

CHAPTER-5

BUDDHIST ICONS AS DEPICTED ON THE STUPAS

The terms icon (derived from Greek eikon) signifies an object of worship or something that is associated with the rituals relating to the cults of different divinities and “graphy” means study. So the word iconography is the study of image. The English word “image”, derived from old French and Latin “imago”, on the other hands, has got the basic connotation of “likeness” from it came to be used in the sense underlying the Greek world mentioned above. Image in its primary sense has its close parallel in such Indian words as *Pratikriti*, *Partima*, *Vimbha*, etc.

All the three great religion of India had well-developed numerous pantheons and at times it becomes difficult to decide as in which of these three systems a particular image should be assigned. The problem is further aggravated due to free and frequent interchange of deities among the three religion. Hindu deities Parvati and Indra are to be found among the Jainas; the latter, as well as Ganapati and Saraswati are found in the Buddhist pantheons. Brahmanical Hinduism has borrowed from the Buddhists gods like Mahacintara, Janguli and Vajrayogini under the names of Tara, Manasa and Chinnamasta respectively. In Mahakala, Nilkantha and others are famous in the earlier phase the Jainas and Buddhist borrowed Brahmanical Hindu gods but in the *Tantric* age, the Buddhist gods were commonly exploited

We get to know about the Buddhist iconography from some ancient texts like the Sadhanamala, Sadhanasamuccaya, Dharmakasangraha (Pandit Amritananda), Nispannayagambara tantra (Pandit Abhayakara Gupta). Heruka, Hevajra Tantra, Candamaha rosana tantra, Vajra varahi tantra, Vajravati Tantra, Yoginijata Tantra, ect.

The first people who were pioneers in the study of Buddhist iconography were professor Waddel, Grunwedel, Foucher, Burgess, Miss Getty and others.

In the earlier phase of Buddhist art we have no representations of the god. The scenes from Buddha's life and the *Jatakas* were depicted; sculptures and railing at Barhut and Sanchi are example of it. Here the presence of Buddha was indicated by symbols like empty throne, parasol, bodhi tree, foot prints etc. According to Foucher, the first image of Buddha was fashioned in Gandhara School of art (Bhattacharyya 1958: 5). Amaravati School is contemporaneous with the Gandhara School. The image of Buddha most probably came up during the Kushana Period with Gandhara and Mathura as contemporary art centres. The Gandhara art has foreign influence whereas Mathura art is more indigenous in nature.

The Mathura School flourished from the first Century CE to the early Gupta period, for we do not meet here with any of the later Buddhist gods, i.e. Avalokitesvara, Tara, Manjusri and other deities (Bhattacharyya 1958: 35). Sarnath School covers the period from the time of Asoka down to the reign of Palas, and the Orissan, Javanese; Nepalese school is contemporaneous to the Palas.

The great majority of Buddhist deities are believed to have emanated from one or the other of the five *Dhyani* Buddha's. So the Buddhist deities are scientifically classified on the basis of their parental *Dhyani* Buddha's

There were a large number of gods and goddesses in the Buddhist pantheons, which developed inordinately in the Vajrayana phase of the Buddhism. The process of deification, which started hesitatingly with the change in the doctrine of early Buddhism leading to the rise of Mahayana and ushered in a number of elementary Bodhisattvas in the early centuries of the Christian era, gained momentum when the *Yogachara* philosophy was fully developed and got inculcated in the Gupta period. This process accelerated beyond all bounds with further doctrinal changes heading to be full-fledged development of *Tantric* Buddhism during the Pala period. Vajrayana enunciated a deep esoteric system of *sadhanas* with emphasis on *Krtyas*, *Mantras* and *Mandalas*.

The primitive pantheon was, consequently, enlarged into a highly elaborated one with Adi-Buddha, *Dhyani*-Buddha (Tathagath) and the latter emanations in the form of a host of divine Bodhisattvas and female divinities each of them was given a sacred *bija-mantra*, or rather they were conceived as the concrete manifestation of the transformation of these germ syllables. The Vajrayanists did not stop with this. They went on extending the pantheons with increasing vigour. Even the individual syllable of a *mantra* was deified. Not resting satisfied with the deification of *Nakshatras*, *Rasis*, *Kalas*, *Paramitas*, *Vasitas*, *Pujapakaranas* (Like flowers, incense, lamp, *gandha*, etc) and *ayudhas*, the *Vajrayanists* went to the extent of imparting divine concepts and iconographical features to all kinds of human desires, both sublime and low (e.g. *Bhojaneccha*, *Gandheccha* etc). Furthermore, they resorted to the proliferation of the forms of the individual

divinities already incorporated into the pantheon. Thus, Avalokitesvara came to be represented in as many as one hundred and eight forms with distinct features and name.

This increase in the number of deities of the Buddhist pantheons is not merely due to the growth and development of the doctrine and ideological concepts. There are other factors accounting for this, chief among these are the keen competition faced by the Buddhist to maintain their hold over the laity and missionary zeal to bring people of various creeds within their fold in view of the formidable strength of other religious systems, particularly of all-persuasive Brahmanism. To en-roll the followers of Brahmanical religion, the Buddhists did not hesitate to make compromises of various kinds and degrees. For instance, they evolved divinities having the essence of some of the principal deities of the Brahmanical sects with which the laity was familiar, deities were also evolved to disgrace Brahmanical god and goddesses (e.g. Hariharivahana Lokeshvara (Bhattacharyya 1958: 394) with Vishnu as a mount of Avalokitesvara, Trilokyavijaya trampling on Maheshvara and Gauri, Aprajita trampling on Ganesa and having Brahma as her parasol-bearer and prasanna-Tara with Indra, Upendra, Rudra and Brahma below her feet).

They went even to the extent of incorporating bodily a good number of Brahmanical gods and goddesses as subordinate divinities within the *Mandalas*. Buddhism in Tibet gave rise to a new type of Buddhism called Lamaism, where the local demonical deities (Bon religion) of the Tibetans were incorporated in to Buddhism to make it acceptable to the locals. The close interaction between India and Tibet since then resulted in the introduction of several adventitious concepts and deities in Indian Buddhist Pantheons. Some of the terrible forms conceived in the *Sadhanas* are presumably, due to the influence of Tibetan Lamaism. These representations are engraved on stone, metals and terracotta. Some of these representations that are seen on the votive stupas at Ratnagiri are discussed below briefly.

It may be stated here that most of the sculptures in Orissa are dated to the Gupta period on stylistic basis or the Gupta art tradition, which was wide spread at that time, was also exercising its influence in Orissa in a provincial manner and the flourishing Buddhist school of sculptures in the Jaipur hills connect Gupta sculptures with the late Kalinga school of Orissa.

After the fall of the imperial Guptas the Orissan School as represented at Lalitgiri, Udaygiri, Ratnagiri and at the surrounding sites is a true heir to the classical Gupta tradition. With this background, shall be described the iconography of Buddhist divinities as seen on the stupas in Orissa. Individual stupa in detail has been discussed in the previous Chapter.

Buddha Images

Dhyani-Buddha

In the Buddhist world it is believed that earth is composed of five *skandhas* (cosmic elements): *rupa* (form), *vedana* (sensation), *samjna* (name), *sanskara* (conformation) and *vijanana* (consciousness). These cosmic forces are confronted in Vajrayana as five *Dhyani-Buddhas*. In due course of time the *Dhyani-Buddhas* were considered as the gods responsible for diversified creation and thus Vajrayana took a polytheistic form, which was completely opposite to the concept which considers *sunya* as the one, Indivisible and Ultimate Reality and formulated the concept of the *kulas* or families of the five *Dhyani-Buddhas* from whom all other deities emanated.

Guhyasamaja Tantra the Buddhist text speaks of the origin of *Dhyani-Buddhas*, they are each given a *mantra*, a colour, a consort, a direction and a guardian of the gate. The Guhuasamaja Tantra describes about an enormous assembly of gods, Tathagatas, Bodhisattavas, saktis and various other divine beings. In the Assembly Lord Bodhicittavajra was requested by the Tathagatas to define the Tathagatamandala (magic circle of *Dhyani-Buddhas*); the Lord sat on a *Samadhi* (meditation) known as *Jnanapradipa* (lamp of knowledge), and his whole form started echoing with the sacred sound of *VAJRADHRK* which is the *mantra* of the Dvesa family. Soon the sounds transformed themselves into the shape of Aksobhya in *bhumisparsha mudra*.

In another *Samadhi* the sacred sound of *JINAJIK* echoed, the *mantra* of Moha family. The sounds compacted themselves into the form of Vairochana in *dharmachakra mudra* and was placed on the east of the Lord.

In the third *Samadhi* the sacred sound *RATNDHRK* echoes, the *mantra* of the Chintamani family. And soon sound compress in the form of Ratnaketu in *varad mudra* and is placed on the south of the Lord.

In the fourth *Samadhi* the sacred sound of *AROLIK* resonant, the *mantra* of the Vajraraga family. And the sound compacted themselves in the form of Amitabha in *dhyana mudra* and is placed on the west of the Lord.

In the fifth *Samadhi* the sacred sound of *PRAJNADHRK* resonant, the *mantra* of Samaya family. The sound compresses in the shape of Amoghasiddhi in *abhaya mudra* and is placed on the north of the Lord.

In the similar manner the female counter-parts of the Five Tathagatas are named and are placed in their appropriate positions.

The emanated deities of these *Dhyani-Buddhas*, hold the miniature figure of their respective *Dhyani-Buddha* on their crown and are placed in the same direction as is assigned to their sires.

The names, colours and the symbols of the five *Dhyani*-Buddhas are Vairochana, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, Amoghasiddhi and Aksobhya, their colours are white, yellow, red, green and blue and they exhibit their hands in *dharmacakra* (teaching), *varad* (boon), *dhyana* (meditation), *abhaya* (protection) and *bhumisparsha* (earth- touching) posture respectively.

The *Dhyani*-Buddhas are always depicted seated on a full blown lotus in *prayankasana* posture with both the soles of the feet turned upwards and most of the time the hand that rests on the lap holds a bowl on it. Generally the *Dhyani*-Buddhas are represented on the cardinal direction of the stupa and Vairochana is the deity of the inner shrine, thus generally he is unrepresented. Occasionally he is given a place between Ratnasambhava in the south and Aksobhya in the east. Independent shrines are also dedicated to *Dhyani*-Buddhas.

Bejewelled Buddha in *dharmacakra-mudra*

Vairochana is considered as the oldest and the first *Dhyani*-Buddha by the Nepalese Buddhists and he is regarded as the master of the whole temple therefore most of the time he is not depicted outside the stupa. When Vairochana is represented in human form he is white in colour and his two hands are held against the chest with the tips of the thumb and forefinger of each hand together in *dharmacakra Mudra* (Plate-XXXIV). A pair of Dragon is his *vahana* and his recognition symbol is a *chakra*.

Buddha in *bhumisparsha-mudra*

Aksobhaya is considered as the second *Dhyani*-Buddha by the Nepalese Buddhists, his description is available in Tantric literature. When he is depicted in the stupa he is facing the east. His left hand rests on the lap while the right hand rests on the knee with the palm drawn inwardly and the fingers touching the ground (Plate-XXXVI). His *vahana* is a pair of elephants and his identification symbol is the *vajra*.

Buddha in *varad-mudra*

Ratnasambhava is the third *Dhyani*-Buddha according to the Nepalese Buddhists. He is depicted in yellow colour and faces the south. His right hand displays *varada mudra* (Plate-CII) and his left hand rests on the lap. His *vahana* is a pair of lions and the recognition symbol is the jewel.

Buddha in *dhyana- mudra*

Amitabha is said to reside in the Sukhavati heaven in serene meditation, he is of red colour originating from the red syllable *Hrih*. When he is represented on a stupa he faces the west and according to Nepalese Buddhist Amitabha is the fourth *Dhyani*-Buddha. Both of his palms are

placed one above the other on the lap forming *dhyana Mudra* (Plate-LXXXII). His *vahana* is a pair of peacocks and recognition symbol is the lotus.

Buddha in *abhaya-mudra*

Amoghasiddhi is the fifth *Dhyani*-Buddha according to the Nepalese Buddhists. His left hand rests on the lap and the right is in *abhaya mudra* (protection) (Plate-CVI). He is represented in green colour and faces the north. A pair of Garudas is his *vahana* and his recognition symbol is the double conventional thunderbolt.

Bodhisattva Manjusri

He occupies the highest position in the Buddhist pantheon. He is considered to be the God who showers transcendental wisdom, who confers knowledge, intelligence, retentive memory, etc. on his worshippers. Manjusri came to be recognized as a Bodhisattva rather early in the history of Mahayana (Plate-CXX). He is known to have enjoyed a great popularity among the Buddhist of all persuasions in all Buddhist countries from third century CE. where for the first time his name occurs in the *Aryamanjusrimulakalpa*.

Detailed information about Manjusri is found in *Svayambhu-purana*, describing the glories of the Svayambhuksetra in Nepal. Here he is depicted in the form of flame of fire. According to this Purana Manjusri lived in China on mount Pancasirsa (the hill of five peaks). He was a great saint with many followers including Dharmakara the king of Nepal. Manjusri built a temple over the flame of fire, built a *vihara* still known as the Manjupattana and reside in the nearby hillock. It is not clearly know when he shifted to Nepal from China, but by third century CE he was a well-known Bodhisattava in most of the Asian Countries.

The manifestations of Manjusri in India are purely Indian or are influenced by the Indian tradition. The Buddhists believed in associating their gods and goddesses to the families of the five *Dhyani*-Buddhas. Sometimes in the *Sadhanas* he is considered as an offspring of Amitabha in red colour and sometimes of Aksobhay with the blue colour. There are forty-one *Sadhanas* in *Sadhanamala* devoted to Manjusri.

Manjuvara

Another form has a 'yellow' color and is seated in *lalitasana* on a lion over a lion throne with two hands in *dharmachakra mudra* (Plate-CXXIII) and with a blue lily stalk passing by his left arm. The lion is absent in the images found in Orissa. The Lily is to be decked with rays of *Visvakrin mantra*, possibly a figurative way of suggesting a sacred text. He is decked with ornaments.

Manjughosha

Manjughosha he is yellow, seated in *lalitasana* on lion throne (*simhasana*) two hands in *vayakhyana* (*dharmachakra*) *mudra* with an *utpala* (lily) held in it. Akshobhya is shown on his crest. He is decked in jewelled crown and is heavily ornamented. Accordingly to *Sadhana* number 52 he is *kanakagaura-vasna* meaning yellow of a light shade. He is seated on a lion (*simhasana*) with two hands in *vyakhyana-mudra* with an *utpala* in it. Akshobhya is shown on his crest. He is decked in all ornaments, Manjughosha has close resemblance with Manjuvara with the difference that the *utpala* does not bear a book on it and Manjughosha is depicted with *utpala* only on his left, but Manjuvara may have it on the either sides bearing a book.

Stupas with Arapachana

This form of Manjusri, though described to be ‘more used’, seems to have been rarely represented in Indian art. *Sadhanamala* describes the form of Manjusri. Arapachana is also known as Sadyonubhava-Arapachana or Sadyonubhava-Manjusri, he is magnificent like the full moon, has a smiling face, adorned with princely ornaments and sits on a *visva-padma* in *vajraparyankasana*. With his right arm he holds a sword which is depicted raised above his head and left with a manuscript held near chest (Plate-CXLI). The sword symbolizes the weapon which cuts off the cloud of ignorance and the manuscript, the text of the Prajnaparomita i.e. the book of transcendental wisdom.

Arapachana is popular in Tibet and China. In Tibet his sword in the right hand is replaced by the bell in the hand of a unique image (Bhattacharyya 1958:121).

Bodhisattava Avalokitesvara

Avalokitesvara is the most popular god in the Buddhist pantheon. He is the second Bodhisattva to be mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures, Manjusri being the first. He is said to have originated from *Dhyani-Buddha* Amitabha and his sakti, Pandara and is to be the ruling divinity during the present *kalpa* (*bhadrakalpa*) i.e. from the end of Buddhas time to the coming of Maitrya. He is believed to have created the fourth world, which is the actual universe, and he is therefore our creator. It is why he is called Lokesvara or Lokanatha, both meaning the lord of the universe (Plate- CXIV CXVII).

As Avalokitesvara is associated with a mountain, has led some scholars to interpret the name Avalokitesvara as the ‘lord’ who from his high moral position and principles, looks upon all created beings whom he has vowed that till they attain the transcendental wisdom. *Maitri* and compassion (*karuna*) were the means by which he tries to achieve this end. One of the passages in

Karandavyuha shows him in the form of all gods of all religions, even in the form of father and mother to impart knowledge of *Dharma*.

Shadaksari Lokesvara

In one of the passage in *Sadhnamala* (p.27) it is said that “The worshipper should think himself as Shadhaksari Lokesvara who is adorned with ornaments, white in colour and four armed, carrying the lotus in the left arm and the rosary in the right. The principle hands are in *anjali mudra*. To his right is Manidhara with the same colour and same posture sitting on a double petalled lotus. To the left is Shadaksari Mahavidhya in the similar manner seated on another lotus” (Plate- CLXXV).

In one of the stanza of the Sadhana; the *mantra* assigned to this form of Avalokitesvara is “*Om Manipadme Hum*” which confines of six syllables consecrating in the form of Shadaksari Mahavidhya.

Jata-mukata Lokesavra

He is four-armed and four-faced and has an effigy of *dhyani*-Buddha Amitabha on his crown. The two right hands shows the rosary and the *varada* pose, while the two left hold the lotus and the water pot (Plate- CXVII).

Bodhisattva Vajrapani

He seems to be an adoption of Sakra (Indra) of Hindu mythology. In the Gandhara art, in the context of the representation of the Buddhist myths and legends, there frequently appears the figure of a person with thunderbolt (*vajra*). *Vajra* is the characteristic *ayudha* of Sakra of Hindu mythology and this personage in the Buddhist context come to be known as Vajrapani, a name also associated with Sakra.

In the Buddhist pantheon Vajrapani came to be regarded as the Bodhisattva of *Dhyani-Buddha* Aksobhaya, the progenitor of the *Vajra* family accordingly to the Kaula School. He is generally shown in a triad with two other gods though also represented independently. In some images Buddha is seen to be accompanied by Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani. The triad of Manjusri, Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani is also not unknown.

Accordingly to *Sadhnamala* 18 he is one of the 8 Bodhisattvas in the *mandals* of Lokanatha. He is white in colour with a *vajra* in one hand and the other in *varad* pose. He is to have *Vajra* on lotus in left hand and *chamara* (yak tail flywhisk) in right (Plate-CXXXIV).

Bodhisattva Maitreya

In the Buddhist pantheon Maitreya has a dual personality. He is considered to be the future Buddha to come for the establishment of the last truth in all their purity (Plate-CXXXIX). In the mean time he is supposed to be residing in the Tushita-heaven as a Bodhisattva and *Sakyamuni* Gautama is believed to have visited him there and appointed him as his successor. In Buddhist art he has been represented in his two-fold existence as the Buddha to be and as a Bodhisattva.

He is being consulted by Buddhist *Arhants* for clarifications of various religious matters. Asanga, who was one of the earliest teachers to graft the philosophy of *tantra* on Mahayana, is also supposed to have visited Maitreya in Tushita-heaven and to have been initiated by him in the mystic doctrine of the *tantra*. Certain sects hence believed Maitreya to be the founder of the founder of the Tantric form of Buddhism.

Emanations of Amitabha

Goddesses

Tarodbhava Kurukulla

The goddess is shown with two, four, six or eight arms. When she is depicted with six arms, she bears the image of five *Dhayani*-Buddha on her crown, when she is two-armed she is known as Sukla Kurukulla and with four arms she is known as Tarodbhava Kurukulla. She is the goddess of entralling men, women, ministers and even kings. The *mantra* of Kurukulla is “*Om Kurukulle Hum Hrih Svaha*”, when this *mantra* is chanted ten thousand times all men are bewitched, thirty thousand times for a minister and one lakh for a king.

According to the *sadhana* Taradobhava is in red colour with garments, ornaments and is depicted seated on a red lotus. She is four-armed seated in *vajraparyankasana*, left two arms displays *abhaya mudra* and the arrow and in the right to arms she carries the bow and a red lotus (Plate-CLXVI).

Bhrkuti

The three-eyed goddess emanates from Amitabha of red colour. She holds the *tridandi* and the *kamandalu* with her left hands, the upper right hand holds a rosary while the other right is in the *varad mudra* (Plate-XXVIII A).

Emanations of Aksobhya

Gods

Quite a large number of deities emanates from the *Dhyani*-Buddha Aksobhya. Blue colour of Aksobhya symbolises the terrible deities, who in general are terrible in character both in deed and in physical appearance with distorted face, pointed tooth, three blood-shot eyes, protruding tongue, garland of skulls, tiger-skin and ornaments of snake. With the exception of Jambhala: the god of wealth.

Chandrasona

Chandrasona is also known as Mahachandarosona, Candamaharosana and Achala. The god is depicted one-faced with two-arms and is squint-eyed, his face is terrible with bare fangs. He has a jewelled head-dress with a *munda-mala* around it and the effigy of Aksobhya on it, and is shown biting his lips. He holds a sword with his right arm and the noose round the raised index finger against the chest in the left. His *upavita* consists of a white snake and is decked with jewels. His bend left leg touches the ground while the right is slightly raised (Plate-CXLII).

Heruka

Heruka is an important deity of Buddhist pantheon. His Sakti is Nairatmaya; along with her he is known to have left his impact on god concept in Tantrayana Buddhism. It is said that *Sunya* personified Lokeshvara the shape of Heuka when male and that of Nairatmaya when female.

Sadhana number 241-242,244-245 describes the iconography and rituals of Heruka when single. He is to have one face, two hands with *vajra* in right and *kapala* full of blood in left. A *khatvanga* (staff with a human skull at the top) passes through the crook of his left arm which is decorated with fluttering banners (Plate-CXXXVIII). His body besmeared in ash is to be clad in human skin (tiger skin according to sadhana-245). He dances in *ardhaparyanka* pose over corpse. He is to have a garland of several human heads and to have ornaments of bone bedecking his body. His face bears a terrific mien with bare fangs blood shot round eyes and brown hair raising-up in flame like curls. On his crest he is to have Aksobhya and in addition five skulls. He is said to confer Buddha hood on his worshippers and to protect the world from evil beings.

Sadhana-243 describes a three faced form of Heruka in embrace with his Prajana, *Sadhana*-248 describes a four faced form in embraced with Prajana, with four other dakinis hovering on four sides eager for embrace with the god.

Vajrasattava

In Mahayana pantheon Vajrasattava is considered as the spiritual son of Akshobhya and simultaneously the chief of the five *Dhyani*- Buddhas (Getty 1928:5-6). Vajrasattava is represented seated on a lotus in *vajraparyankasana*, in his right hand he holds a *vajra* close to his chest and in his left hand he holds a *ghanta* resting on his thigh (Plate-CXXXII)

Emanations of Ratnasambhava

Jambhala

He is the counterpart of Kubera and like him presides over the domain of riches. He also seems to have been originally a Yaksha. He is mentioned in a number of *Sadhanas* of the *Sadhanamala*, i.e. *sadhanas* numbered 284-280,291-295,296-299. Generally he is to have one face and two hands holding a Citron and in left hand a mongoose vomiting jewels in the left hand. Existence of pots of jewels is also mentioned in the descriptions (Plate-CXXXVII).

Vasudhara

The goddess is the consort of Jambhala, on her crown she bears the image of either Aksobhaya or Ratnasambhava. She is yellow in colour and she bears the ears of corn with her left arm and displays her right hand in *varada mudra*. She is represented either seated or standing posture and is decked with all sort of ornaments.

Sometimes, Vasudhara is depicted six armed seated in *lalitasana*. Her three right hands exhibits the *namaskara mudra*, *varad mudra* (Plate-CLX) and the ears of corn, the upper left hand has a book, ears of corn and a vessel containing jewels on her lap. Her hair rises upwards in the shape of flame.

Emanations of Amoghasiddhi

Goddess

Tara

Tara (Plate-CXLIV) occupies the same position in the Buddhist pantheon as the great goddess Durga does in the Hindu religion. She is considered to be the personified energy (*sakti*) of her consort and to have manifested herself in innumerable forms, benign as well as terrific. Tara is believed to be the consort of *Dhyani*-Buddha Amoghasiddhi. She is also the Bodhisattva of great compassion, by whom she is said to have been charged with the alleviation of the miseries of all

beings. She occupies the position of the supreme goddess in Buddhism of Mahayana and Tantrayana affiliations.

The word Tara or Tarini, by which name this great goddess is known, seems to have been derived from the root tar i.e. 'to cross'. In this sense the worship of the goddess is said to help the devotee to the ocean of existence. Alternatively, the root tar means also 'to save' or 'protect' and as such Tara is also recognized to be the saviour goddess protecting her worshippers from all the evils of existence. These two aspects in her conception may account for her great popularity and estimation among the Buddhist; and to these is also added the 'mother concept' since she is regarded as the mother of all Buddha's and Bodhisattva's. Between the eight and twelfth century, when tantric ideas overwhelmed Buddhism, the popularity of goddess Tara increased to a great extent. That she had gained ascendancy over other divinities of the Buddhist pantheons is known from one of her *Sadhanas* her *mantra* – 'Om Tara tuttare tare svaha': is considered to be endowed with great power and as the lord of *mantras* adored, Worshipped, and recited by all Tathagathas.

Innumerable are the forms of this great goddess of the Buddhist pantheon having separate existence and functions. Like Ekajata, Parnasabari, Mahachina Tara etc are believed to be her manifestations.

Tara manifests herself in benign as well as terrific forms. In Indian art of Buddhist usage the terrific forms are very rarely represented.

Parnasabari

Parnasabari is the goddess who prevents out-breaks of epidemic and assures safety to the terror stricken. She is depicted in yellow complexion with three faces, three eyes and six arms; her face at the centre is blue, the right white and the left red and has a smiling face (Plate-CLXV). She is adorned with jewels, holds a *vajra*, a *parasu* and arrow in her right hands and in her left *tarjani* with the noose, cluster of leaves and the bow. Her *jatamukata* bears the image of Aksobhaya. In some instances Parnasabari is shown standing in *pratyaldha* posture on the moon over the white lotus, trampling Vighnas (Ganesha) under her feet. But in Orissa from Ratnagiri just one stupa bearing the image of goddess is reported seated in *paryankasana* posture on a double petalled lotus and Ganesha is not depicted in this stupa.

Emanations of Vairocana

Goddesses

Marichi

She is generally invoked at dawn with proper ceremonies and rituals. This shows her connection with the Sun god and her iconographic features may be seen to have been adopted from the Brahmanical Surya though in a different manner. She drives a chariot drawn by three, five or seven pigs / horses; she has a female charioteer who has no legs or Rahu who has no body (Plate-CXCVIII).

16 *Sadhanas* in the *Sadhanamala* describes as many as 8 distinct forms of the goddess; 1 & 2 are one face with two hands, 3 & 4 are three faced (one of sow) with eight hands and with four companions divinities, Varttali, Vadali, Varali and Varhamukhi, 5 is three faced (one of sow) with eight hands, but without the companion divinities, 6 is with three faces (with right and left of sow) with 12 hands, 7 is five faced with ten arms and four legs, and 8 is six faced with 12 arms, The majority of the *Sadhanas* describe Vairochana as the parental *Dhyani*-Buddha of the goddess.

Marichi is the Buddhist counterpart of Surya. The goddess is depicted either human headed or three headed (left head of the goddess is sow-like) and six armed forms are shown standing in the *pratyalida* posture either on a chariot the charioteer being rahu or on a plain pedestal. The right hand carries a needle, an arrow and thunderbolt. Two of the left hands hold the branch of an *asoka* tree and a bow, the three being in the *tarjani mudra* with or without a thread ending in a noose.

The eight-armed bejewelled Marachi carries in her four right hands a needle, an elephant-goad, and an arrow and a thunderbolt and in her left hands a string, a bow and the branch of an Asoka tree, the principal left palm being in the *tarjani mudra*

Asokakanta

Generally two-armed and one headed Marichi is known as Asokakanta. She holds the bough of an *asoka* tree with her left arm and right arm in *varad mudra* she bears the image of Vairochana on the crown; but she is known as Arya-Marichi if she carries the needle and the string in her two hands (Plate-CLXVII).

Chunda

Chunda (Plate-CXXVIII C) is an important deity of the Buddhist pantheon. Three *Sadhanas* - 129, 130 and 131 describes fourhanded form of this goddess and this form has been more often represented in sculptures and paintings. Abhayayakara Gopal's *Nishpannayagavali* mentions a goddess of 26 hands forms, apparently of this goddess Chunda, with six, twelve, sixteen and eighteen hands are also known. This multiplicity of forms reflects in a manner, the popularity of the goddess among the Buddhist worshippers of those days,

She is the embodiment of the Chunda *dharini* or Chunda *mantra* and so is endowed with all the mystic powers that the *Dharini* or *Mantra* represents. One of the Sadhana -130, describes her as *Vajrasatva-mukuatm*, i.e. with Vajrasattava on her crest. By her association with various *mandalas* she is supposed to have the *Dhyani*-Buddha of the principle deity of the *mandala* as her sire, for instance, she may have Vairochana when she is affiliated to Manjuvara-*mandala*. As a *Dharini* deity she may have Amogasiddhi, as all *Dharini* deities are said to have collectively emanated from this *Dhyani*-Buddha (Bhattacharyya 1958: 337).

Aryasarasvati

Sarasvati the Hindu goddess is known as Aryasarasvati in Vajrayanism. She is the goddess of knowledge, she holds in the left arm the stalk of a lotus on which Prajnaparamita book is placed (Plate-CXCVII). The *Dhyana* is silent about the symbol carried in the right arm and the *asana* is also not mentioned (Bhattacharyya 1958: 152).

After give a brief description on the background to iconographic features of the deities represented on the various stupa under discussion, in the last chapter-6 'Conclusion' summary of the research work is done.

