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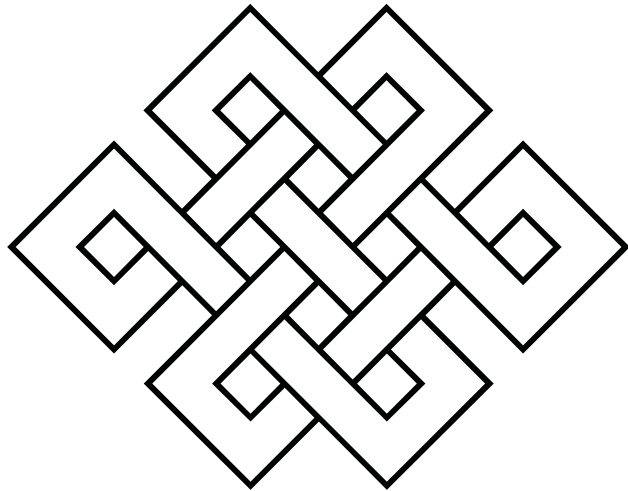
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## The Buddha and His Emaciated Demons

Claudine Bautze-Picron

The present paper emerged out of a study bearing on images of the emaciated Buddha from Southeast Bangladesh and Burma (BAUTZE-PICRON 2008). This aspect refers to a long period of the life of the future Buddha when, after having left the city of his forefathers and renounced the throne, he abandoned his royal garments and cut his long hair, withdrew in the forest and practised severe penance during six years. After having practically reached the shore of death, Śākyamuni took the decision to resume taking food and was thus 'reborn'.

While researching this topic, it appeared that this very particular type of representation was not particularly privileged in South Asia: The most famous examples were produced in the North West probably between the second and the fourth century; two further examples are observed in the eighth-century art of Kashmir, and later twelfth-century examples are observed in Southeast Bangladesh. Moreover, taking into consideration the type of available material in South Asia, we observe that this image seems to have existed as independent image only in Gandhara where it is also introduced in the narration of Śākyamuni's life whereas the known examples from Kashmir and Bangladesh are parts of a larger program centred on the Buddha vita.

This aspect of the Buddha iconography was thus by large ignored and one might ponder over the reasons justifying this apparent lack of interest. It remains, however, the only physical variation of the Buddha<sup>1</sup> (whereas in the

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<sup>1</sup> Meaning here the historical Buddha. One knows that the Buddha has bodies or *kāyas* of different essences or that wrathful characters, for instance Kālacakra or Heruka, are said to be also Buddha (LINROTHER 1999: 237-238). These are further aspects of the 'image' of the Buddha which cannot be forgotten but the study of which remains outside our present purpose. One might also add here that it is not yet the Buddha who is then represented and that another variant in the physical appearance of the (future)

Hindu pantheon, deities present a great variation of forms) and shows the unhealthy consequence of a rigorous asceticism, being then clearly opposed to the image of the healthy Buddha. Showing the skeleton, what remains after the decay of the corpse, it also reflects the deadly, i.e. human nature of the Buddha.

However, the image of the ill-shapen body – but not of the Buddha – was not altogether forgotten. It would indeed still be preserved at the entrance of monuments (BAUTZE-PICRON 2001b), in composition such as the *maṇḍala* and in the depiction of the Enlightenment as we shall see below. In this context, the location of emaciated characters, be they gods/goddesses or ascetics, within the general structure of the image, be it a painting or a sculpture, or of the monument would always remain the same, i.e. at the outskirts of the image or monument – which clearly enhances again the opposition between the inner circle with the ‘healthy’ Buddha and the outside world.

Without lingering further on this, let us observe, however, that the disappearance of the emaciated image of the (future) Buddha was most probably related to changes having affected the concepts with which the representation of the Buddha was being loaded. As a matter of fact, whereas till approximately the Gupta period, the attention had been principally paid to Śākyamuni as ‘historical’ character, it got more and more diversified through the strengthening of the position of Bodhisattvas who had emerged in the North West and through the appearance of a large number of ‘deities’, a movement which will not stop till Buddhism disappears from India. *Jātakas* and Śākyamuni’s last life have been considered in the early period to be of major importance in being displayed on *vedikās*, *torāṇas*, bases of *stūpas* or various architectonic elements, i.e. basically on the outer walls; in the Gupta period, such narrative depictions shift inside the monument, letting place to the multiplied images of the Buddha standing or seated and displaying various *mudrās* without being related to specific moments of his life, as in Ajanta for instance. This iconic figuration (as opposed here to the narrative rendering) was always present but it is now seen either on the façade or hidden deep in the sanctuary.<sup>2</sup>

Buddha shows him as the prince who he was – extreme richness and extreme destitution would thus be the two situations characterizing this image in the pre-Bodhi phase.

2 In the field of Buddhist iconography, too little attention has been paid till now to the location of the images within the architectural structure. However, it is evident that images distributed on the outer façade and thus easily accessible to the eyes of any-

Simultaneously, this image gets to be integrated within the *maṇḍala*, a major concept of reorganizing the universe (and redefining the position of the monastery within the society), which found its formulation after the Gupta period (DAVIDSON 2002). This leads to (or proceeds from) the idea of the Buddha ruling over the universe – an ancient concept already present in the *cakravartin*. The Buddha does not only sit at the centre of the *maṇḍala*, i.e. at the centre of the universe as the Buddhists conceive it (BAUTZE-PICRON 2010: 35-39; DAVIDSON 2002: 131-144), he sits also at the peak of the universe from where he has sovereign power on all deities: It is indeed on mount Meru that he is enthroned as king of the gods, being seated on Indra’s throne (BAUTZE-PICRON 2010: 16).

This ‘divine’ aspect of the Buddha’s personality comes very clearly forth from the fourth century and onward, when the ‘healthy’ Buddha image was retained as the best possible model for the representation of a number of ‘other’ Buddhas, i.e. the central Buddha of the Buddhakula (Vairocana) as he emerged in the system of the Mantrayāna or the five Tathāgatas distributed in the different spatial directions in both Mantrayāna and Vajrayāna systems.<sup>3</sup> Having gained such a position, the Buddha, whoever he is, ruled on the universe which includes all aspects, including images of horror mostly borrowed

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body, including non-Buddhists, can also be considered to reflect a kind of ‘propaganda’ towards the outside world while the images carved or painted within the monument are only accessible to the devotees, be they monks or lay people (but there also one can object that images included in the place of dwelling of the monks were not accessible to the lay people in contrary to the images distributed within a shrine).

3 This movement encompasses larger dimension than the one mentioned here and is concerned with the image of the Buddha as focal image of the worship. As observed by N.R. RAY (1972: 39-42), “the pivot of fifth-sixth century and later Indian art is the human figure ... all animal and vegetal figures are pushed altogether out of the narrative on to the borders, ... where they keep themselves confined in their exclusiveness ... the human figure itself becomes the carrier or conveyor of the unceasing flowing movement that used to reside in every vegetal device ... A largeness of conception endows the human figure with a physical and mental discipline which ... elevates it to the state of an experience, insofar as the Buddha-Bodhisattva figures are concerned, of a subtle spiritual but vital experience ... Slowly but eventually the realization came that supra-human power and energy lay not in the enormity of size and heaviness of proportions and that the light of wisdom and articulation of spiritual experience lay not in the iconographic attributes, but in the balanced disciplining of the body and the conquest of the senses and the mind.” (39-40). Images of emaciated bodies clearly fall out of such a context.

from the Hindu pantheon. These images were distributed at the periphery of the Buddhist universe, ‘in the field outside the *vajra*’ as the texts say, and include human-shaped or fantastic characters that will be considered below.

Brahmanical gods are also present among the fearsome characters introduced in the representation of the Enlightenment from the ninth century and onward, particularly in Eastern India (see below). They appear also in compositions where they are tamed by frightful characters that had started emerging in the iconography from the late fifth century and onward (LINROTHE 1999; BAUTZE-PICRON 2007: 83-84); in literature probably from the post-Gupta period and in art from the eighth century, these Kroddhas shared the major function of subjugating these gods of Hindu origin and have been illustrated on their own. To quote some examples will be here sufficient: Trailokyavijaya is the transformation of Vajrapāṇi who overthrows Maheśvara and his wife in the *Sarvatahāgatattvasaṃgraha* (IYANAGA 1985; LINROTHE 1999: 178-192), Saṃvara/Cakrasaṃvara arises out of Vajradhara and similarly tames Maheśvara (LINROTHE 1999: 237-238) – further examples and a detailed study of this type of images, in texts as in art, can be found in Rob LINROTHE’s book on the topic.

All through this development evoked here in its broad lines, the Buddha preserved his ‘healthy’ body. As just mentioned, the fearsome characters, when of Brahmanical origin, were shifted to the outer field of the *maṇḍala*, being thus still taken into consideration; but without being denied, their existence was obviously considered to be of inferior value. When of Buddhist origin, these characters found a suitable place within the central fields of the *maṇḍala* but their wrath was exclusively directed towards the gods of the outside world.

Brahmanical deities belong to the (agitated) world which is located at the outside boundary of the monastery. Similarly, in *maṇḍalas*, they are distributed in the external field, and although they might be ascribed specific locations, the way of depicting them is far from being monotonous; as a matter of fact, they are distributed in compositions which are not unified, they show various attitudes, etc. Further, in representations of the Enlightenment, they belong to the group of restless, fearsome, monstrous, or emaciated characters turning around the peaceful monk.<sup>4</sup>

4 At this point, we could ask what really makes an image: Does it exist within the limits of its own representation or in relation to its surrounding context. I would rather suggest that the image is more than itself, that it cannot exist as such but that there is a constant

What follows is a presentation of different situations where ‘demons’ are observed in the vicinity of the Buddha image; these situations vary in time, the nature of these demons likewise changes – and we shall mainly concentrate on those presenting an emaciated appearance. The aim is not to provide an in-depth analysis trying to explain the iconography of these images, but rather to follow how through the centuries the perfect image of the Buddha was not to exclude characters that were frightening or felt as dangerous but rather to include them in very specific spaces distributed around the Buddha image. Anticipating the remarks which follow, we may say that the image of the ‘healthy’ body of the Buddha constitutes a large central and peaceful area amongst a crowd of tiny restless characters shown as monsters or as emaciated characters – and this relates more probably to aesthetic choices than to strict iconographic rules.

### The Enlightenment and Māra’s demons

Till the end of its development in India, Buddhism’s main image of worship remains the image of Śākyamuni’s Enlightenment, in particularly in Bihar. We shall limit ourselves in referring to the early depiction of such scenes at Bharhut and Sanchi. The taming of the monstrous characters by the Buddha

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interaction between the image-representation of a particular deity and the motifs and other elements distributed at its periphery. To be properly understood, a work of art has to be considered in its totality. See also the analysis of the concept of *bodhi* proposed by N.R. RAY (note 3): From the fifth century and onwards, the image of the Buddha predominates in the composition, having assimilated features which used to characterize at an earlier period the surrounding within which the human body was displayed; the human body was clearly then differentiating itself from this (close) surrounding or background (through the mere size of the Buddha for instance, through its central position in the composition, through the mere fact that this surrounding was basically the nature, etc.). According to RAY, this (close) surrounding being deprived from its features (assimilated by the Buddha image), it could easily be rejected at the periphery. One could add that this development unfolded parallel to an isolation of the Buddha image which is no more part of the (historical) setting within which it initially evolved. The Buddha is then clearly no more the ‘historical’ character and the void around him is filled in with Bodhisattvas and other ‘divine’ characters. The initial background to the image of the Buddha while moving away and becoming a mere frame to the Buddha and his Bodhisattvas, loses also its initial value; the nature of the relationship between the centre and the world around it is not harmonious any more but is elaborated on a conflict: The periphery needs to be conquered, to be tamed, to be converted.

is observed since the early period of Indian art. Already at Bharhut, disproportionate frightful faces seem to threaten the seat where the (unseen) Buddha had taken place at what would be named Bodhgaya (**Fig. 1**). This inaugurates a tradition which will never fail (BAUTZE-PICRON 1998) and to which we shall come back in the course of this paper when considering images from Eastern India.

The presence of demonic characters is indeed closely related to the depiction of the Enlightenment. As such, they appear around the beginning of our era on the northern *torāṇa* of *stūpa* 1 at Sanchi where they fill the right part of the middle lintel (**Fig. 2b**). The composition of this lintel clearly shows two parts. The left side (for the viewer) is centred on the (absent) Buddha seated under the *Ficus religiosa*, having taken a last meal offered to him by Sujātā and being addressed by Māra who is accompanied by his family; the same group turns then right (for the viewer) towards (another image of) Māra installed on his throne and flanked by attendants (**Fig. 2a**). All characters depicted on this side show peaceful human features whereas those carved on the proper left side of the god are the monsters of his army; they have distorted



Fig. 1 Bharhut



Fig. 2a

Sanchi,  
Stūpa 1,  
northern torāṇa



Fig. 2b

features: huge bellies and disproportionate faces with open mouths having protruding teeth and tongues and bulging eyes (**Fig. 2b**).<sup>5</sup>

5 The composition in both groups, left and right, completely differs and introduces, perhaps for the first time, a composition which will constantly be observed in the subsequent illustration of the scene. In the left part peaceful characters turn towards the Buddha (**Fig. 2a**) whereas in the right part, the frightful ones are seated in a circle (**Fig. 2b**). In images allowing to combine both types of characters around one single point, i.e. the Buddha (present or not), the peaceful attendants are preserved in the lower and upper parts of the panel (see for instance the musicians in cave 26 at Ajanta [BAUTZE-PICRON 1998: pl. XIX], or the gods in the image at Jagdishpur, here **Figs. 28a-b**), turned symmetrically towards the central image whereas Māra's army moves from left to right (for the viewer) and is thus depicted in a permanent flow which is not

This tradition of showing demons with disproportionate faces or bellies, wide-open eyes, open mouth with fangs, and who violently aggress the (future) Buddha is preserved till Eastern India and beyond, Burma and Tibet. A further type will be added in Eastern India showing monsters with an emaciated body (**Figs. 16a-b**) which becomes in the region an awesome image related to aggression, more particularly to aggression led against the Buddha.<sup>6</sup> As such, the depiction of the Enlightenment allows focusing on images of death by opposing them to the representation of the central Buddha – as seen below, different characters emphasize this concept.

interrupted by the presence of the Buddha. The idea of the circle, well evident here, is also present in a more subdued manner in these later renderings of the scene: In Ajanta 26 the upper part of the space filled by the Buddha image is rounded, in Jagdishpur a circular nimbus is carved behind the head (and the nimbus marks the limits of the Buddha image, being not hidden by any of these characters). In both cases – like in any other example – the defeated monsters on the proper left side do not fully turn towards the Buddha. They accept their defeat through a gesture of veneration which they do while turning the upper part of the body towards the Buddha, but on the whole, their mounts or their attitude still run towards the right side of the sculpture. Clearly, the Enlightenment cannot be adequate with the end of the flow of existence – Māra and his army continuing their way, belonging as they do to the trap of death. On the other hand, one can also argue that the unblinking Buddha is not affected by this eternal flow, passing through and around him, but not distracting him. In such images life and death are thus superimposed on the opposition between light and obscurity (BAUTZE-PICRON 1998: 5), both might appear contradictory but they are also complementary.

- 6 This clearly shows a shift in the appreciation of such image: Brahmins depicted as ascetics, i.e. with *jaṭā* and beard, are present in the representation of the Buddha's life from the very beginning, at Sanchi or in Gandhara; they either participate actively to some event (the horoscope for instance) or are converted (the Kāśyapas for instance). As such, their image is preserved in the subsequent centuries in a narrative context. However, in Eastern India one notes that they occur in an iconic setting and are favourably estimated (here **Fig. 31**, a detail of an image of Avalokiteśvara from Kurkihar which is preserved in the Indian Museum, Kolkata): Distributed at the fringe of the image, they probably represent those Buddhist ascetics who used to live in the forest. They similarly appear in the murals of Pagan, painted among scrolls around the image of the Buddha or around windows, i.e. at the limit between the monument and the outer world (whereas two monks, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, are constantly depicted on either side of the cult image) (BAUTZE-PICRON 2003: 104 & 108, pls. 126-128). As noted by Marie-Thérèse de MALLMANN (1964: 176), confusion might have occurred between the image of the ascetics and the one of Bhṛṅgin at a later period, the emaciated figure carrying the traditional attributes of the ascetics.



Fig. 3 Kashmir, Cleveland Museum of Art

### The ascetic (future) Buddha

Attention is drawn here to a particular depiction of this period of Śākyamuṇi's life which originates from Kashmir and can be dated in the eighth century (**Fig. 3**). A closely crowded group of small male goblin-like characters tease the meditating (future) Buddha in the upper part of the image – reminding of Māra's army also distributed around the Buddha's head. Two ascetics are entangled in this group whereas semi-divine figures offer garlands in the upper part of the relief.

### Images at the periphery, the *maṇḍala*

**THE SOURCES** — Although most deities of the Brahmanical pantheon might have been felt as dangerous characters, they are usually depicted in their

peaceful aspect when introduced in a *maṇḍala*.<sup>7</sup> Among them, various forms of Śiva and images of the Mothers will here retain more particularly the attention. This movement of integrating Hindu deities became most probably very active around the sixth and seventh centuries, being apparently by large completed in the following century when Amoghavajra (705-774) wrote a commentary to the *Prajñāpāramitānayasūtra* where the Eight Mothers are distributed around Mahākāla (below) and when the *Mahāvairocanasūtra/Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi* was translated in 724 by Śubhakarasiṃha into Chinese, probably from a manuscript collected in India by Wú-xing who died in 674 – which lets surmise the date of redaction of the text to have been ‘about the middle of the seventh century at the earliest’ (HODGE 1994: 70; 2003: 15, 21).

We shall deal here exclusively with some very specific deities included in various *maṇḍalas*, i.e. Śiva, Yama and the Mothers, since they share the particularity of presenting frightful aspects in their original Brahmanical context and it is also perhaps because they betrayed there a strong relationship to death that they were given a place of importance in these *maṇḍalas*.

Images of Śiva, of Yama and of the Mothers are thus incorporated in the *Mahākaruṇāgarbhadhātumaṇḍala*; this *maṇḍala* is described in the *Mahāvairocanasūtra* (HODGE 2003: 83-152), but Śubhakarasiṃha’s commentary to this text includes further references to a much more detailed *maṇḍala* “transmitted by the ācārya”, i.e. by Śubhakarasiṃha himself (TAJIMA 1959: vii). The same *maṇḍala* – together with the *Vajradhātumaṇḍala* – has been illustrated in China, from where copies were brought back as early as the ninth century to Japan; both would be reproduced in the course of the centuries (TAJIMA 1959: vii-ix; SNODGRASS 1988).<sup>8</sup>

7 Apparently, the image of Vajrapāṇi being put aside, the first fearsome images to be included by the Buddhists in their pantheon, are directly derived from the Brahmanical pantheon. The Krodha figures, although appearing in the late fifth and in the sixth centuries in Maharashtra, preserve till the eighth century a ‘peaceful’ attitude as attendant to a main Bodhisattva. A dramatic shift takes place in Eastern India (Bihar and Orissa) in the ninth and tenth centuries when proper Buddhist images of dread emerge. For the development of this late period, see LINROTHE 1999.

8 No artistic testimony from India proper is known: LUCZANITS 2008 recently described and analysed the 12<sup>th</sup>-century ‘Hindu and Pan-Indian Deities’ in the Lo tsa ba Lha khang at Nako but their representation resorts to the Himalayan tradition. In the course of this paper, I shall basically refer to the Japanese material as far as the representation of these deities in *maṇḍalas* is concerned. Although a proper study of the Hindu deities

*Maṇḍalas* 21 and 26 of the *Niṣpannayogāvalī*, a text compiled by Abhayākara Gupta (eleventh-twelfth c.) and describing *maṇḍalas* which must have already been in use at the time of its compilation but remain of uncertain date and regional origins, mention also the seven or eight Mothers.<sup>9</sup>

**BRAHMANICAL SITES** — The *maṇḍalas* including Brahmanical deities reflect a deep knowledge of their iconographies, functions, and meanings. Although Buddhists were always familiar with these images, we can wonder whether their introduction in a very well-structured composition which serves to illustrate the ‘world outside the *vajras*’, i.e. the world outside the Buddhist community, did not at least partly find place in sites where this community was permanently confronted with the Brahmanical temple. Such a site is Ellora and without claiming that this is ‘the’ site where Buddhists found their inspiration for the composition of the outer field of the *maṇḍala* – two more probable regions being Kashmir and Eastern India –, the recognition of some iconographic topics or motifs in the Brahmanical caves which find an echo in the Buddhist *maṇḍala*, might let suggest how the Buddhist community reacted towards the outside, i.e. non-Buddhist, world by partly integrating some of its deities at the periphery of its visual universe.<sup>10</sup> As such, and from

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therein is still missing – see however the extremely detailed research published by IYANAGA Nobumi – one must underline the fact that what is seen there reflects most probably a South-Asian model to be broadly dated from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century and of an imprecise location, perhaps Kashmir (or the Swat valley), Maharashtra or Eastern India. Attempt of illustrating this circle of the *maṇḍala* might have been made at Paharpur (GAIL 1999).

9 Concerning *maṇḍala* 21 (*Dharmadhātuvāgīśvaramaṅjuśrīmaṇḍala*), see MALLMANN 1964: 175-176; *idem* 1986: 62; and LUCZANITS 2008 who takes also into consideration another source preserved in Tibetan, i.e. the *Dharmadhātuvāgīśvaramaṅjuśrīmaṇḍalavidhi* which describes in a more precise way the *maṇḍala* (p. 494). In this *maṇḍala*, the Seven Mothers are listed in the large group of Brahmanical deities, directly followed by the mentioning of Bhr̥ṅgin (concerning the link between this character and the Mothers in a Brahmanical context, see below). Concerning *maṇḍala* 26 (of Kālacakra), see MALLMANN 1986: 71; the goddesses are here distributed in the eight directions at the level of the circle of speech and Lakṣmī is added to the traditional seven Mothers in order to constitute an octad, see MALLMANN 1986: 336.

10 In fact, it would be worth studying some elements of the ornamental decoration of the Japanese *maṇḍalas*; although all late copies (TAJIMA 1959: viii-ix), some preserved motifs or forms of motifs having originated in India: BAUTZE-PICRON 2010: 56, note

the viewpoint of the Buddhist monasteries at the site, these compositions are located at the periphery, ‘outside the field of the *vajras*’, outside the boundaries of the monastery, but still in its direct neighbourhood.

Observations made in the Brahmanical caves of Ellora in relation to images integrated by the Buddhists, brings also into limelight the eventual transformation of the images when they shift from one context to the other. The representation of the ‘healthy’ body of the Buddha and the rebuttal of representation of the emaciated Buddha were probably also parts of an answer given to the Brahmanical pantheon, in particular to its wildest images such as those in caves 14, 21 & 29 at Ellora.

**THE MOTHERS AND ŚIVA** — Not too surprisingly, in the *Mahākaruṇāgarbhadhātumaṇḍala*, the Mothers and Kālarātrī are supposed to accompany Yama<sup>11</sup> although in the illustration of the *maṇḍala*, the Mothers are not painted in the close vicinity of the god as seen below.

Śiva is introduced in a peaceful aspect as Maheśvara accompanied by Umā in the South-west corner of the ‘field outside the *vajras*’.<sup>12</sup> The following Mothers are illustrated in his vicinity: Brāhmī, Aindrī, Kaumārī & Cāmuṇḍā (SNODGRASS 1988: 497-500; here **Fig. 27**). But he is also seen as

46, introduces some of these similarities. Although reference is essentially made here to Ellora, similarities can also be observed with other regions (Northwest and Afghanistan; South India).

11 “Then in the southern portion the Lord Yama should be drawn. He holds a club and rides a buffalo; his colour is that of summer rain-clouds. He is accompanied by the wrathful Mothers, Kālarātrī and the Lord of Death.” (HODGE 2003: 116). See also IYANAGA 1999: 58; the same, p. 57 reminds the closeness of Mahākāla and Yama. LUCZANITS 2008: 499 & 503 also observes the presence of the Mothers near Yama in the Lo tsa ba Lha Khang at Nako.

12 SNODGRASS 1988, 2: 495-497 & fig. 243. The names Maheśvara, Śaṅkara, Rudra, Īśāna, although all referring to the same god, designate, however in the Buddhist context, different aspects of him: Śubhākarasiṃha writes that ‘the old texts call him “Rudra” who is the wrathful body of Śaṅkara ... [and also] the Buddha’s Transformation Body. He is also Maheśvara’s Transformation Body, called “Īśāna”’ (*ibid.*: 496). The first two names (Maheśvara, Śaṅkara) refer to the god in a general way and, apparently, in a peaceful mood. A major variation from the canonical image of the god is to have him seated on a water buffalo. The name ‘Rudra’ is also applied to the form Īśāna (*ibid.*: 544).



Fig. 4  
After  
ASTLEY-  
KRISTENSEN  
1991: ill. 14

Mahākāla and Īśāna near the North-East corner.<sup>13</sup> As Īśāna, he is acting as Dikpāla of the North-east and is said to be ‘the wrathful manifestation of Maheśvara’ (*ibid.*: 544). As to Mahākāla, he is three-faced, six-armed, has a demonic face, hair standing on end, wrathful ornaments, and holds weapons and attributes including the elephant skin stretched behind his back (*ibid.*: 542 & fig. 282; see also SØRENSEN 1991/92: 313-314). In his commentary to the *Prajñāpāramitānayasūtra*, Amoghavajra (705-774) describes a *maṇḍala* where all seven Mothers together with Brāhmī surround Mahākāla (**Fig. 4**).<sup>14</sup>

The name of Mahākāla occurs also in a completely different context, his image being described by Yijing as standing ‘in great monasteries in India, at the side of a pillar in the kitchen, or before the porch, a figure of a deity carved in wood, two or three feet high, holding a golden bag, and seated on

13 SNODGRASS 1988, 2: 540-545 & figs. 282 and 284; IYANAGA 1994: 865-869 & 871-874.

14 IYANAGA 1999: 46; ASTLEY-KRISTENSEN 1991: 159 & illustration 14 where indeed only Brāhmī is clearly identifiable.



a small chair, with one foot hanging down towards the ground. Being always wiped with oil its countenance is blackened, and the deity is called Mahākāla, or the great black deity. The ancient tradition asserts that he belonged to the beings (in the heaven) of the Great god (or Mahesvara) in the translation by Takakusu (as quoted in BAUTZE-PICRON 2002: 244-245, note 39, with further references), a passage which has been analysed in detail by IYANAGA Nobumi (1994: 855-856). This testimony proves that in seventh-century India, this aspect of the god who is paired with Hārītī, also mentioned by Yijing, was related to images such as Pañcika and similar images (Jambhala, Kubera, etc.), heralding one major aspect of the god in Japan (IYANAGA 1994; FRANK 1991: 207-209). As far as we are concerned, it constitutes a precise point of articulation between an aspect of Śiva, which was recognized by the Chinese pilgrim, and a Buddhist architectural setting – where it could be located ‘in the porch’, i.e. at an intermediary area between inner and outer spaces.

**MAHĀKĀLA, THE MOTHERS** — Emaciated characters all related to Śiva appear at Elephanta and Ellora (Figs. 5-7). The gaunt image of the ‘Great Time’ or Mahākāla is observed, alone (Elephanta, sixth century)<sup>15</sup> or together with Kālī and other emaciated figures including probably Bhṛṅgin (see below), in the vicinity of the Mātṛkās in caves 21 (Fig. 5) (sixth century)<sup>16</sup> and 14 (Fig. 6) (seventh century)<sup>17</sup> at Ellora.<sup>18</sup> A similar group with the central

15 MEISTER 1986: figs. 16-17; HARPER 1989: 110-114, figs. 50-53.

16 SATO 1977: pl. 148; MEISTER 1986: figs. 20-21 [correct the legend]; HARPER 1989: 113, 163-165, figs. 59-66; BERKSON 1992: 144.

17 SCHASTOK 1985: figs. 127-131; HARPER 1989: 163, figs. 67-69; BERKSON 1992: 191; HANDELMAN/SHULMAN 1997: fig. 25.

18 And this would sustain the chronology suggested by Sara SCHASTOK (1985: 54-55) for the groups of Mātṛkās, the Shamalaji groups being prior to the group in the Elephanta cave, from where it moved to caves 21 and 14 at Ellora: The skeletal image, be it Kāla or Bhṛṅgin, is indeed alone at Elephanta and Aihole while a whole group of such characters accompany the Mothers at Ellora. Let us mention, however, that what was considered to be the ‘seventh female with no staff’ by M. MEISTER (1986: 238) who is quoted by SCHASTOK (1985: 55), has been in the meantime re-identified as Cāmuṇḍā by K. HARPER whereas the skeletal character earlier seen as the Mother has been rightly recognized by the same authoress as being Kāla standing above a crouching figure (1989: 111-113). The earlier groups of goddesses, at Shamalaji, Elephanta, Aihole and Aurangabad, are standing whereas the later Ellora groups sit.

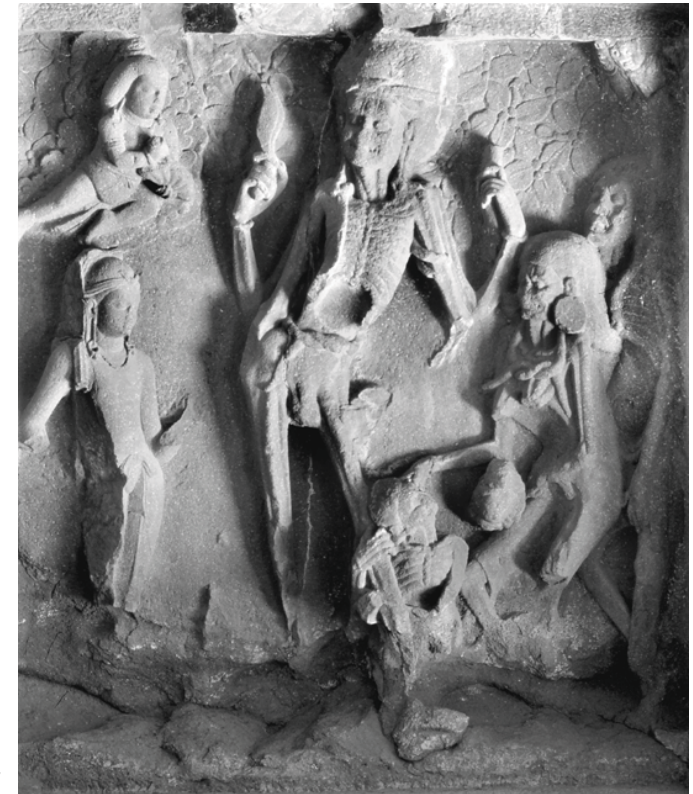


Fig. 5  
Ellora,  
Cave 21

male figure seated above two naked human figures is present in the sanctuary of the Mothers in monument 16 (Fig. 7).<sup>19</sup>

19 MEISTER 1986: 237, fig. 22; BERKSON 1992: 219-221. MEISTER identifies the group with ‘Kāla-Kālī-Bhṛṅgī’; the identification of the ‘victim-like’ figure in caves 14 and 21 with Bhṛṅgī is refused by HARPER, her main argument being that the image never has the tree legs characterizing the emaciated character; to her eyes, ‘it is more than likely that the kneeling skeleton depicts the initiate’ (1989: 164-165). To have this figure identified as such or not is not of great relevance for our purpose: What matters is that such a character, i.e. a skeleton barely covered by a translucent skin, is noted in the vicinity of the group of Mātṛkās who are related to Yama and even to Bhṛṅgin in a Buddhist context (but see below note 21 where the link of Cāmuṇḍā to Yama in a Brahmanical text is mentioned) – which makes it in fact very likely that one of the gaunt figures should be recognized as being Andhaka’s mutation. To return to the mastering of Andhaka by Śiva, one should remember that the god was supported in this action by the Mothers and that Cāmuṇḍā was present, drinking the blood dropping from Andhaka’s wounds (IYANAGA 1999: 47; HANDELMAN/SHULMAN 1997: 118, 137).



Fig. 6 Ellora, Cave 14.  
After SATO 1977: pl. 62

Cāmuṇḍā<sup>20</sup> is integrated in the group of Mothers and may preserve in this situation a rather ‘healthy’ appearance – probably because of this integration, for instance at Aihole or in caves 14 & 21 at Ellora or at Elephanta (see also HARPER 1989: 112; SCHASTOK 1985: fig. 118). She appears in her terrifying aspect in the iconography of the *Andhakāsuravadhamūrti* of Śiva<sup>21</sup> in monuments 15 (Fig. 22) and 16<sup>22</sup> – a wrathful form which she will from now on preserve (compare Figs. 23-24).

Such groups probably inspired the authors of the *Mahāvairocanasūtra* who relate the group of Mātṛkās to Yama since Śiva as Mahākāla clearly assimilates the function of death of Yama, at Ellora for



Fig. 7 Ellora, Monument 16

instance.<sup>23</sup> However, in the *Prajñāpāramitānayasūtra*,<sup>24</sup> Mahākāla does not tally with this emaciated image of the god but shows Śiva holding the hide of the elephant Nīla whom he had killed (Fig. 4);<sup>25</sup> as such, the skin is

20 Cāmuṇḍā can already present a gaunt appearance in the fifth and sixth c. (see HARPER 1989: figs. 39, 43, 58), but it is only after the sixth to seventh c. that her image undergoes a radical change which is probably based on the cadaverous images of Mahākāla and Kālī as seen for instance at Ellora. Both are depicted with a third smaller gaunt figure kneeling in front of them and, in cave 21, with a fourth standing figure behind Kālī and are positioned in a ‘dark corner’ of the cave, as if being at the periphery of the overall iconographic program of the monument. Another change in her iconography concerns her attitude: from seated/standing in a motionless pose, she turns into an agitated and dynamic character and this is how we mainly know her in Eastern India. Concerning these terrifying characters, see HARPER 1989: 164-167.

21 MELZER 2001: 10-11, provides a detailed presentation of the literary sources where goddesses appear during the battle against Andhaka; they can be named or remain anonymous, their number is variable. Among them, we shall retain Cāmuṇḍā who can be produced by Yama and drink Andhaka’s blood (*Skanda-Purāṇa*); Durgā can be created by Śiva and likewise drinks the blood of the demon (*Skanda-Purāṇa*); ten Dikpālikās can defend Pārvatī; Śaktis are produced by Viṣṇu and vanquish the demon, etc. The presence of the owl in most of the Ellora reliefs allows recognizing Cāmuṇḍā. The seven Mothers sit at the feet of the god fighting Nīla in the large relief of monument 16 (*ibid.*: Abb. G11).

22 MELZER 2001: 74, Abb. III-A19, 20, 24, G12; IYANAGA 1999: 45; BERKSON 1992: 255; HANDELMAN/SHULMAN 1997: 118-119, figs. 14-15.

23 Although the text was not written in India but in China and is based on Amoghavajra’s teachings, one should here mention Liangbi’s commentary of a translation attributed to Amoghavajra (but in fact a Chinese apocryphal text) which is quoted at length by IYANAGA (1999: 55-56); this passage concerns a quote from the *Mahāmāyūrī Sūtra* (but in fact not included in the known *Sūtra* of that name; *ibid.*: note 34) where Mahākāla is said to live in a cemetery, he is the god of battles (a feature shared with Cāmuṇḍā, see here note 44) and is surrounded by genies who feed on human beings and possess fantastic medicines. To worship him through human offerings bring victory. In the illustrated version of the *Mahākaruṇāgarbhadhātumaṇḍala* such wrathful characters are seen around Yama, identified with the Piśācas (below).

24 IYANAGA 1999: 47-48. Again, although those texts were apparently composed in China, it is evident that their iconographic vocabulary refers to an Indian situation.

25 Similarly, a four-handed, three (four?)-headed, dark-red aspect of Śiva tentatively identified by LUCZANITS (2008: 495 & 498, fig. 44.3) with Rudra is painted in the *maṇḍala* at Nako. In view of the fact that he holds the elephant-skin, one could perhaps also suggest identification with Mahākāla. This is one of the two major forms taken by the god in Japan, the other one being the god of benign appearance and related to

introduced in the representation of Śiva killing Andhaka (MELZER 2001), creating a motif – the elephant skin held behind the deity by two of his/her stretched hands – which will be integrated during the ‘medieval’ period in different iconographies, Hindu or Buddhist, male or female, for instance Cāmuṇḍā or Ekajaṭā (*ibid.*: 42-44; MALLMANN 1986: 6).

Moreover, six Mātrkāś led by Śiva Vīṇādhara are carved on the left wall of cave 13 at Aurangabad;<sup>26</sup> they are all standing and rather anonymously illustrated, facing two seated images of the Buddha. The central image on the back wall is Gaṇeśa, flanked by the victorious Durgā at his left and by a four-handed female deity, who might perhaps be another aspect of the same goddess.<sup>27</sup> This group differs from those encountered in a Brahmanical context; although it is much disfigured, it is still possible to figure out that neither the children nor the vehicles were apparently depicted.<sup>28</sup>

**BHR̥ṄGIN** — From Gudrun MELZER’s survey of the material bearing on Śiva killing Andhaka (2001), one observes at the feet of the god the presence of a dancing skeleton, whom the authoress sometimes tentatively identifies with Bhr̥ṅgin (pp. 75: Ellora; 118: Bihar). ‘One to four’ such (male?) characters

distribution of richness; for a detailed study of Daikoku-ten (i.e. Mahākāla), see IYENAGA 1994; a very good summary is presented by FRANK 1991: 207-209.

26 BERKSON 1989: 226; HARPER 1989: 114-115, figs. 55-58.

27 Or Cāmuṇḍā with whom she has been identified by BERKSON (1986: 226) and HARPER (1989: 115)? However, she is four-handed whereas the Mothers are two-armed and is at the same level as the Durgā – thus slightly higher than the Mothers. A brief comparison with the images in cave 14 at Ellora lets surmise that the Durgā image was inspired by the two images of the goddess flanking the entrance of cave 14, the idea of having her twice depicted might also have been borrowed from this monument. Another group of six females flanked by a standing Bodhisattva (Maitreya?) (in place of Śiva) and a standing Buddha is carved in the *maṇḍapa* of cave 7 (BERKSON 1986: 120-121). They are in a deep niche which faces another niche where Hārītī and Pañcika are depicted (*ibid.*: 115-116); further two images of Lakṣmī watered by elephants are carved above the side windows on the back wall (*ibid.*: 113-114). Nothing excludes the possibility that this second group also depicts the Mothers who were integrated by the Buddhists without the child, probably because there was already in the pantheon a goddess depicted with a small child on her lap, namely Hārītī. The iconographic program of the *maṇḍapa* with its two large side niches would thus constitute a coherent ensemble framing the large depictions of the Bodhisattvas and the entrance to the inner shrine.

28 HARPER 1989: 114 is less final in her appreciation of the relief.



Fig. 8  
Aihole,  
Rāvaṇa Phadi



Fig. 9  
Badami,  
Cave 1

can be seen in full action, i.e. dancing, playing music, holding weapon (p. 91: Hoysaḷa temples), or even female emaciated figures like Kālī or Cāmuṇḍā are recognized (p. 69: Pattadakal; p. 74: Ellora; pp. 101-102: Khajuraho). Considering the chronology of this material – where such figures are encountered – it would thus seem that the earliest examples are to be dated in the early part of the eighth century at Pattadakal and Ellora (cave 15) (Abb. III-A19) before being seen at different positions at the Kailāsa (Abb. III-A20, A23, A24).

However, Bhr̥ṅgin appears in the sixth century in various settings. Thus, one sees him at Elephanta in the game of dice,<sup>29</sup> accompanying Śiva dancing,<sup>30</sup> and in the scene showing Rāvaṇa shaking Mont Kailāsa.<sup>31</sup> In caves 21 and 14 at Ellora (**Figs. 10-11**),<sup>32</sup> he stands behind the legs of the dancing god,

29 *Elephanta* 1983: pl. 28; MICHELL 2002: 78; HANDELMAN/SHULMAN 1997: 3-6, figs. 1-2.

30 *Elephanta* 1983: pl. 64; MICHELL 2002: 39; HANDELMAN/SHULMAN 1997: 113.

31 *Elephanta* 1983: pls. 70-72; MICHELL 2002: 79; HANDELMAN/SHULMAN 1997: 113.

32 LIPPE 1972: 277; HARPER 1989: 163; cave 14: SATO 1977: pls. 55, 57; BERKSON 1992: 108, 177; HANDELMAN/SHULMAN 1997: 135, fig. 20; cave 21: SATO 1977: pls. 141, 143; SCHASTOK 1985: fig. 126; BERKSON 1992: 132.



Fig. 10 Ellora, Cave 21



Fig. 11 Ellora, Cave 14

and in the large relief of monument 16, behind those of the god fighting Nīla (*Gajasamhāramūrti*) (Fig. 12)<sup>33</sup> where the Mothers also appear, seated at the feet of the victorious god. Likewise, he sits behind the divine couple throwing dice in caves 21 and 14 (Figs. 13-14).<sup>34</sup>

The very same Bhṛṅgin is already present in a sixth-century relief in cave 1 at Badami, standing at the proper right side of the androgynous god whom he worships (Fig. 9),<sup>35</sup> and one of the oldest depictions of such a skeletal figure is introduced in Rāvaṇa Phadi at Aihole where he crouches down above the group of Mothers in the upper left (for the viewer) corner of the main wall (Fig. 8).<sup>36</sup>

33 SATO 1977: pl. 97; SCHASTOK 1985: fig. 123; BERKSON 1992: 78, 107, 173; MELZER 2001: 75, Abb. III-G11. This character is practically generalized in the Śiva images from Eastern India, and this might explain why he also occurs in a rare depiction of the Andhakāsuravadhamūrti from Konch, in Bihar (LINROTTE 1999: fig. 166; MELZER 2001: 118, Abb. XXIII-A156).

34 SATO 1977: pl. 55.

35 BANERJI 1928: 6-7, pl. III.a; LIPPE 1972: fig. 29.

36 HARPER 1989: 119, fig. 70; LIPPE 1972: fig. 4.

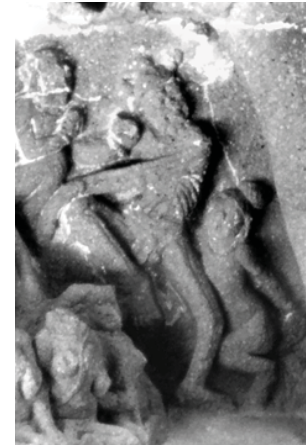


Fig. 12 Ellora, Monument 16



Fig. 13 Ellora, Cave 21



Fig. 14 Ellora, C. 14

In her study concerned with the Mothers, Katherine HARPER doubted that Bhṛṅgin could be recognized among the frightening characters of cave 14 and 21 (1989: 164-165); however, since he is mentioned in relation to the Mothers in the *Dharmadhātuvāgīśvaramaṅjuśrīmaṅḍalavidhi* (LUCZANITS 2008: 499, 503) and in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* (21 & 26: MALLMANN 1986: 119; *idem* 1964: 176) – and is illustrated close to them and Yama at Nako (LUCZANITS 2008: fig. 44.7), one can wonder whether these Buddhist sources do not reflect a situation actually observed and similar to the one encountered in monuments such as caves 14 or 21 at Ellora: There the Mothers are accompanied by Śiva Vīṇādhara on their right and by the group of emaciated figures centred on Mahākāla (the ‘Yama’ of the Buddhists) on their left. Further, Bhṛṅgin appears in both monuments in the depiction of the dancing god – and in Rāvaṇa Phadi at Aihole, he is most probably the character present above the Mothers surrounding the god.

**THE MOTHERS** — As mentioned above, the Mothers are listed in the text describing the *Mahākaruṇāgarbhadhātumaṅḍala* (together with Yama) in a commentary of the *Prajñāpāramitānayasūtra* (around Mahākāla) (Fig. 4).

Although the *Mahāvairocanasūtra* quotes the seven Mātṛkās as a troop following Yama,<sup>37</sup> they do not belong to his direct entourage but are distributed

37 But without enumerating them. TAJIMA 1959: 127; SNODGRASS 1988, 2: 481, 499. Concerning the group of the Seven Mothers in a Japanese context, see IYANAGA 1999:



Fig. 15 After Eros + Cosmos 1978: 19

in two different parts of the field ‘outside the vajras’ in the *mahākaruṇāgarbhadhātumaṇḍala* of the *sūtra*. As a matter of fact, one small group is seen near the South-East corner, i.e. East from Yama in the Southern field (Raudrī, Yamī and Vaiṣṇavī), and the second one is in the Western field, near the South (Umā who accompanies Maheśvara, Brāhmī, Aindrī, Kaumārī & Cāmuṇḍā).<sup>38</sup>

Cāmuṇḍā would thus be represented, together with Brāhmī, Aindrī and Kaumārī. However, the goddess named Cāmuṇḍā is red-skinned and pot-bellied while having the head of

a sow, thus being clearly Vārāhī (Fig. 27) whose name does not appear in the Japanese list of Mātṛkās.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, the deity whom we name Cāmuṇḍā in an Indian context is here altogether absent. Other scrawny images are distributed in this margin, most related to Yama (Fig. 15). And it would thus appear that at a period prior to the eighth century, certain confusion prevailed concerning the proper representation of these two goddesses in a Buddhist context.

### Close to the Buddha, the army of Māra in Eastern India

‘SPIRIT EATERS’ — Among the demons attacking Śākyamuni at the eve of his Enlightenment two skinny male figures stand on either side of the Buddha in the large image at Jagdishpur near Nalanda: The figure at the proper left holds a broad knife and an indistinct attribute (a flower?), whereas the one at

46-47. The Mothers are also related to Yama in the *Dharmadhātuvāgīśvaramaṅjuśrīmaṇḍalavidhi* (LUCZANITS 2008: 503 with further references to publications by MALLMANN). This text links, moreover, Bhṛṅgin to the Mothers (*ibid.* & fig. 44.7).

38 See SNODGRASS 1988, 2: 471-472 (& fig. 223), 497-500 (& figs. 244-245); TAJIMA 1959: 132-134.

39 IYANAGA 1999: 46; SNODGRASS 1988, 2: 499-500.



Fig. 16a

Jagdishpur

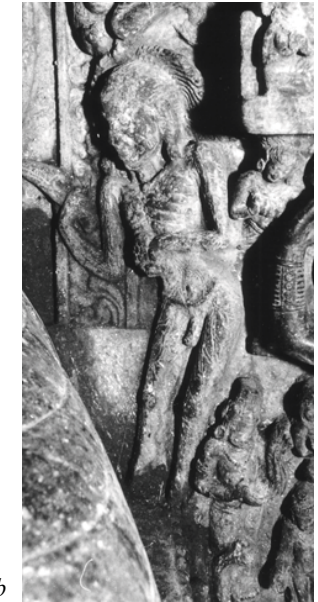


Fig. 16b

the proper right holds a similar knife, apparently threatening with it the male child held in his left arm (Figs. 16a-b). The very same two male figures reappear in the same setting but in a simplified rendering on reliefs which originate most probably from Bodhgaya (Figs. 17-18).

A proper identification remains difficult. Pretas are not represented that way during this period in Eastern India; indeed, they may have emaciated rib cage, arms and legs but with a bloated stomach and a pointed mouth which justifies their name in literary sources, i.e. ‘Needle-faced’ or Sūcīmukha.<sup>40</sup> Another category which could be taken into consideration is the one of the Piśācas or ‘Spirit Eaters’; they are depicted feeding on parts of human body in the field outside the vajras of the *mahākaruṇāgarbhadhātumaṇḍala* of the *Mahāvairocanasūtra/tantra*, more particularly between the South gate and the South-west corner, and they share, moreover, their fearsome aspect with the two characters seen in these images from Bihar (Fig. 15).<sup>41</sup>

40 Concerning this figure in the iconography of Avalokiteśvara, see BHATTACHARYA 2001.

41 SNODGRASS 1988, 2: 484-485, figs. 233-234; Eros + Cosmos 1978: 19, 30-32; *Hōbō-girin* 1: 83-84, fig. 41. In an altogether different context, i.e. the *Skanda-Purāna*, it is Bhṛṅgin who is compared to the Piśācas (HANDELMAN/SHULMAN 1997: 18).



Fig. 17 Bodhgaya; Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, München



Fig. 18 Bodhgaya; present whereabouts unknown



Fig. 19 Private Collection

**CĀMUṄḌĀ** — A further example of an aggressive gaunt figure is noted in a fragment from what was once a very large image of the Buddha also depicted at the eve of the Enlightenment and surrounded by the depiction of events of his life. Cāmuṅḍā appears here (Fig. 24), holding a short knife in the right hand and devouring a head held in the left hand. The goddess is a major figure of death in the Brahmanical iconography, specially of north Bengal (Fig. 23),<sup>42</sup> from the tenth to the twelfth century who can only but inspire terror, and it is most interesting to observe that in the mind of those who conceived this image, she was, like Brahmā carved here above her and showing fangs (Fig. 19) – an utmost unusual feature for that god –, considered to be an aggressive deity who could only but belong to Māra's army.<sup>43</sup>

The presence of this aspect of Kālī among the soldiers of Māra reminds that she was praised in order to be victorious on the battle-field.<sup>44</sup> She is not the only goddess to appear in this context: Vārāhī sits on her *vāhana*, the buffalo, in the Jagdishpur image (Fig. 26)<sup>45</sup> and Durgā herself belongs to the group of gods, such as Śiva, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and others who are included in the depiction of the Enlightenment in images from Southeast Bangladesh (Fig. 25).<sup>46</sup> Now, the presence of Durgā and of goddesses emanating from her within the army of demons attacking the Buddha constitutes a radical change

42 Concerning the goddess in North India, see MISRA 1989: 102-124 and MANI 1985: 109-110, and more particularly for her images in Eastern India BHATTACHARYYA 1999. Images of the goddess are found all through North & Central India starting from the eighth century onwards. Although this would deserve further research, we can speculate that her images are related to the representation of characters such as Mahākāla or Bhṛṅgin who appear around the middle of the sixth century in cave 21 at Ellora.

43 As seen below, the Jagdishpur image includes also a depiction of Vārāhī in the army of Māra.

44 MALLMANN 1963: 153; KOIJ 1994: *passim*.

45 The animal is quoted in the *Agni-* and *Maitreya-Purānas*, see MALLMANN 1963: 150-151; more rarely the elephant is mentioned (*ibid.*: 151, note 3) or the owl (in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī*, see also MALLMANN 1986: 434 & note 10); see also DONALDSON 1995: 158-159 and 177 where the author suggests that the presence of this animal 'closely associate[s] Vārāhī with Yama'.

46 BAUTZE-PICRON 1992 (always at the proper right side, lower part of the group of deities). She seems to be also integrated in the group carved around the Buddha of Jagdishpur, where she would sit above the lion, showing her back to the viewer (left side of the Buddha).



Fig. 20 Jagdishpur



Fig. 21

in the perception of the relationship between the Buddha and the goddess. This relationship was complementary and peaceful, being articulated on the royal function; in this context, both could be associated at the same level in compositions found up to Afghanistan till the seventh or eighth centuries.<sup>47</sup> From the (late) fifth century, female images are slowly integrated in Buddhist iconography, a movement which steadily increases in the following centuries. Simultaneously, the understanding of the Buddha nature which had led to the image of his coronation and of his identification as king, moves toward a more abstract conception: The converging of these two trends results in the emergence of the Vajrayāna pantheon. In this context, Brahmanical images encountered in earlier times could completely turn away from their original functions, which is particularly evident in the case of Durgā.<sup>48</sup> The goddess belongs to the army of Māra, chasing the demon that is here identified with the Buddha; she clearly belongs to the hostile camp.<sup>49</sup>

47 BAUTZE-PICRON 2010: 17-21.

48 Concerning this question, see BAUTZE-PICRON 1996. Male deities show an ambivalent nature from the tenth century and onwards, being preserved as attendants in the depiction of major moments of the Buddha's life and being simultaneously integrated in the army of Māra. On the contrary, Durgā occurs only in a negative context.

49 The attitude of the goddess in images from Eastern India is integrated within the image of Mārīcī, both being depicted fighting against the buffalo or the darkness; see SHAW 2006: 214-218 and BAUTZE-PICRON 2001a: 273-274.



Fig. 22  
Ellora, Cave 15

To my knowledge, no other female deity, besides Durgā and Cāmuṇḍā, and no other Mātṛkā, besides Vārāhī, was integrated within Māra's army.<sup>50</sup>

50 It is true that Cāmuṇḍā was at that time integrated in the group of the Seven Mothers (concerning the development of the Mothers till the seventh century, see HARPER 1996; for a general survey, consult MANI 1995). Nonetheless, her images, originating mainly from North Bengal, do not usually show her in this context, but as a seated or wildly dancing fearsome character that resides in a cremation ground and is surrounded by animals devouring cadavers (BHATTACHARYYA 1999; HAQUE 1992: 267-274; KINSLEY 1975: 95 & 1988: 147, quoting Hindu literary sources which describe the goddess). As to the presence of Vārāhī, one can perhaps relate it to the existence of Vajravārāhī or/and to the fact that the boar has been retained as drawing the chariot of Mārīcī (ENGLISH 2002: 47-48; DONALDSON 1995; BAUTZE-PICRON 2001a; *idem* 2010: 39-40, note 94, concerning the eventual function of the theriomorphic Vārāha at Apsad in this integration of the animal in this position; see also SHAW 2006: 212). Mārīcī being the personification of the light arising at the moment of the Enlightenment reflects somehow the positive (Buddhist) interpretation of the boar integrated within her iconography (besides the seven boars pulling her chariot, she has also a sow face) and confronting



Fig. 23 North Bengal; National Museum, New Delhi

All three are warring goddesses, but one can ponder over the background to this particular selection. Were they, in the Brahmanical context from where they originate, already understood as enemies to the Buddhist community? Is it a mere chance that the severed heads lying on a pedestal below Cāmuṇḍā as if being offered to her wear a broad chignon which evokes the shape of the *uṣṇīṣa* (Fig. 23)? Could the fact that Vārāhī has for her main vehicle the buffalo have influenced her selection, the buffalo being also Yama's *vāhana* and Yama being the god whose presence is no more to demonstrate in the region (BAUTZE-PICRON 2007: 87-89)? Is it because, as female echo to Varāha, she is related to the Earth-Goddess?<sup>51</sup> Or is it that, in contrast to the other Mothers who preserve their human face or a healthy body, Vārāhī and

the aggressive (Brahmanical) attitude of the Mātṛkā. Mārīcī is depicted twice in the Jagdishpur image (BAUTZE-PICRON 2001a: 270-272, figs. 9-10). In a Buddhist context, Cāmuṇḍā and the Mothers are included in *maṇḍalas* described in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* (MALLMANN 1986: 62, 135). Marie-Thérèse de MALLMANN observed that both Cāmuṇḍā and Vārāhī are described in a detailed manner in *maṇḍala* 21 whereas the other Mothers are only listed as being similar to their male equivalent (1964: 175).

51 From DONALDSON's study on the goddess in Orissa, it is clear that she was often worshipped 'as a presiding deity independent from the other mātṛkās' (1995: 170f.), as Cāmuṇḍā also was.



Fig. 24 Detail of Fig. 19



Fig. 25 Betagi

Cāmuṇḍā were retained because they display the most horrific features and that by being integrated within Māra's army they blend with those imaginary and wicked characters?

These questions and many more remain outside the scope of this paper; enough is here to remind that all three goddesses appear in a battle of cosmic dimensions. When considering the fact that in the Jagdishpur image, major gods are distributed above Māra's demons (Figs. 28a-b) – as if observing the scene without really taking part in it –, one cannot fail to suggest that what is seen in this image is a reproduction of the cosmic fight described in the *Devī Māhātmya* with the Buddha acting in place of Mahiṣa or Raktabīja.



Fig. 26 Jagdishpur



Fig. 27 After Snodgrass 1988: 498, fig. 245





Fig. 28a

Jagdishpur



Fig. 28b

Another observation deserves some consideration: In the depiction of the Enlightenment, the Buddha is the only character to show human features and to reflect a peaceful attitude. In this battle which opposes him to Māra's army that is assimilated to the divine army led by Durgā, it is evident that the situation is completely reversed: The Buddha can be the demon to be vanquished only in the eyes of the 'other', i.e. the Brahmanical society/priesthood, whereas in the (Buddhist) context where this image is anchored, the Brahmanical gods turn to be the demons. Those who have been selected seem to be in particular those who had taken, in the Brahmanical context of their origins, a wrathful form in order to destroy dark forces: For instance, two aspects of Śiva, i.e. Andhakāsuraavadha- and Tripurāntakamūrti, have inspired the representation of two gods attacking the Buddha in the Jagdishpur image (Figs. 20-21); the first character is four-handed and has a frightful face while holding his sword the way Śiva killing Andhaka holds his *triśūla*, and the second character has the lower part of his legs hidden and shoots an arrow. Such wrathful and demonic representations underline that the best and only way to Enlightenment lies within the limits of a healthy human (male) body.

**THE DAUGHTERS OF MĀRA** — Whereas the presence of these various characters reflects a tradition anchored in the historical situation of the Buddhist



Fig. 29 Betagi

community in Bihar, an altogether different source can be found in biographies of the Buddha, such as the *Buddhacarita* or the *Nidānakathā* where the three daughters of Māra transform themselves in elderly women in their attempt to seduce Śākyamuni.<sup>52</sup> Failing in this action, they cannot recover their youth and appear in their skinny body kneeling in front of their defeated father in the Betagi sculpture (Fig. 29) or in the lower part of a mural in the Nandamanya, at Pagan (Fig. 30).<sup>53</sup> Such images are extremely rare, which



Fig. 30 Pagan, Nandamanya

52 Or in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*; see WILSON 1996: 35-36 & 206-207, notes 69-70, and BAUTZE-PICRON 2003: 41 & 215, note 50 for further references.

53 *Ibid.*: 43, fig. 39.



Fig. 31 Kurkihar; Indian Museum, Kolkata

betrays most probably the practically complete lack of interest in which this topic had fallen. In the depiction of the Enlightenment, the accent was clearly put on the ‘fight’ which the Buddha (and his community) was leading against the Brahmanical gods of Māra’s army (and the surrounding society).

\* \* \*

All through the development of Buddhist art in India, one thus notes the simultaneous representation of the peaceful Buddha and of monstrous characters that attack him while he meditates under the tree at Bodhgaya. Among them, scrawny images of various types occupy a particular position; they appear after the emaciated Buddha is no more illustrated, which underlines their unbeneficial nature in contrast to the central healthy Buddha image. Similar emaciated figures are integrated within the outer field of *maṇḍalas*. The nature of these deities indicates a long-time and close relationship with the Śaiva pantheon where one notes the appearance in the sixth and seventh centuries of scrawny characters such as Bhṛṅgin, Mahākāla, or Cāmuṇḍā. Both Bhṛṅgin and Mahākāla appear in close relation to the Mothers, Cāmuṇḍā being one of them who is involved in the battle led by Śiva against Andhaka who, once vanquished, becomes in the form of Bhṛṅgin a faithful follower of the god. It is also within the context of a battle, the one led in vain by Māra against the Buddha, that skeletal characters or Mothers are introduced, a way of assimilating the pantheon of ‘the enemy’.

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