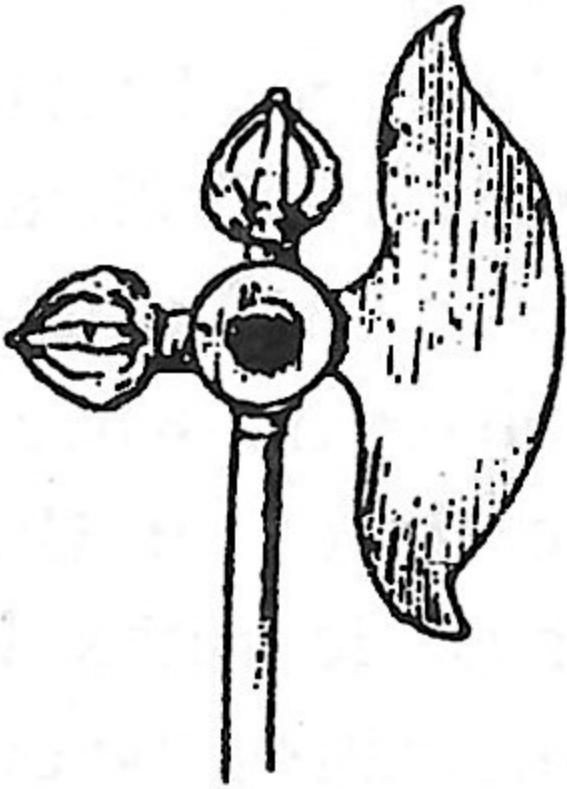
For containing blood in tantric ritual. Held by Kali and other manifestations of Shiva Sakti, by Mahakala and other guardian deities and their Dankinis. Kapala is made of severed head of a man or the cup made of a skull, or a bowl. The skull cup is of two kinds, when it is filled with blood it is called Asrkkapala, and when with flesh it is called Mamsa kapala. It is used in Tantric ritual. The deities are appeared to partake of the blood or the flesh of the demon carried in these cups.

VAJRA (Thunder Bolt)



The thunderbolt or diamond that destroys all kinds of ignorance, and itself is indestructible. The Vajra is symbol of Indra also. In tantric rituals, the Vajra symbolised the male principle which represents method in the right hand and the Be" symbolised the female principle, is held in the left. Their interaction leads to enlightenment. Also the Dorje or Vajra represents the "Upaya" or method Tibetans name Vajra as "Dorje"

PA (Battle Axe)

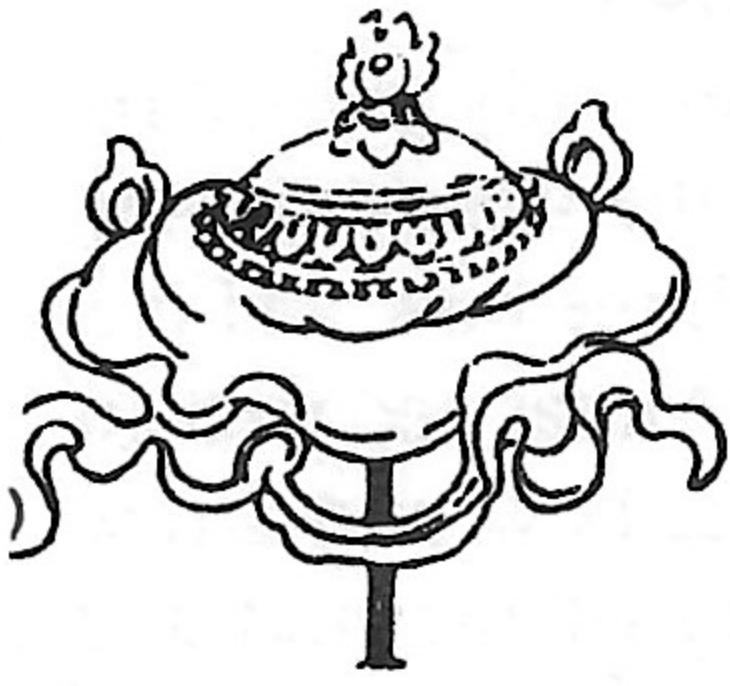


In Tantric Buddhist iconography, the battle axe is held by ferocious deities to symbolize severance of this worldly attachments. In Hindu Iconography, it is a weapon held in the hand of Parasuram, the sixth Avatar of Vishu, who descended to this world to fight Kshatriyas caste of warriors at the call of Bramins.

BELL

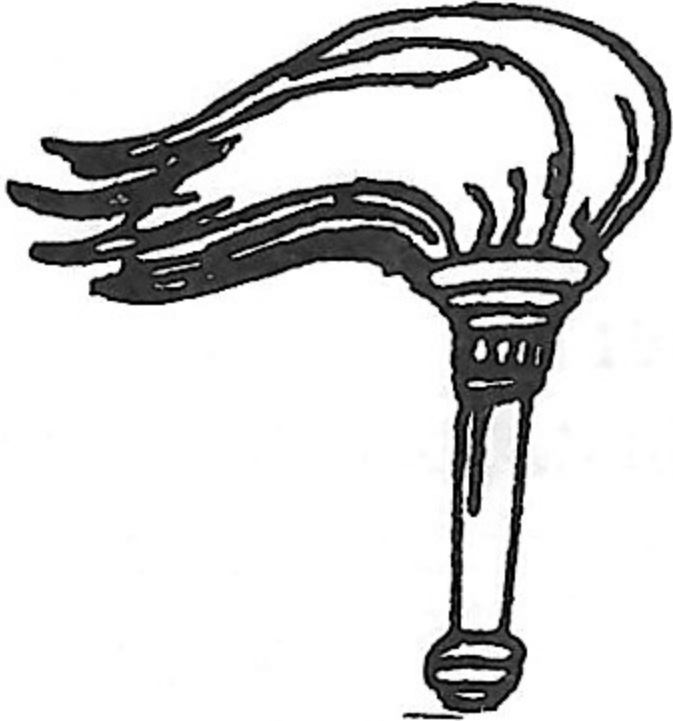


The bell representing the female aspect, stands for "prajna" or "wisdom". This is held in the left hand Dorje held in the right and they are always used in combination during the religious ceremonies. So Bell & Dorje are inseperable ritual objects and two together lead to enlightenment.



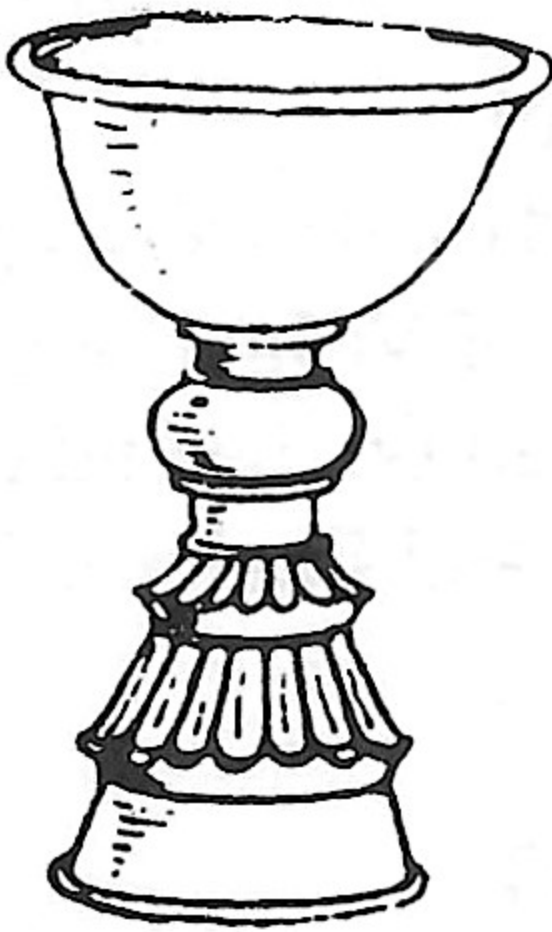
CHHATRA (Parasol)

It is a symbol of Buddhist goddesses such as Pancharaksa, Usniasita. It protects from the evils. It is one of the eight symbols of good luck.



CHAMARU (Fly Whisk)

It is often held by supporting Hindu deities and semi devine beings and attendants. It is one of the eight symbols of good luck.



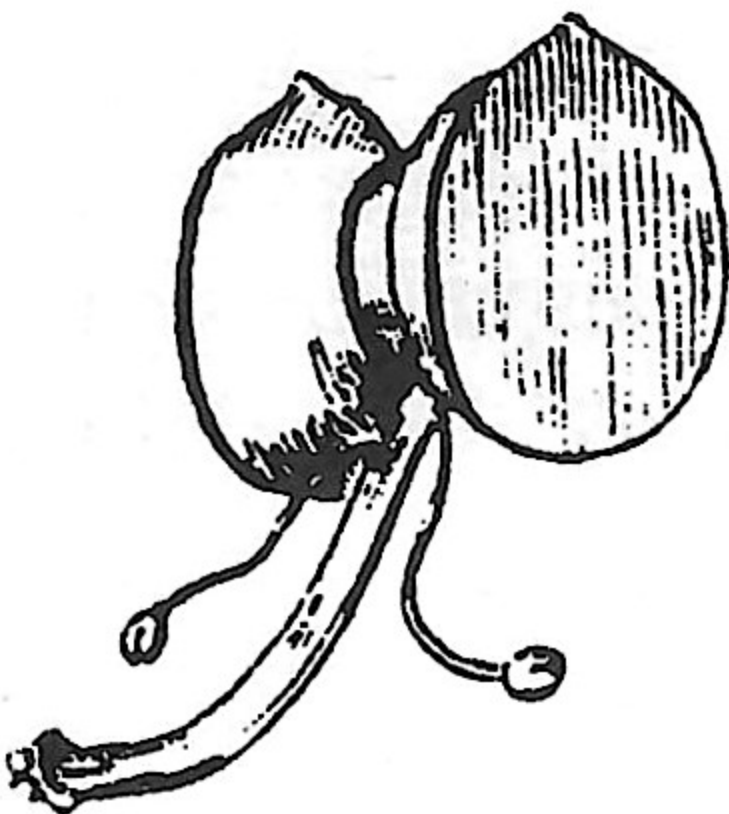
DIPA (Lamp)

It is sacred lamp fed with Ghee (butter) People offer it to the Gods and Goddesses.



DHOOP DANI (Incense Burner)

It is a pot made of metal for burning incense which is to be offered to the gods and goddesses.

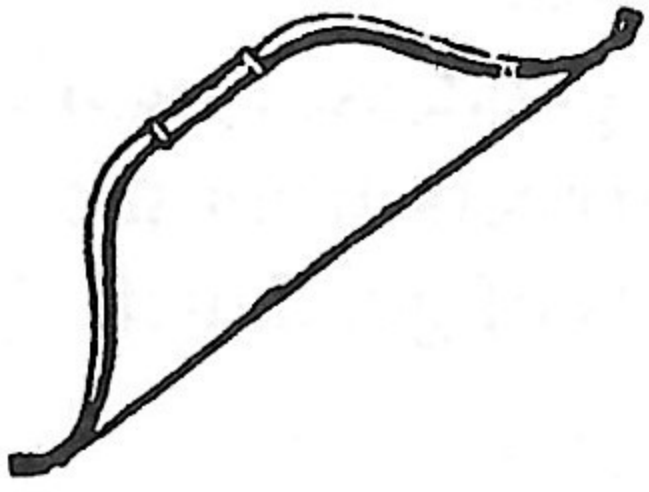


DAMARU (Drum)

It is a small double drum with a leather string tied over the narrow middle part of it, where knotted, wooden or bone ends make of rattling sound on the drum's memberances, when swung. It is appeared along with the trident (Trisula) in association with shiva cults. The tantric symbol known as the Damaru is a hand drum made of two half skulls.

DHANUSA (Bow)

Dhanusa is a bow. It is generally carried in the left hand. It appears with the tantric deities such as Marici, Kurukulla. With the bow and the arrow Marici inflicts pain to the Maras and wicked beings. Like Bajra and Ghanta, bow and arrow symbolize the complementary of method and wisdom.

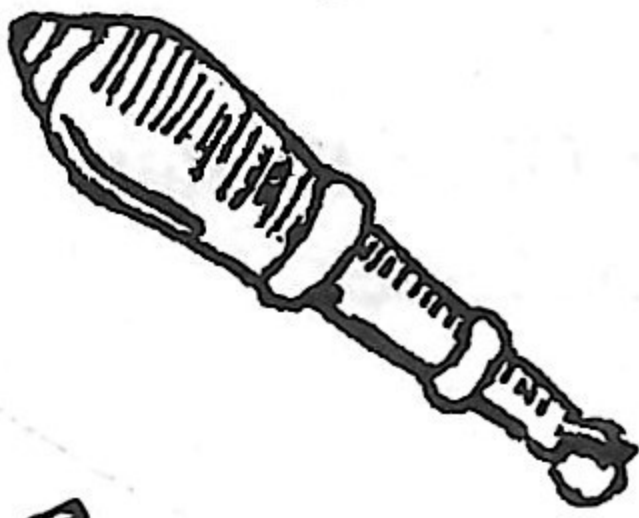


DHWOJA (Banner)

It signifies the victory of Buddhism.

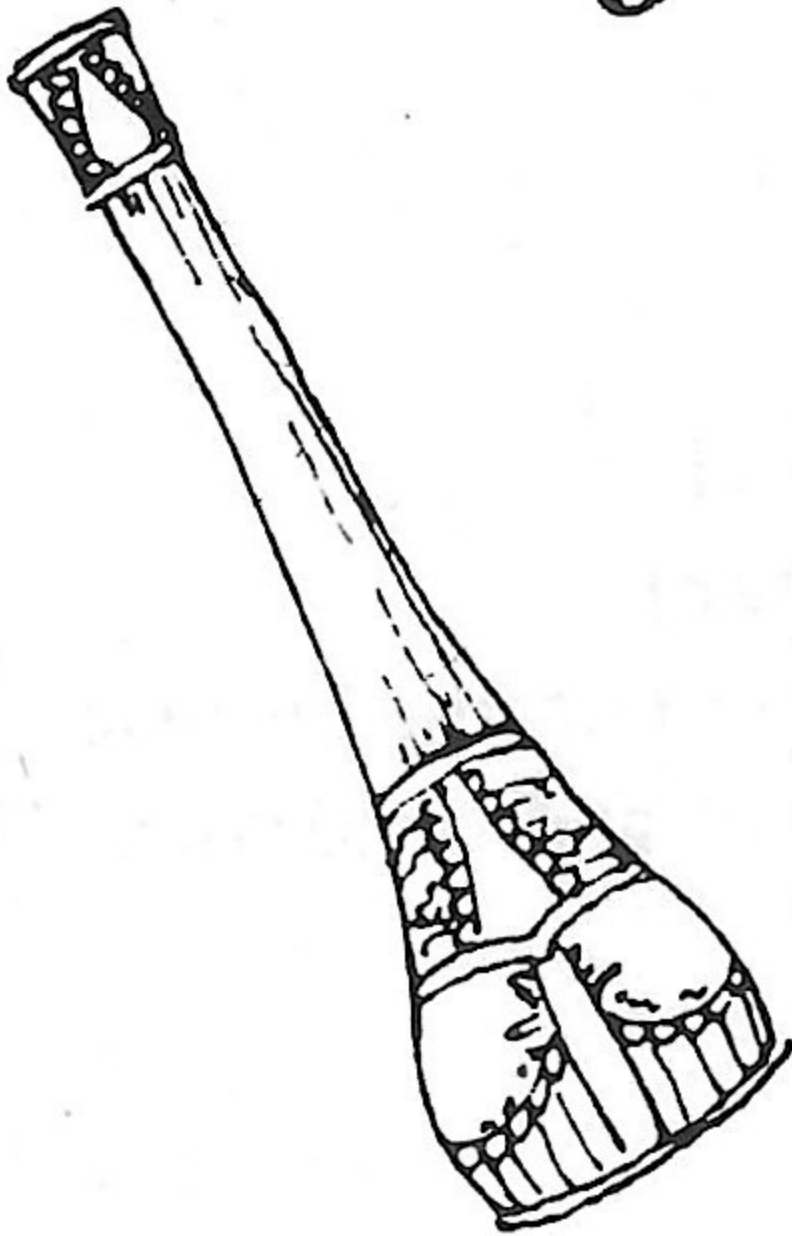
GADA (Mace)

A staff with a tapering end used as a weapon in close combat. It is a symbol of Vishnu. A club made of human bone with a skull on the end of it is carried by Devi, Durga, Kali and Bhairab.



KANGLING

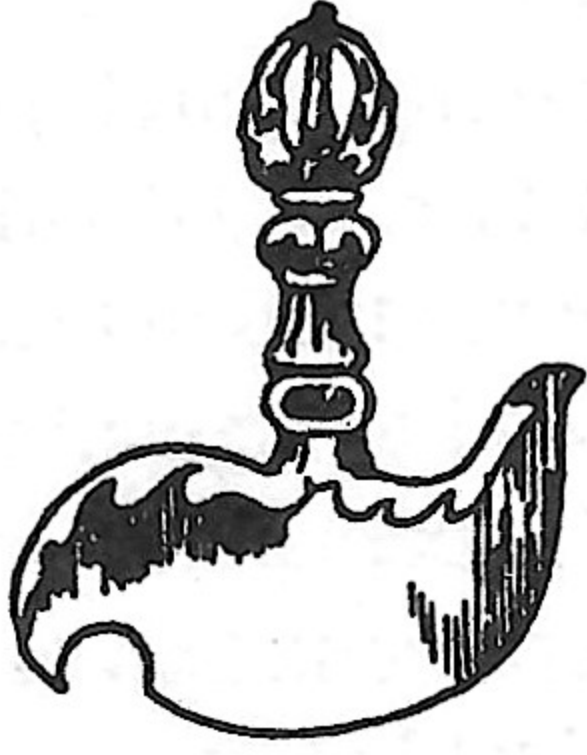
A trumpet is made of human thigh-bone. It is a ritual object used at the time of tantric ceremony and blown to drive away evil spirits. Damaru goes side by side which gives "Magical Music" for the celestial journey. Music is considered to be similar to a mantra.



KALASA

In Hindu tradition, Kalasa contains the primeval water carried by Brahma, the creator. In Buddhist iconography, the Kalasa holds Amrit, the water or the elixir of immortality. It appears with Padmapani. It is also one of the auspicious sign and symbolizes plenty among the eight Astamangalas.





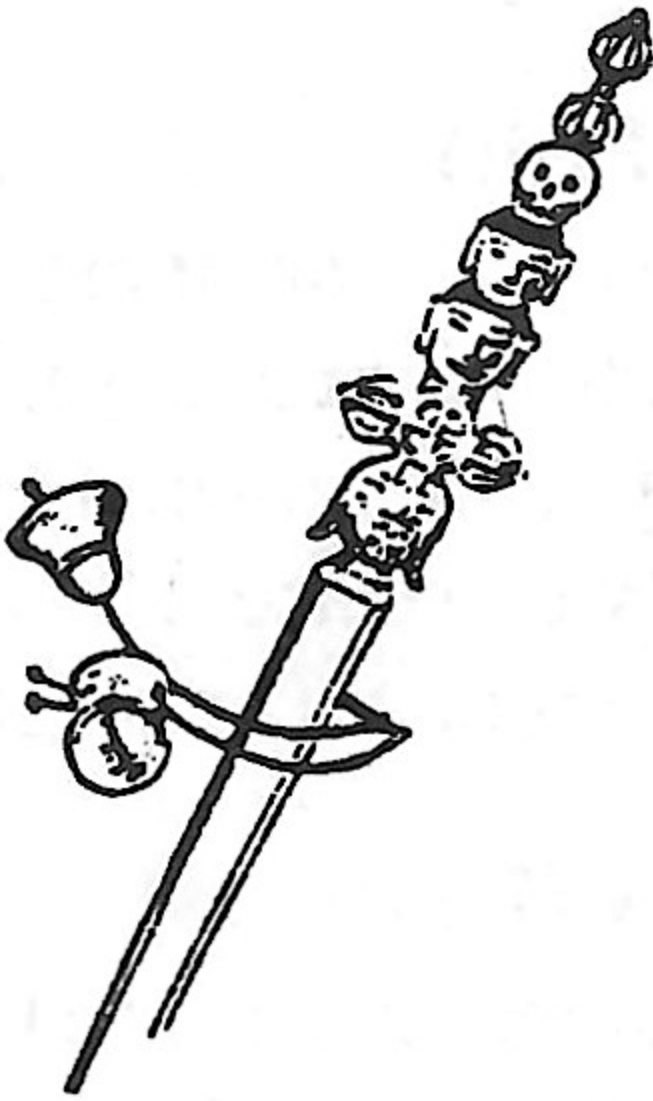
KARTIKA

A weapon symbolizing severance of all material and this worldly bonds held by Mahakala and by the Dakinis embracing the Dharmapalas and the Yidams such as Yama and Yamantaka.



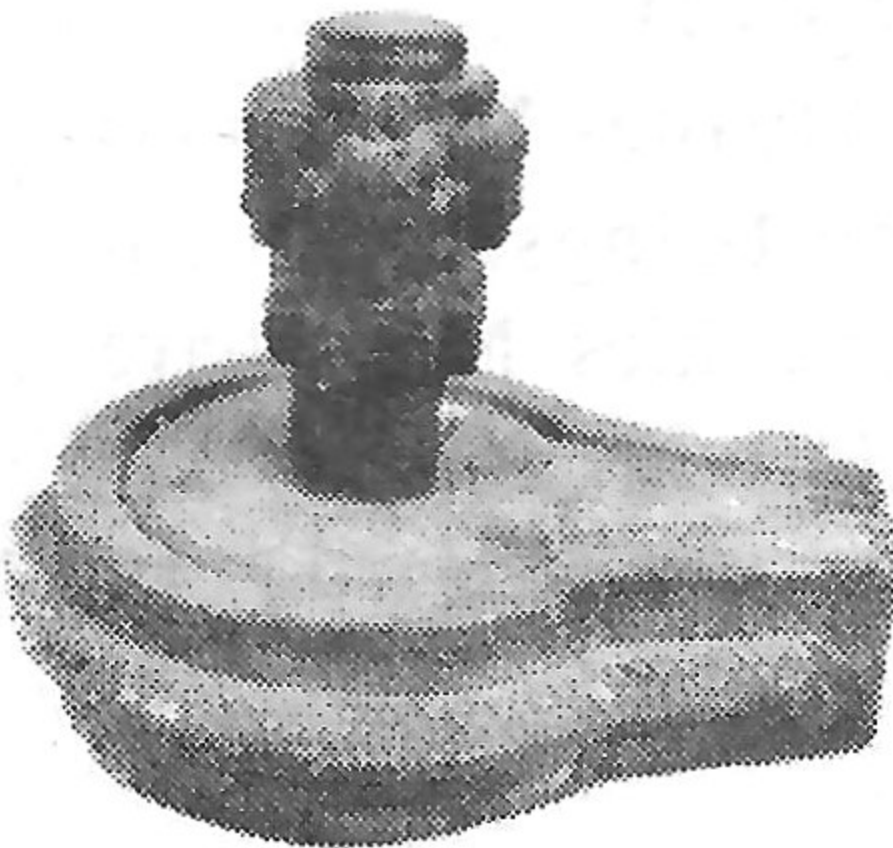
KHADGA (Sword)

It is a symbol of enlightenment, used to destroy ignorance, the enemy of liberation from the bonds of worldly attachments, hence of continuous misery. It is a special symbol of Manjushree. The sword in the hand of Manjushree is called the Prajna Khadga or the sword of wisdom which is believed to destroy the darkness of ignorance by the luminous rays issuing out of it.



KHARTWANGA

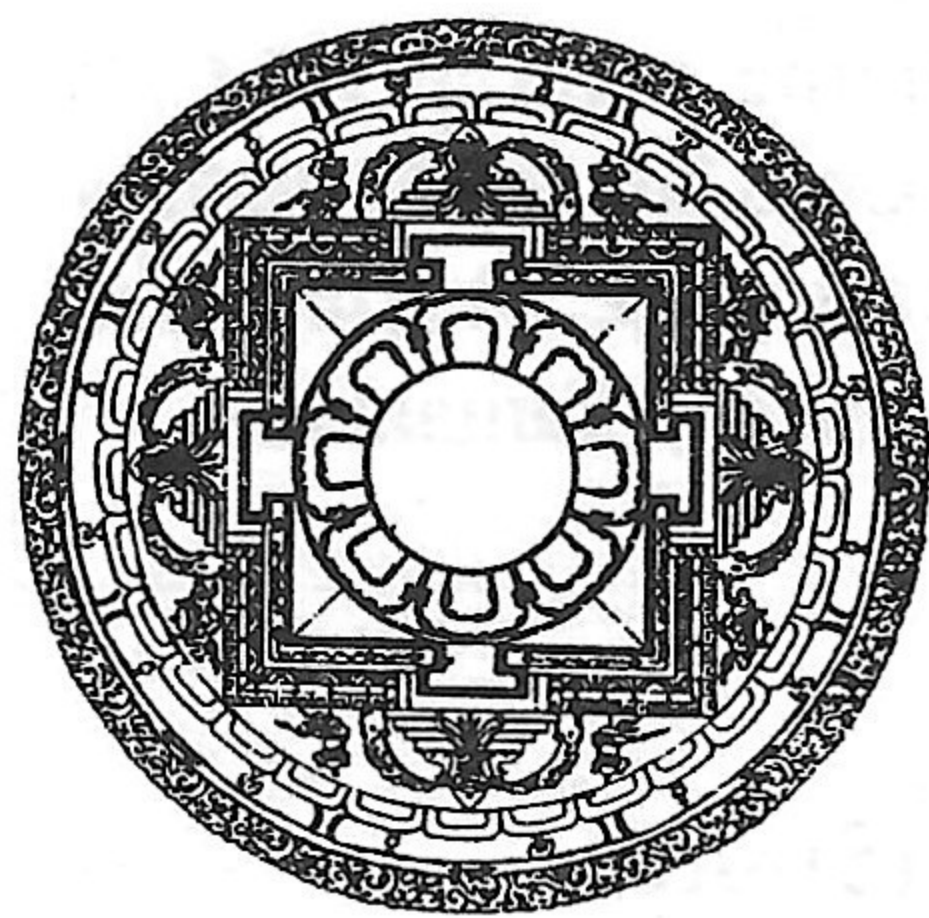
It is a kind of club, made of bone of forearm or leg, sometimes of wood and metal. It is a magic wand held by tantric deities, Dakinis and Vajrayana saints. It is generally surmounted either by Vajra or Kapala or the Trishula or the banner or all of them. In any case for a Khatwanga the skulls are necessary and it will be so called even if nothing else is present.



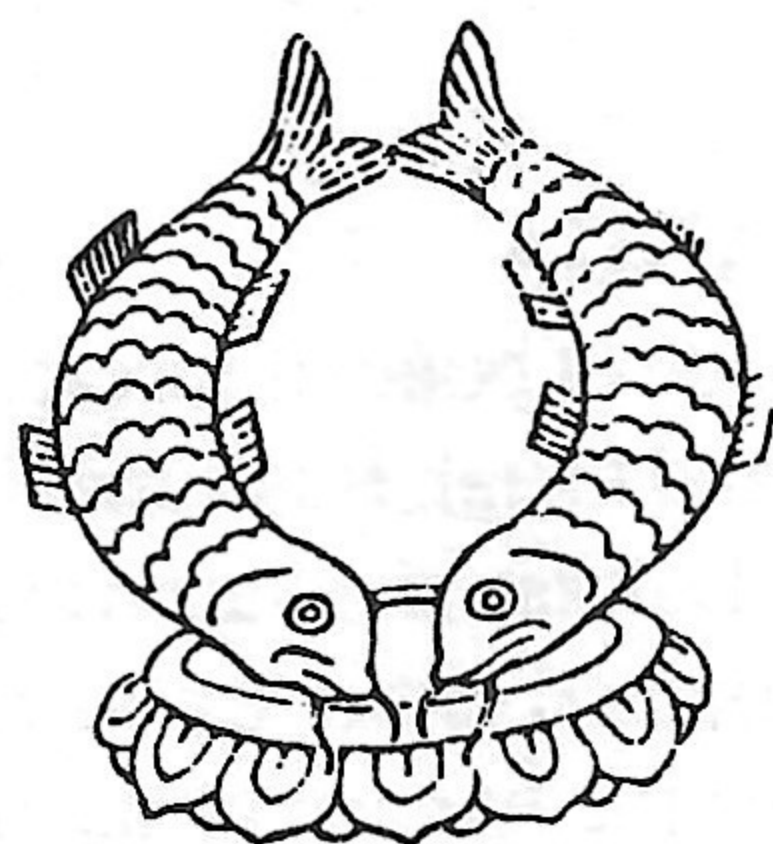
LINGAM (Linga)

It is a symbol of Shiva. In its usual form it is a cylindrical piece of stone or wood standing on its narrow end. The top is usually rounded. The lingam is frequently founded in combination with the Yoni, a platelike disc with a drain, which supports the lingam.

MANDALA



Mandala (Literally meaning a circle) is a Tantric meditation device. It is a visual aid for concentration and introvertive meditation leading to the attainment of insights and to activation of forces culminating in "Siddhi" supernatural forces. The Mandala is the graphic representation of this process. It is not only theoretical but practical as an operational scheme involving a clear plan for practical realization of the process within oneself. It thus becomes an instrument (Yantra). There are many types and varieties of mandalas depending on the nature of the central deity. The most classic pattern of mandalas are of the Dhyani Buddha. This pattern appears in the oldest tantrics, The mandala represents "Palace of Purity" a magic sphere cleansed of spiritual obstacles and impurities. The square of the 'sacred palace' proper is enclosed in multiple circles of flame, vajra, eight cemeteries (appears only in wrathful deities) lotus, then the inner square to reach of the deity of the Mandala.



MATSYA (Fish)

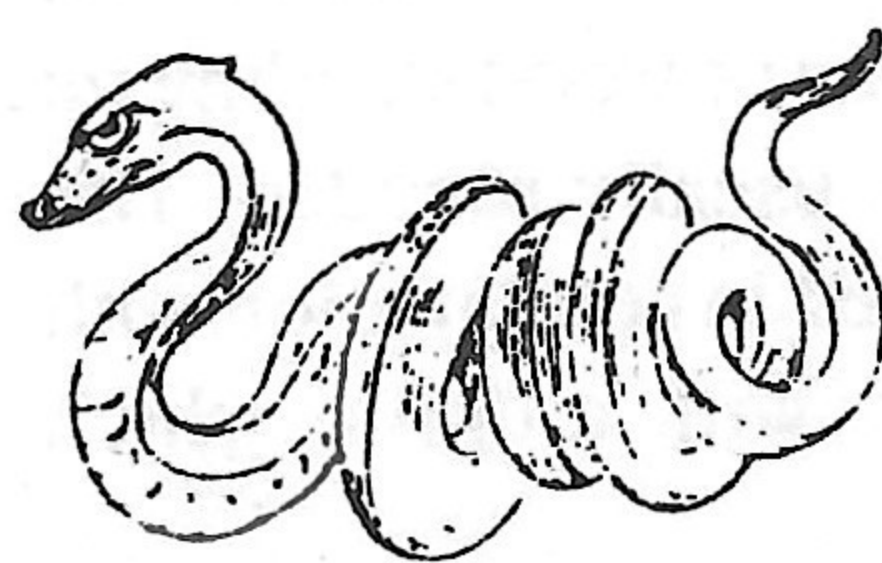
It is a first incarnation of Vishnu, therefore may be associated with him. Suvarna matsya, the two golden fish, symbolizing beings rescued from the ocean of misery of earthly existence. It is also one of the eight auspicious signs of Astamangalas.



MAYURAPICCHA (Feathers)

It is a three peacock feathers spread in a kind of fan. The feathers are from the peacocks.

NAGA (Serpent)



Ramnant of early fertility rites. Worshipped as divine and semi-divine beings. Frequent ornament of guardian tantric deities. Nagas have power to bring or withhold rain. So, they are regarded as gods of rain. They are believed to be the protector of the law of Buddha.

NAKULA (Mongoose)



A Mongoose vomiting jewels, is associated with god of wealth Kubera and his Buddhist counterpart, Jambala. It is believed to be the receptacle of all gems and when the god of wealth presses the animal, it vomits forth all the riches.

PADMA (Lotus)



Padma is a lotus which may be of any colour except blue. The blue lotus is designated by the word Utpala or Nilotpala. In Tantric works the Padma is the day lotus, while Utpala stands for the night lotus. It is regarded as especially sacred by all classes of Indians. When the lotus shows petals in both the upper and lower directions it is called the Viswapadma or the double lotus. Padma indicates purity of descent. In Buddhist tradition it symbolises self creation (Hence it is the sign of Swayambhu). In Vajrayana it represents the female principle. White open padma appears above the left shoulder of Avalokiteswara Padmapani, his spiritual Parents are Dhyani Buddha Amitabha and White Tara.



PHURPA

A "magic dart" used especially for the ritual slaying of human effigy of foe.

PRAYAR WHEEL



It is exclusively Buddhist praying instrument which always bears the mystical word "OM MANI PADME HUM" numbering six syllables in the mantra of Avalokiteswara. The syllables are carved outside the wheel as well as kept inside the wheel printed in the paper in numerous number. When it turns one round it means the mantra is read how much mantra has kept inside the wheel.

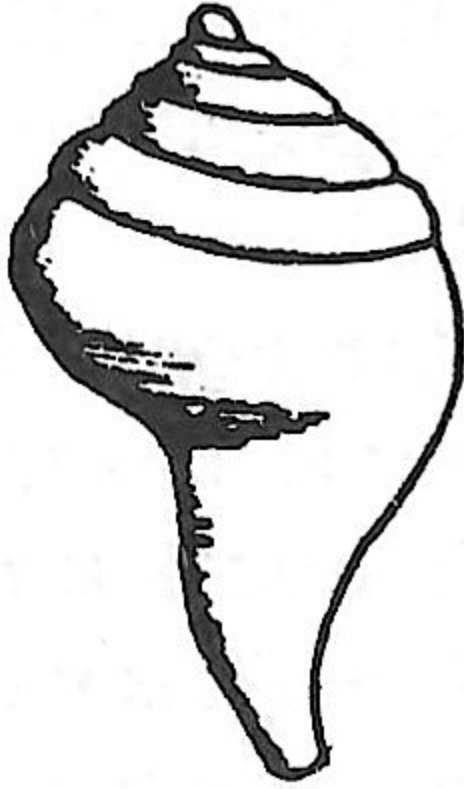
PUSTAKA (Book)

It is a symbol of transcendental wisdom accompanies both Buddhist and Hindu deities such as Brahma, Manjushree, Saraswati, Prajnaparamitta, Avalokiteswar, Vasundhara associated with wisdom, learning and arts. The book is sometimes placed on lotus. In Buddhist iconography, the Pustaka as a symbol represents the Prajnaparmita, a treaties on transcendent wisdom supposed to have been given to the Nagas by the Buddha to guard until mankind had become wise enough to grasp its profound truths.



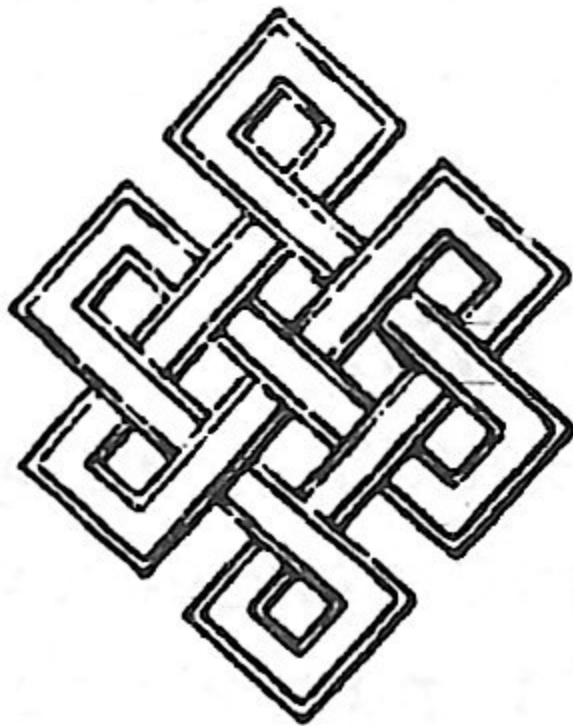
SANKHA (Conch Shell)

An offering vessel; a symbol of Vishnu. In Hindu tradition, the conch shell seems to have been extensively used in wars by ancient Indian. The white conch shell whose humming sound proclaims the glory of the saints. It is especially given as a symbol to the gods as the sound vibrated through a shell penetrates far and wide.



SHIELD

It represents Dharma which protects like a shield.

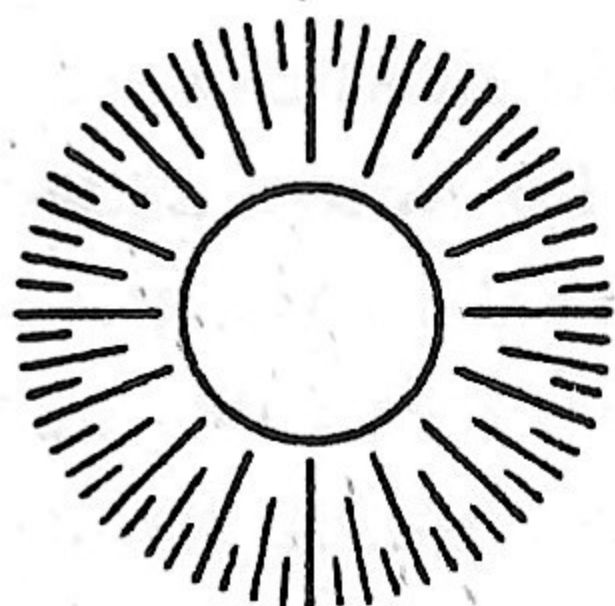


SHIRIVASTA

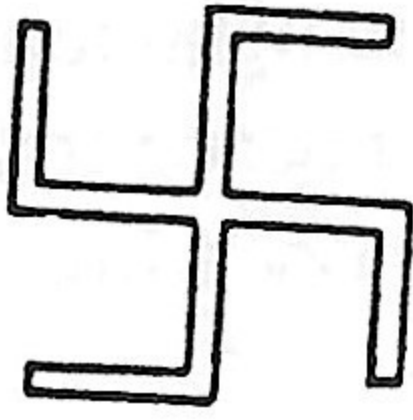
It is a endless knot. It is also considered luck knot, life knot or love knot.

SURYA (Sun)

It is a Hindu sun god. In Buddhism it is associated with moon as symbol of basic unity of the apparently different relative and absolute truth; appears separately in the upper part of thang-kas. It is a special symbol of Akashgarbha.

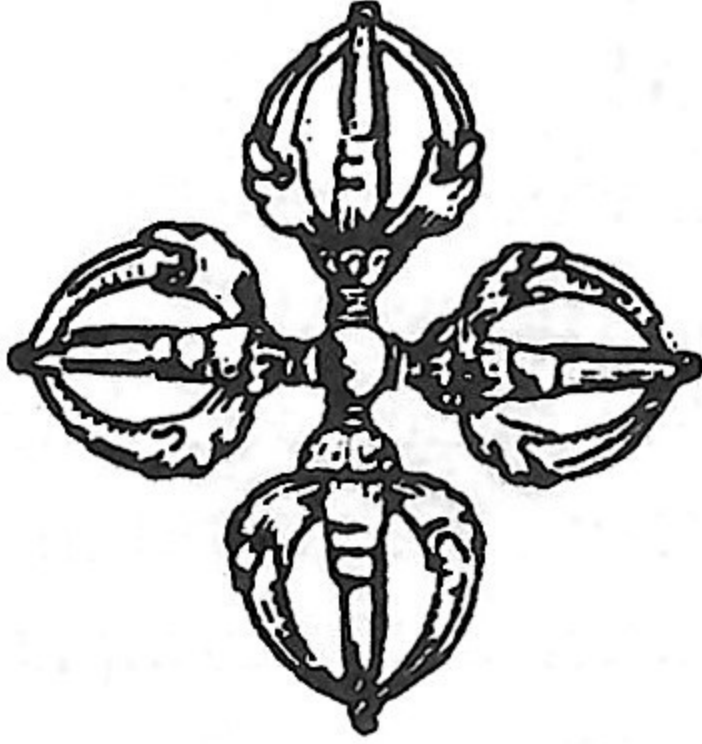


SWASTIKA



Used both in Hinduism and Buddhism as a symbol of the Law. It is also an auspicious sign (Swasti in Sanskrit is well being). It is one of the sixty five marks of Buddhahood found in the imprint of Buddha's foot. As a Buddhist symbol it represents the esoteric doctrine of Buddha.

VISWA VAJRA



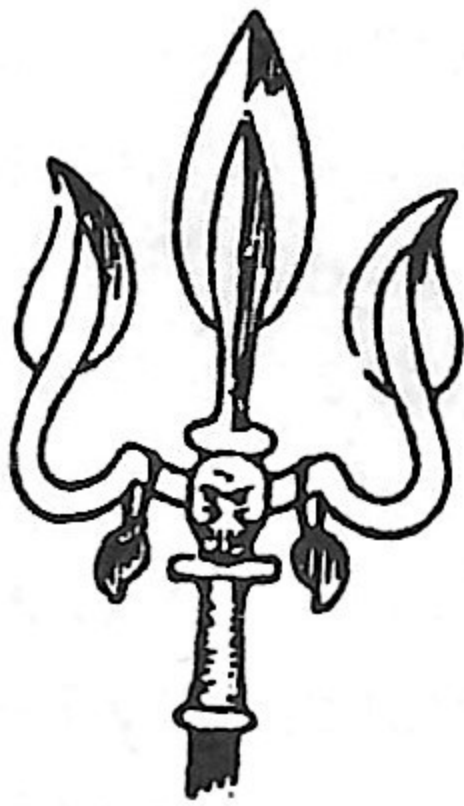
When two thunderbolts are crossed it is called a Viswa Vajra. It is the emblem of Amoghasiddhi. In Buddhist Tantra the word generally designates Sunya or Void which cannot be cut, cannot be destroyed but which destroys all evils.

TRI RATNA



It symbolizes the three fold Jewels namely Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The meaning of these three fold jewels Buddha, Dharma and Sangha is a title signifying "The Enlightened" or "The Awakened", Buddha, the doctrine and community propounded by Shiddartha Gautam.

TRISULA (Trident)



It is also called Sula. It is the favourite weapon and the symbol of Shiva. The three forked weapon symbolizes Shiva's creation, protection, and destruction. It is carried by members of Shaivists. In Buddhist iconography, it is regarded as a representation of Tri Ratna, the three fold jewels - Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. It is also carried by Agni, Mahakala and Padma Sambhav.

UTPALA (Half Closed Lotus)



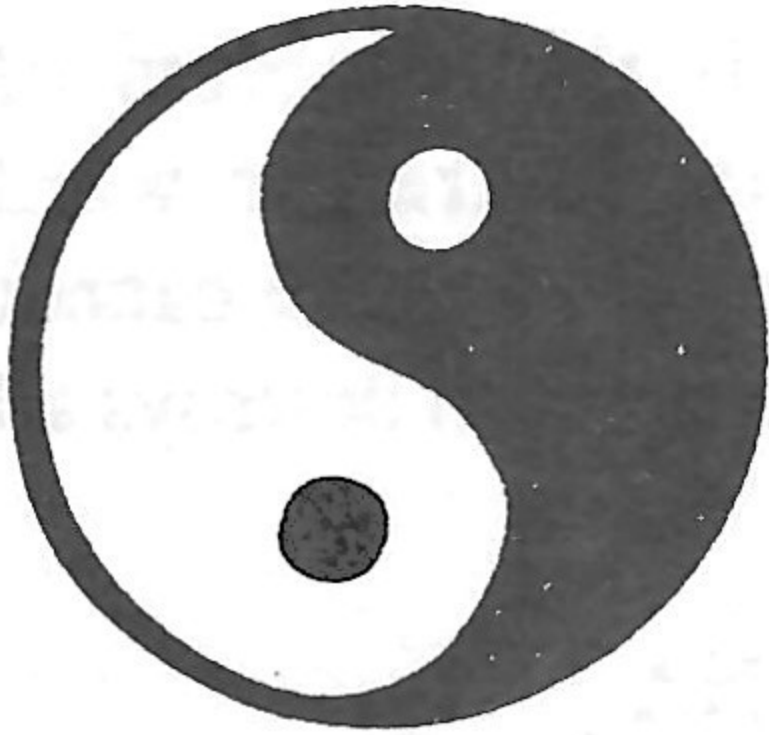
Elongated petals, blue, characterizes the Green Tara, consort of one of the Dhyani Buddha. It is designated by the word Utpala or Nilotpala. In tantric works Utpala stands for Night lotus. It is the special symbol of Manjushree and green Tara.

ṬANTRA

It is the name of the text which expound the mystic philosophy and the principles of action leading to the attainment of "Enlightenment" i.e. the state of mind of total independence from the bonds of existence in the span of one's life.

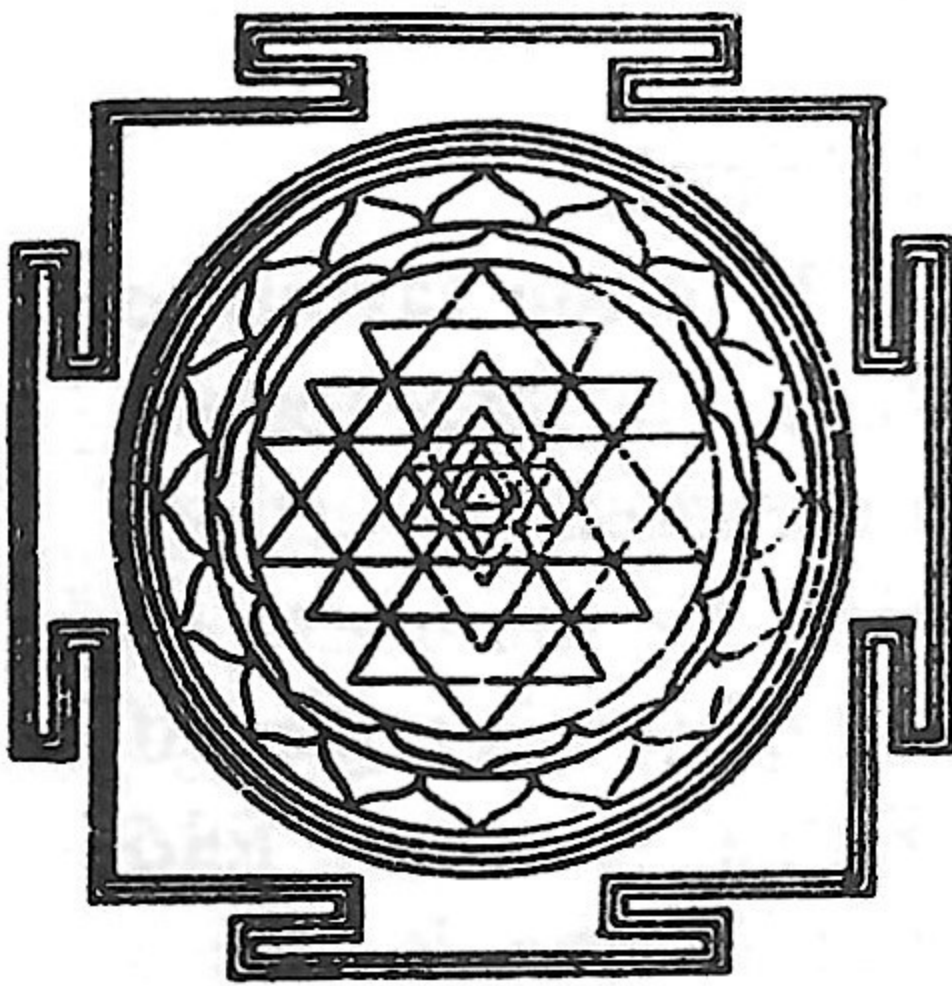
YAB-YUM

Yab-yum, is a Tibetan word consisting of two particles yab and yum. The word 'Yab' in Tibetan means the 'honourable father' and 'Yum' means the 'honourable mother'. The combined word therefore, means the father in the company of the mother or in her embrace.



YANTRA

Yantra is a nucleus of the visible and knowable, a linked diagram of lines by means of which visualized energies are concentrated. There are different kinds of Yantras and Sri Yantra is the Great Yantra. Other lesser yantras (Om yantra, Kali yantras etc.) are obviously segments out of the all embracing Sri yantra. Yantras may be made in permanent form of many substances. The Most important is rock crystal. Its clear colourless substance which can be shaped so as to focus light at its apex in a very good emblem for the all, inclusive substance of fundamental reality just as colourless light includes all the possible colours of light. So crystal can serve as analogy for the substance which includes all substance.



(Shree Yantra)

MUKHA (Ritual Crown)



The crown worn by Buddhist priests of Vajrayana during the religious performances is known as Mukha (ritual crown). Invariably, the crown bears images of four of the five Dhyani Buddha to establish cosmic principle. The Dhyani Buddhas represented here are Vairochana, Akshyovya, Ratna Sambhaba, and Amitabha. The fifth member Amoghashiddhi is not shown physically but is symbolized by the thunderbolt at the top of the crown.

POORNA KALASH (Full Vessel)



Poorna Kalash is a water vase which is full of all the characteristics of goodness. As it is full of all goodness it is treated as an auspicious object for all human beings. When the religious ceremonies are held Purna Kalash is kept at the centre surrounded by eight vessels. In Purna Kalash, there will be the signs of eight auspicious symbols.

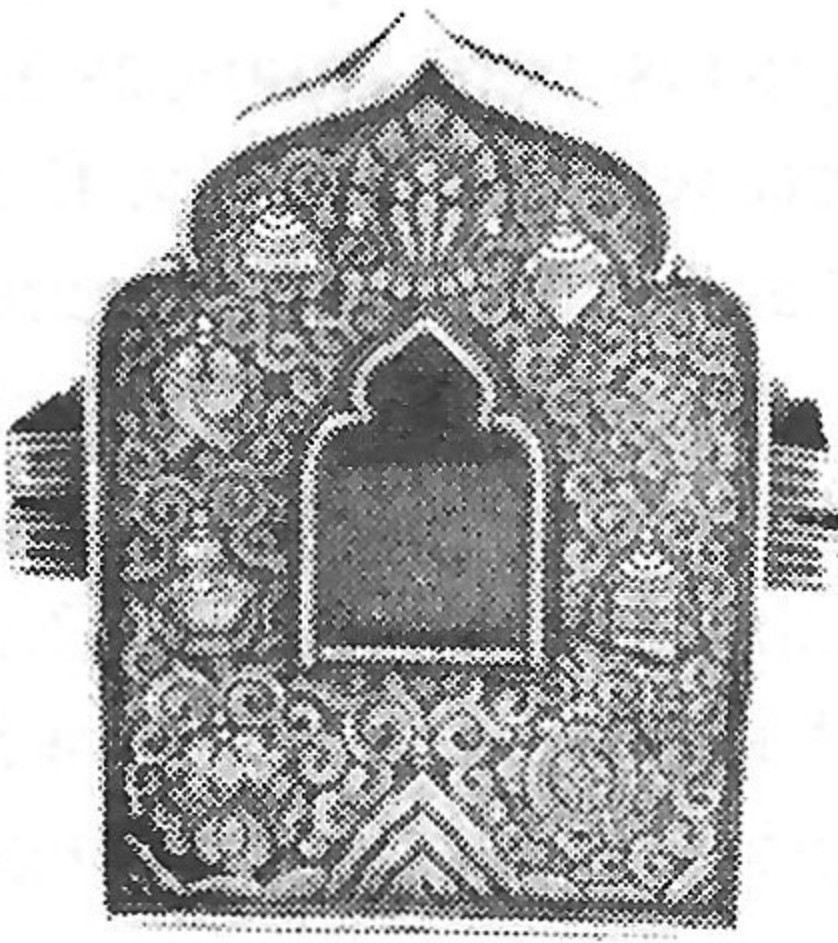
SUKUNDA (Oil lamp)



Sukunda is an oil lamp with combination of lamp and oil container. It is made of metal in artistic design. Oil was stored in the main section of the large pot and burnt in the bowl beside the neck with the aid of a wick. The filling of oil was done by a metal spoon known as Sumicha. Sukunda is the most important object for every religious and social performances. There must be the inscription of Ganesh in it, whose presence is always needed for the performances as the god of bestower of success.

GHAU (Prayer Box)

Ghau is a portable shrine in which an image of the owner's personal deity (Ishta Devata) is kept wrapped in silk cloth. Most Tibetans used Ghau at home and during travelling. At home, it is kept on an altar. But when travelling it is fastened at the cross belt. Generally, Ghau has a trefoil shaped top and a window in the middle through which one can see the personal deity. Ghau is made of two parts which fit together to form a box. The back is usually left plain and the front is richly decorated.

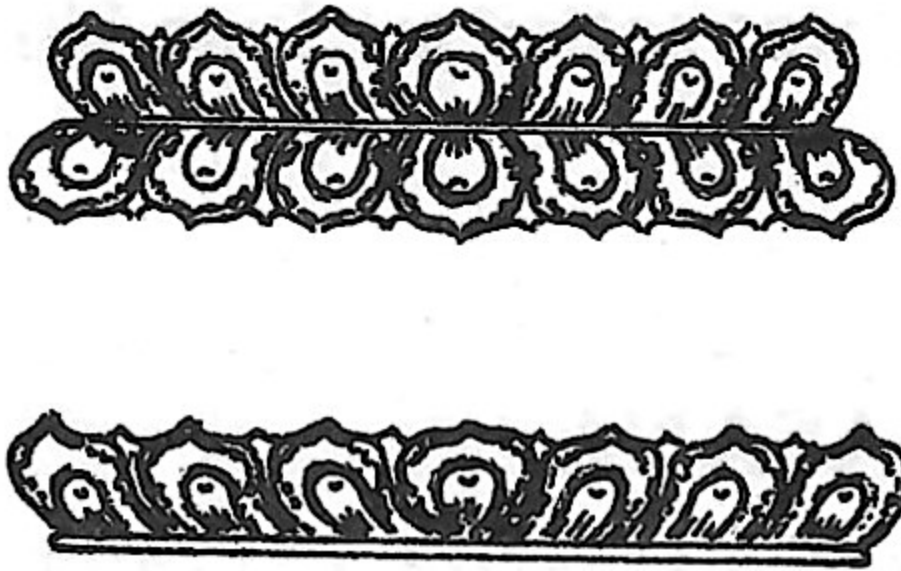


BHUMBA

Water is perhaps the most important both in Hindu and Buddhist ritual and is always present on the altar in a costly pot or in some other container. The pot whose shape is just like a flat shape jar with a pipe to bring out the water from the pot and which is richly decorated with precious stones and metals is known as Bhumba.

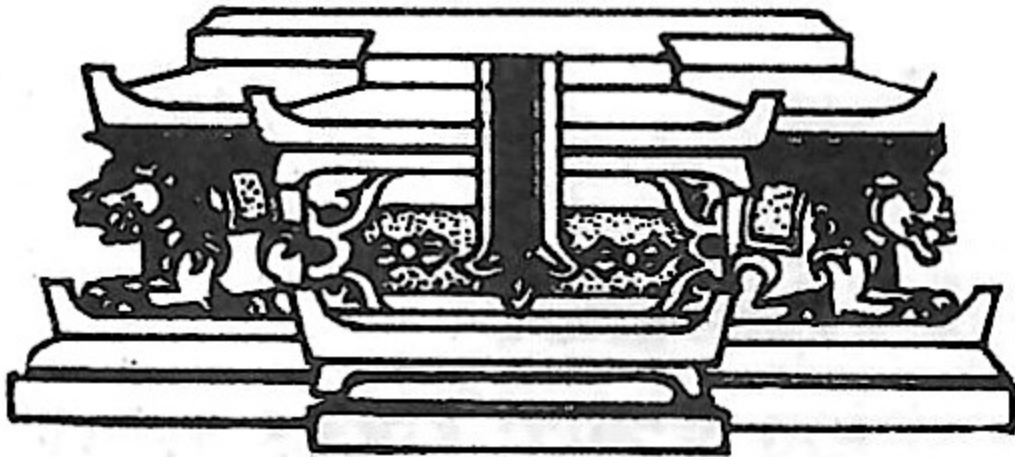


Postures & Pedestals



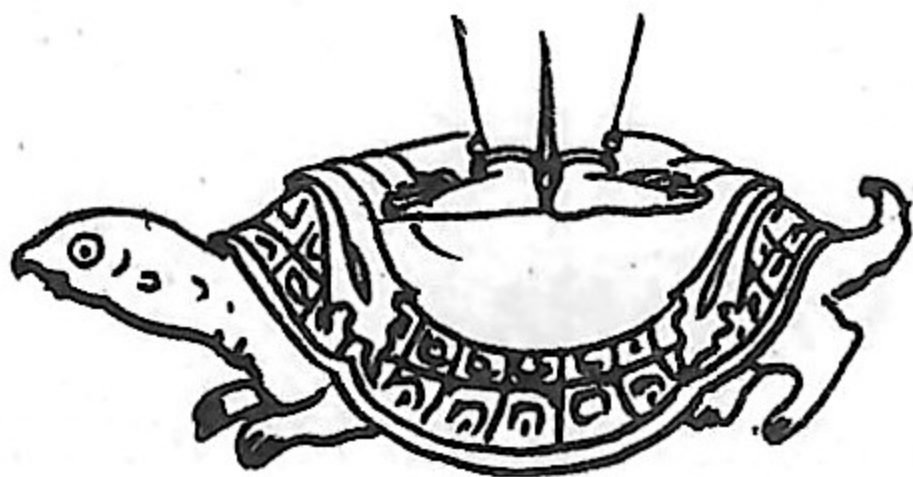
PADMASANA

Asana also means a throne or a pedestal. If the pedestal of lotus is arranged in single petal row it is called Padmasana. If the lotus petals are arranged in a double row it is called Viswapadmasana.



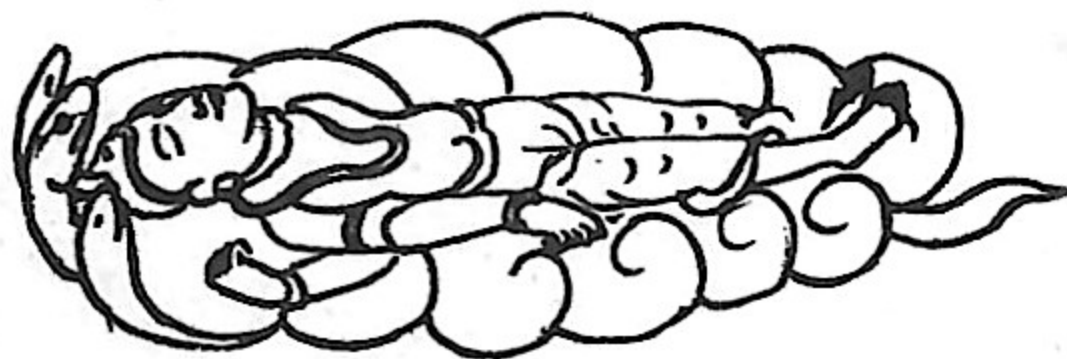
SINGHASANA

The pedestal supported by lion is called Sinhasana.



KURMASANA

The pedestal supported by the tortoise is called Kurmasana.



SAYANA ASANA

It is a sleeping pose of Hindu god Vishnu.



NRITYAMURTI ASANA

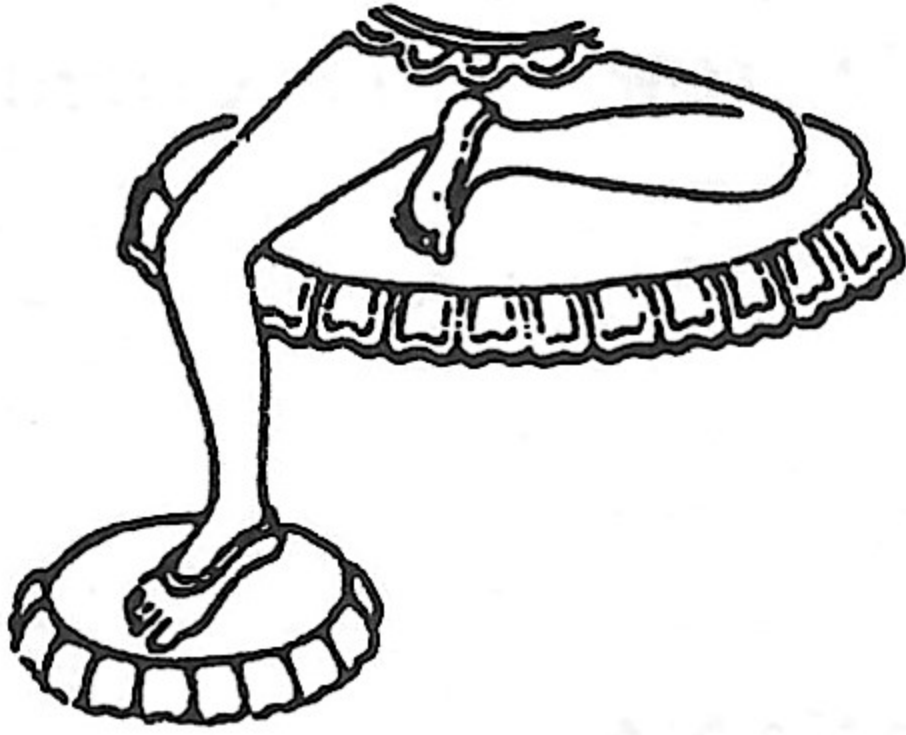
A pose of dancing Shiva and other various tantric gods are found in this position.

ASANA (Sitting Position)



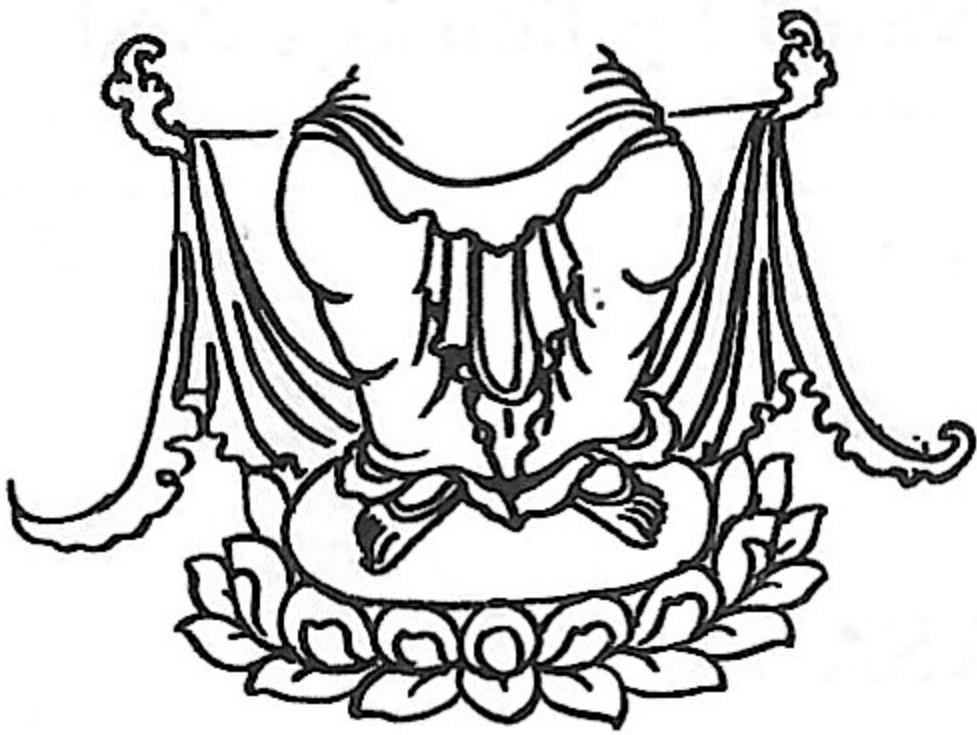
DHYANA ASANA

The Meditative pose is also called padmasana. In this position the legs are crossed closely locked with the soles of both feet visible. All Buddhas and Bodhisatwas seated are found in this position.



LALITA ASANA

A pose of ease-one leg pendant and often resting on a lotus flower. The other leg is in the usual position of Buddha. Taras, the consort of Dhyani Buddha, Saraswati, Basundhara are found in this Asana.



PARYANKA ASANA

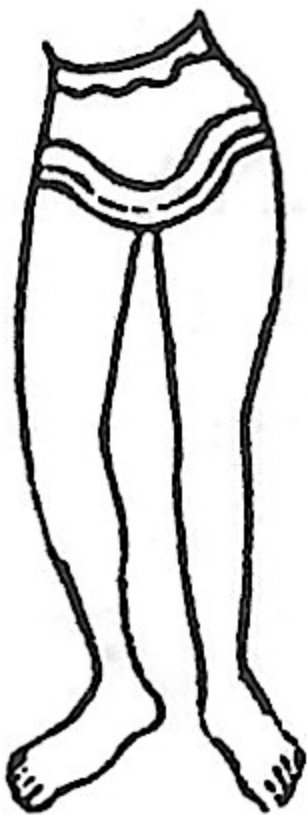
The European position seated knees apart and both legs pendent. The position of Maitriya Buddha.



RAJALILA ASANA

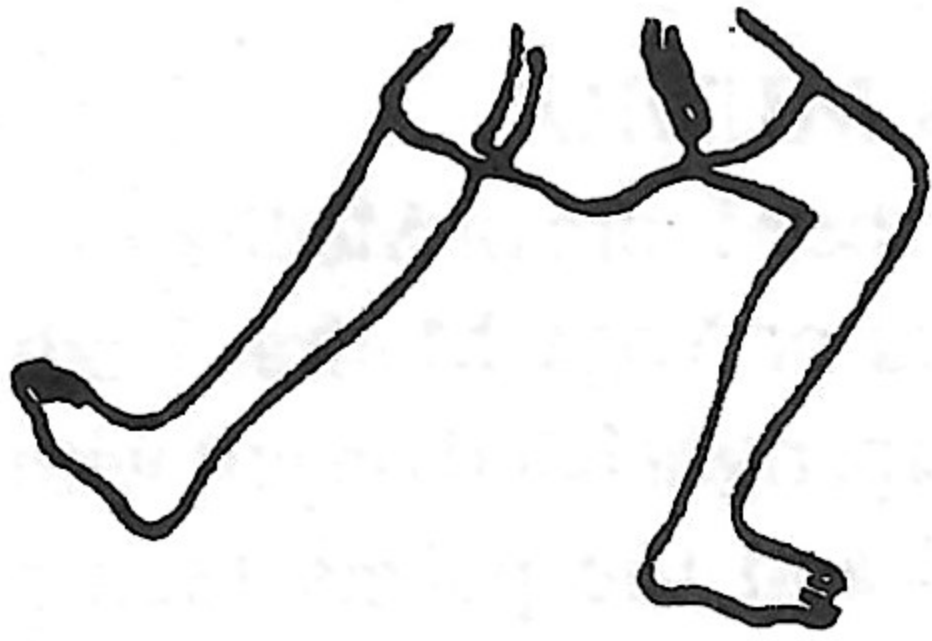
Seated with right knee raised and left leg in the usual position of Buddha. Right arm hanging loosely over the right knee. Hindu deities are often shown in this posture.

ASANA (Standing Postures)



SAMAPADA ASANA

A pose standing either in straight or in various degrees of flexion of body or legs. Boddhisatwas are found in this position.



ALIDH ASANA

A pose stepping to the left with right leg straight and left leg bent. The aggressive forms of god, the Dakinis and the wrathful deities are found in this position.

MUDRA (Gesture)

ABHAYA



Abhaya Mudra is the Mudra (Gesture) of Protection. In this gesture, the arm is elevated and slightly bent. The hand is lifted to shoulder level with the palm turned outward and all the fingers are extended upward. This mudra is characteristic of Dhyani Buddha Amoghsiddhi.

BHUMISPARSA



Bhumisparsa is the mudra of witness (earth-touching). The right arm is pendant over the right knee. The hand with the palm turned inward and all the fingers extended downward with the finger touching the lotus throne. The left hand lies on the lap with palm upward. This gesture 'of touching the earth' or calling the earth to witness' commemorating Gautam Buddha's victory over temptation by the demon Mara.

This gesture is Characteristic of Dhyani Buddha Akshobhya as well as Shakyamuni.

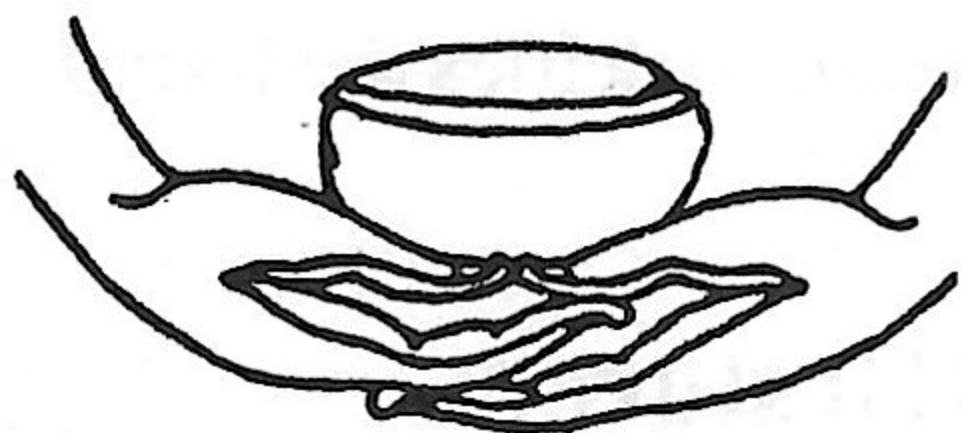
DHARMACHAKRA



Dharmachakra Mudra is the gesture of Teaching. Literally, Dharma means 'Law' and Chakra means wheel and usually interpreted turning the Wheel of Law. In this gesture both hands are held against the chest, the left facing inward, covering the right facing outward, the index and thumb of each hand making a circle. It is characteristic of Dhyani Buddha Vairochana. It is also a gesture of hands exhibited by Lord Buddha while preaching his first sermon at Sarnath.

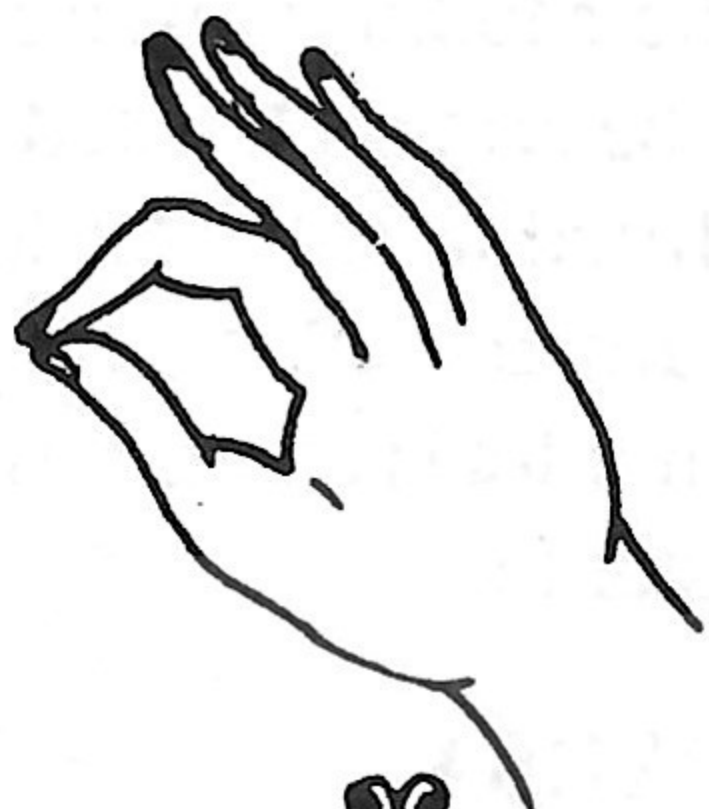
DHYANA MUDRA

Dhyana Mudra is the Mudra of Meditation. It is also called Samadhi or Yoga Mudra. Both hands are placed on the lap, right hand on left with fingers fully stretched and the palms facing upwards. Often, a begging bowl is placed. This is the characteristic mudra of Dhyani Buddha Amitabha.



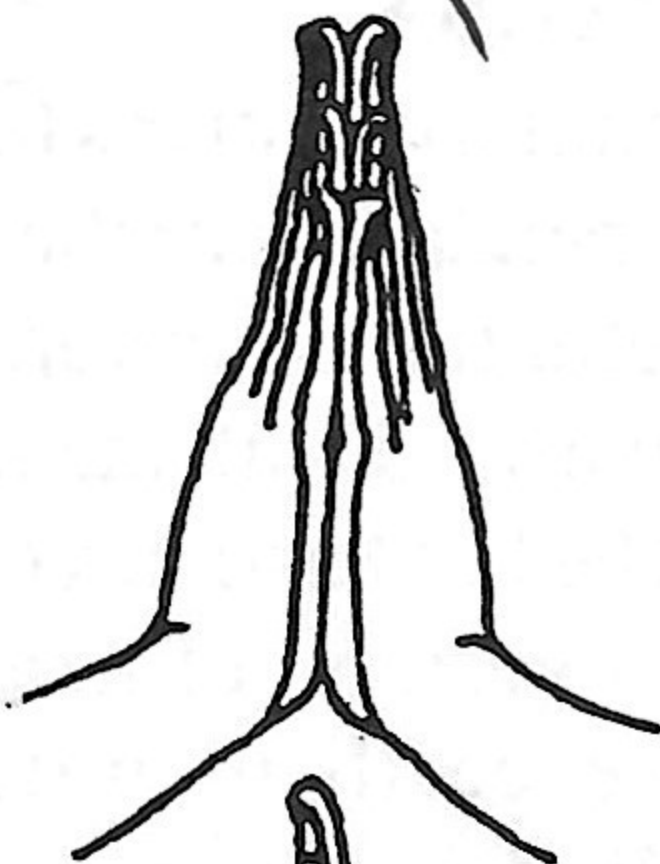
JNANA MUDRA

Jnana Mudra is the gesture of teaching. In this gesture, the tips of the index and the thumb are joined and held near the center of chest with the palm turned inward. This is the characteristic mudra of Manjushree.



NAMASKAR MUDRA

Namaskar Mudra is the gesture of prayer. In this gesture, the hands are kept closed to the chest in devotional attitude with the palms and fingers joined. This is the special gesture of Avalokiteswara when with more than two arms.



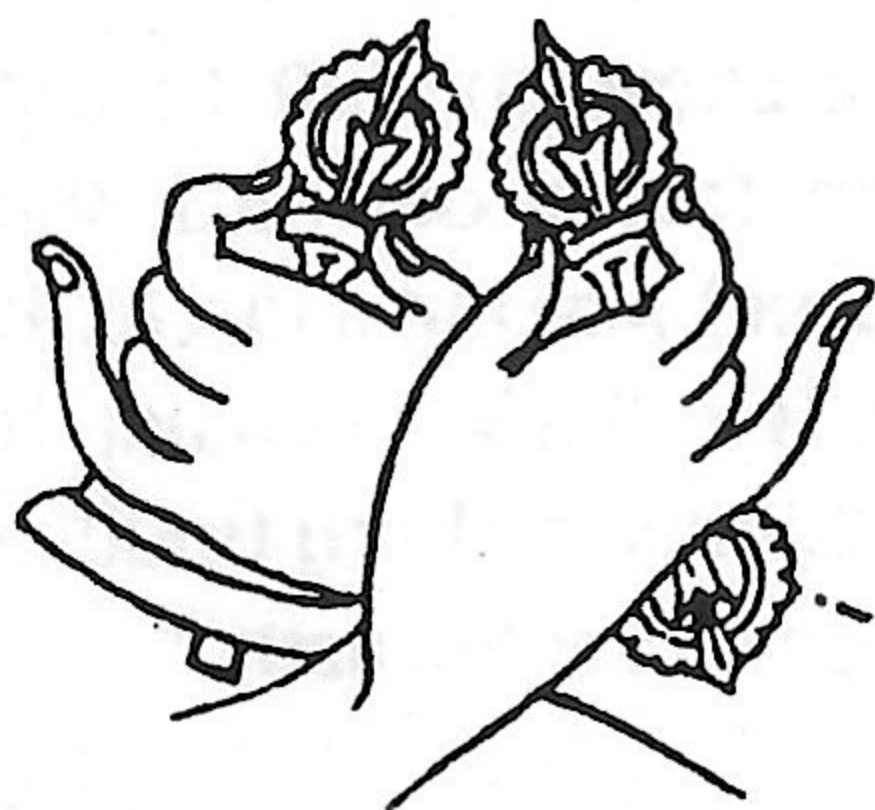
TARJANI MUDRA

Tarjani Mudra is the gesture of threatening or warning. Only the index finger is raised while the other fingers are locked up in the fish. This mudra is characteristics of most of the wrathful deities.



VAJRAHUNKARA MUDRA

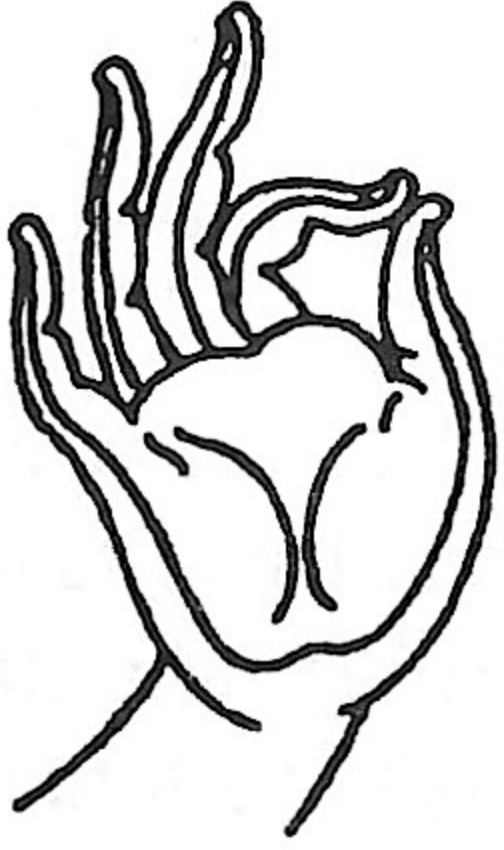
Vajrahunkara Mudra is the gesture of Adi Buddha, Vajradhara. In this gesture the wrists are crossed at the breast. The hands hold usually the Vajra and Ghanta. This is the special mudra of Vajradhara and Samvara and most of the gods when holding their Saktis.





VARADA

Varada Mudra is the gesture of Charity or conferring boon or grace. The arm is extended all way down with palm facing outwards, fingers extended downwards. This is the Mudra of Dhyani Buddha Ratna Sambhava, Avalokiteswara, sometimes, of a standing Sakyamuni.



VITARKA MUDRA

Vitarka Mudra is the gesture of argument. In this gesture the tips of thumb and index finger touched forming a circle. All the other fingers are extended upwards. This is the mystic gesture of Taras and Boddhisatwas.

Gods and Goddesses of Buddhism and hinduism



ADIBUDDHA

Adibuddha is the original Buddha who is without beginning and without end. He is said to be infinite, self created and revealing himself in the form of a blue flame coming out of a lotus. In Nepal, Swayambhu is worshipped as Adibuddha.



AMITABHA

Amitabha is the most ancient Buddhas among the Dhyani Buddhas. He said to reside in the Sukhabati heaven in peaceful meditation. He is of red colour originating from the red syllable HRIH. He represents cosmic element of Sanjna (name). His vehicle is peacock. He exhibits Samadhi Mudra with his two palms folded face up one on top of the other lying on his lap. He has a lotus as his sign. When represented on the stupa, he always faces the west. He is worshipped thinking that one can have salvation. Sometimes holding a Patra on the same posture. His female is Pandara. Amitabha denotes "Boundless light" or Incomprehensible.

AMOGHSHIDDHI



Amoghshiddhi is the fifth Dhyani Buddha in order. His left hand lies open on the lap and the right exhibits the Abhaya mudra. He represents cosmic element of Samskar (Conformation). He is of green colour and his recognition symbol is the viswa vajra or the double thunderbolt. He always faces the North. He is the embodiment of the rainy season. Sometimes a serpent with seven heads forms the background as an umbrella. In front of his shrines, therefore, is found a small square pit which is meant for the snake. His vehicle is garud.



AMOGHAPASA LOKESWAR

Amoghpaśa Lokeshwar is also a form of Avalokiteswar. He is four-faced and eight - armed and stands on a lotus. He carries in his four right hands the Vajra, the sword, the goad and the bow, while the four left carry the Ghanta, the Trindandi, the noose and an arrow.

AKSHOBHYA



Akshobhya is next importance among the Dhyani Buddhas. He is regarded as the second Dhyani Buddha by the Nepalese Buddhists. Akshobhya originates from the blue syllable Hum. He is two-armed and one-faced and exhibits the Bhusparsa (earth touching) mudra which means calling the earth for witness, and sits in the Vajraparyanka pose. He represents the primordial cosmic element of Vijnana (consciousness). When represented in the Stupa, he always faces the east. His left hand rests on the lap, while the right rest on the right knee with the tip of the middle fingers touching the ground with palm drawn inwardly.

His vehicle is a pair of elephant and his recognition symbol is the vajra or the thunderbolt. His female is Locana.



ARDHANARISWARA

Ardhanariswara is combined form of god and goddess. When the image of half Shiva and half Gauri, it is called Hara Gauri. Like that half Vishnu and half Laxmi is popularly known as Laxmi Narayan.

AVALOKITESWARA

Among the 108 forms of Lokeswara Avalokiteswara is one who refuses to accept Nirvana since he considers such acceptance selfish in view of the ignorance of the great majority of the people who have not yet attained that stage. His sacrifice symbolises infinite compassion (Karuna), sharing of mankind's misery, willingness to help those in distress. He holds in his hand the indestructible jewel. He is saviour and protector from danger, So, his invocation (Mantra) "OM MANI PADME HUM" is found inscribed on rocks, loose stones, prayer wheels, etc. Avalokiteswara is called Chengresik in Tibet.

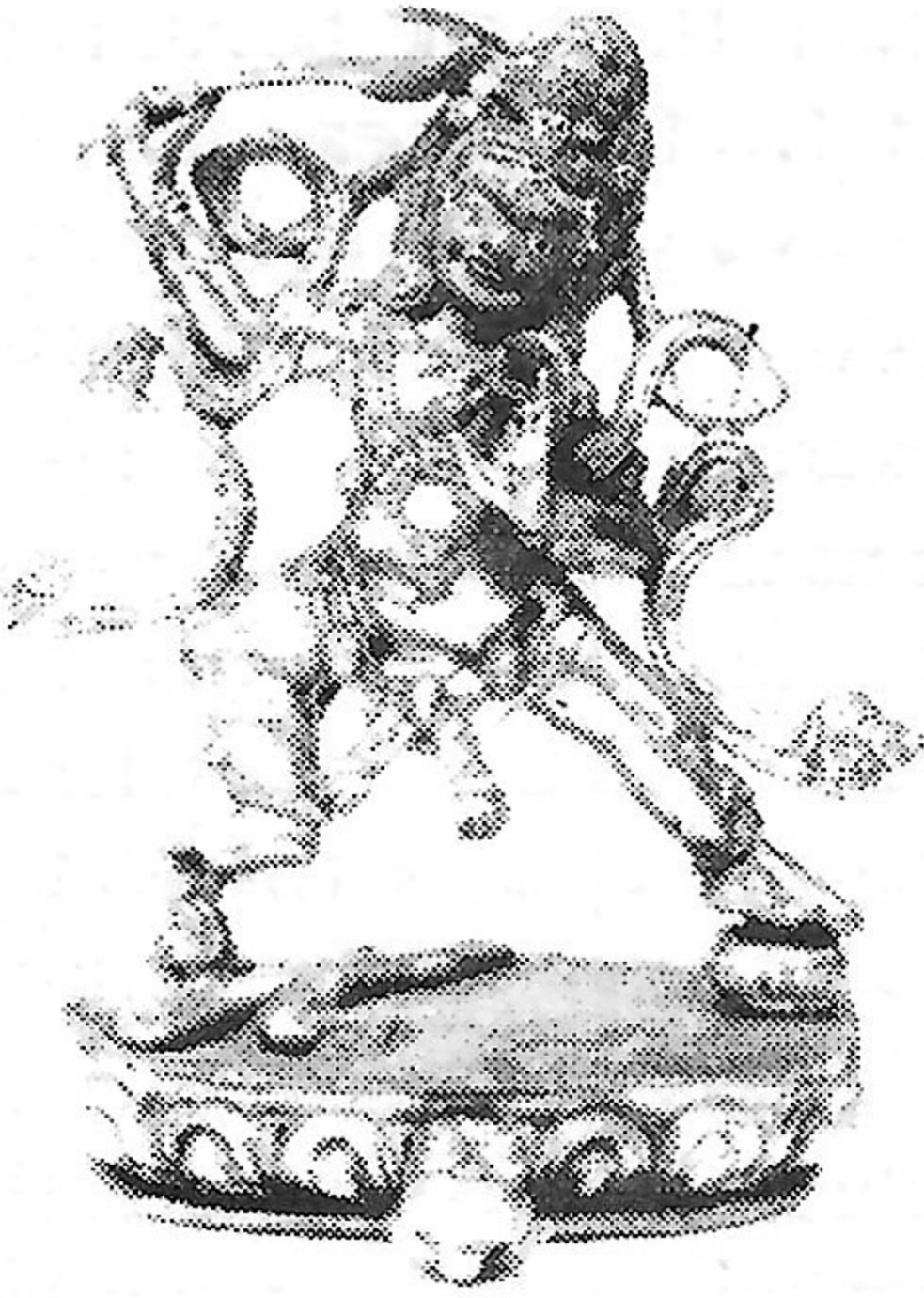


VAJRASATWA

Vajrasatwa, the sixth Dhyani Buddha, is regarded by the Nepali Buddhist as the priest of the Five Dhyani Buddha. He is not represented in the stupa like other Dhyani Buddhas, but independent shrines are dedicated to his worship. His worship is always performed in secret and is not open to those who are not initiated into the mysteries of the Vajrayana. Vajrasattwa is represented in two forms, single and yabyum. This

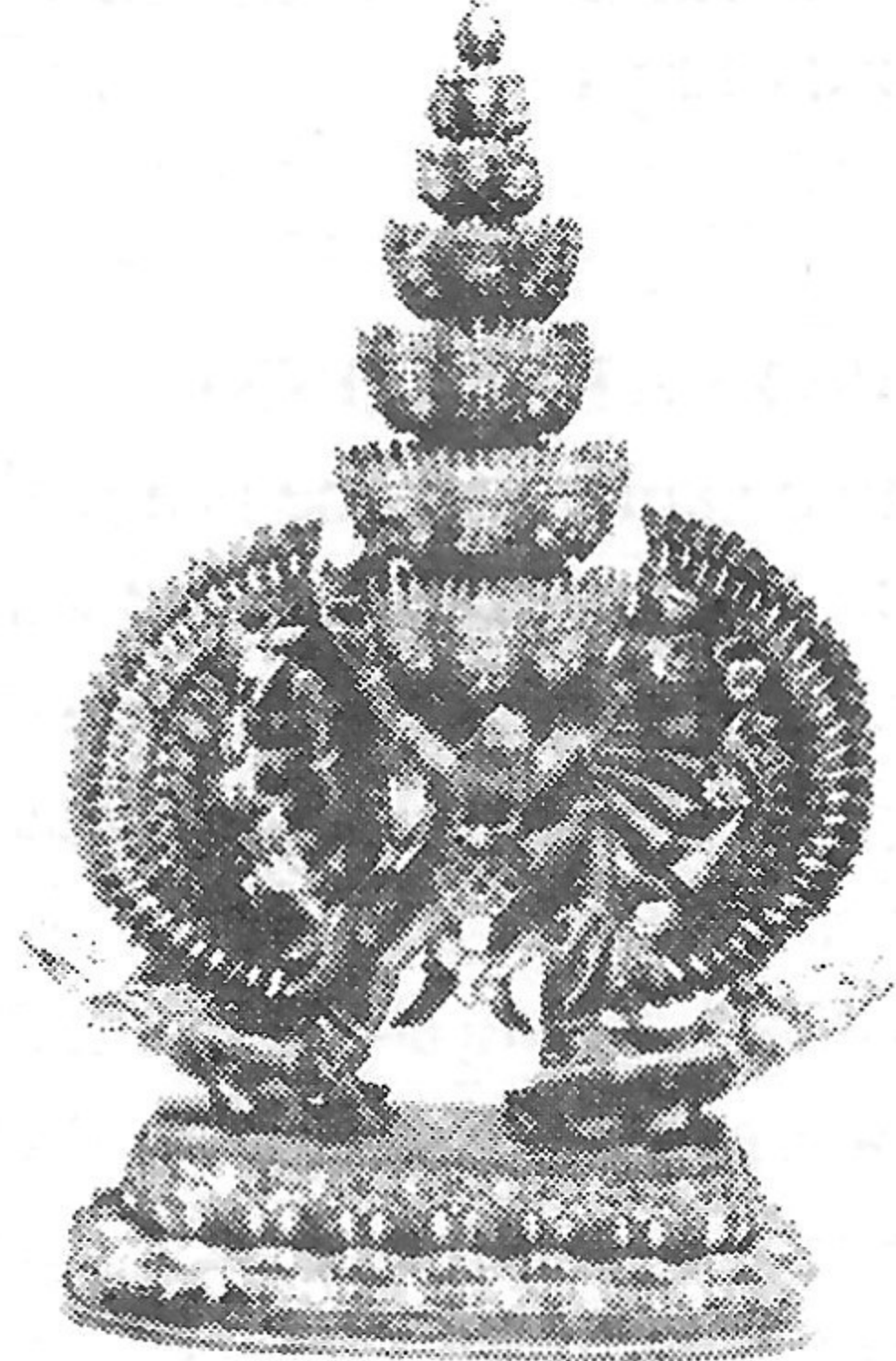


Dhyani Buddha wears all ornaments, rich dress and a crown. He is of white colour. He sits cross legged in the meditative pose like other Dhyani Buddhas. He carries the vajra in his right hand with palm upwards against the chest and ghanta (bell) in the left hand resting upon the left thigh.



BHAIRAB

Bhairab has a number of different forms. He is Shiva's another form in a terrible position and the most distinctive tantric form of Shiva. He is nude, black or dark blue in color. Sometimes in painting, he is white. He has rolling eyes, many arms but usually one head. In his hands are weapons, skull-cup, a wand with 3 skulls or a noose. He wears a necklace, garland of skulls and has skulls in his crown. His hair is unruly. He may wear sandals and is often standing on a recumbent figure.



BISWARUPA

A representation of many gods in one. He is a many-headed, many armed. The rear circle of arms has the hands in all the various hand-poses; other circles hold all the implements and weapons. All the heads terrible and gentle are those of the deities.



CHAKRA SAMBARA

Chakra Sambara is the main deity of Sambara. He is also regarded as manifestation of Heyvajra who is the central figure of an esoteric cult, the Vajrayana Buddhism. Vajrabarahi is his consort embracing in a mystic position. Their embrace symbolises union between wisdom and method which leads ultimate bliss.

CHANDAMAHAAROSHANA

Chanda Maharoshan is also called Maha chandrarosana and Acala. He is one faced, two armed and squint eyed. His face appears terrible with bare fangs. He wears a jewelled head-dress, bites his lips and wears on his crown a garland of severed heads. His eyes are slightly red. He carries the sword in his right hand and the noose round the raised index finger against the chest in the left. His sacred thread consists of a white snakes. He is clad in tiger skin and he wears jewels. His left leg touches the ground, while the right is slightly raised. His worship is always performed in secret and the god is kept secluded from public gaze. He is emanated of Akshobhya, so he bears on his crown the effigy of Akshobhya.



CITIPATI (TWO SKELETONS)

The Citipati is two skeletons, one is a male and the other is a female. They are represented with arms and legs interlaced, dancing on two corpses. Each holds a wang topped by a skull. One holds a skull cup and the other a vase. Sometimes both carries the same symbol. According to the Buddhist legend, the citipati were two ascetics in their former existence. Once they were lost in a deep meditation, they did not notice that a thief had cut off their heads and thrown them in the dust. Since then they became ferocious enemies of the thief and had vowed eternal vengeance.



CHINTAMANI LOKESWAR

He is also a form of Lokeswar who dispenses jewels and wealth to his devotees. He is the Lokeswar of wishing gem.