

TWO YOGINĪS OF HEVAJRA FROM THAILAND

In Vajrayāna every image is symbolic: it must be interpreted like a book written in secret signs, which only the initiates can read. – Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (I. 245)

For the identification of images belonging to the pantheon of the Vajrayāna, we have two main sources of knowledge:

1. Tantric texts, tantras and sādhanas.
2. Maṇḍalas, geometric figures designed as receptacles of the deities invoked.

With their aid, we shall examine two small bronzes of Khmer style which were recently discovered in Northeastern Thailand, in an area less than 200 km. from Bimāya (Phimai).

The first (Fig. 1) is a graceful statuette now in a private collection in Bangkok. The bronze is covered with a thick green patina. The exact place where this piece was discovered is unknown; it is said to have come from somewhere east of Nagara Rājasimā. It represents a female deity in a dancing posture. Her right hand is raised high and holds a small drum (*damaru*). Her left hand, placed a little below the left breast (position of the heart) in a ceremonial gesture, holds an animal with a long snout, remnants of canine teeth, stiff bristles of hair along the spine, a long body and short legs. She has an angry face (*kródha* aspect) with bulging eyes; traces of a third eye are visible in the forehead. Her only garment is a short *sampot* (one-piece cloth), one end of which hangs down in folds and touches the pedestal, while the other end is twisted into a knot at the rear so as to secure the garment. She wears a five-pointed crown, with a three(?) -pointed tiara in front; also ear-rings, necklace, arm-bands, bracelets, girdle and anklets. On the oval lotus pedestal beneath her left foot lies a prostrate figure whose crowned head extends to her left.

The second statuette (Figs. 2, 3) is a little larger than the first. It comes from Khonkaen in Northeastern Thailand and used to be in a private collection in Bangkok. It represents a goddess in the same dancing posture as the first one, but her face wears a peaceful expression. Her eyes are open and the third eye is placed vertically in the forehead. Her hair is combed up in a high pile on top of the head, and encircled by a diadem (*mukuta*). She wears the same ornaments as the first goddess. One end of her *sampot* falls down as far as the left heel; the other is spread out in a fanlike fold behind. The upraised right hand holds the broken part of a small solid discus or cakra. The left hand, placed below the left breast as before, holds a plough, of a shape that is still in use today in Southeast Asia to prepare flooded fields for the planting of wet rice. Attached to the left foot is a short metal pin, apparently original (not seen in the photograph). By means of it the statuette is fixed to the wooden pedestal, which is modern.



Fig. 1
Bronze figurine, here identified as Cauri; ht. 9.4 cm.;
weight 115 grs. *Private collection, Bangkok*

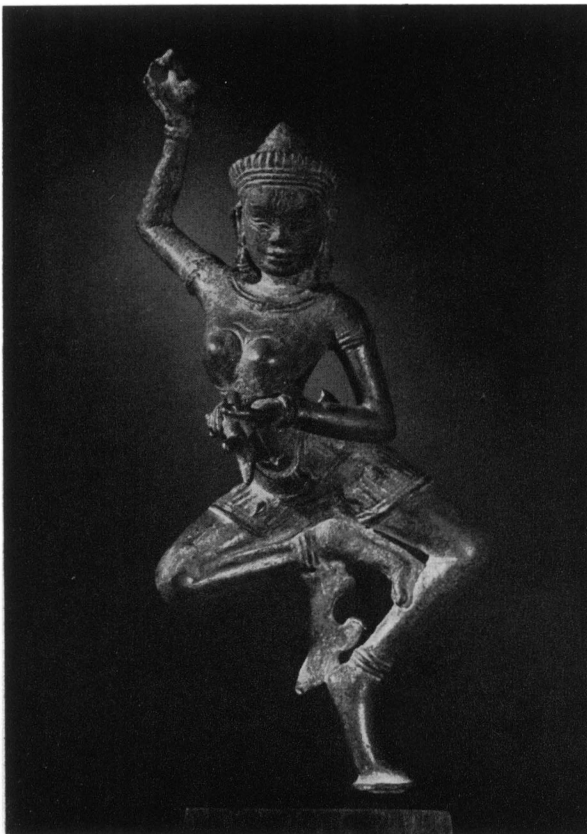


Fig. 2
Bronze figurine, here identified as Caṇḍāli; ht. 15 cm.
From Khonkaen, Northeast Thailand

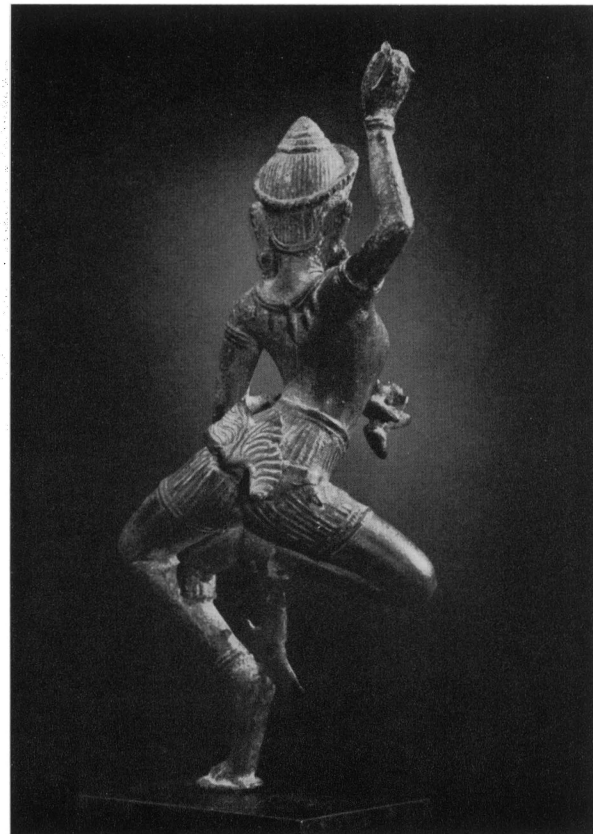


Fig. 3
Same as Fig. 2



Fig. 4
Hevajra-maṇḍala. Ht. 17 cm. Plaster cast from bronze
mould in the *National Museum, Bangkok*



Fig. 5
Bronze figurine, probably Hevajra. Ht. 15.5 cm.
National Museum, Bangkok (By courtesy of the Museum)



Fig. 6
Sandstone relief, Gate of Victory (south),
temple of Bimāya (Phimai), Thailand.
Early 12th century. Vajrasattva



Fig. 7
Sandstone lintel over east door, main sanctuary, Bimāya. Early 12th century



Fig. 8
Sandstone lintel over north door, main sanctuary, Bīmāya (detail).
Early 12th century *Yoginis*



Fig. 11
Three bronze figurines of *yoginis*. *National Museum, Bangkok*
(By courtesy of the Museum)

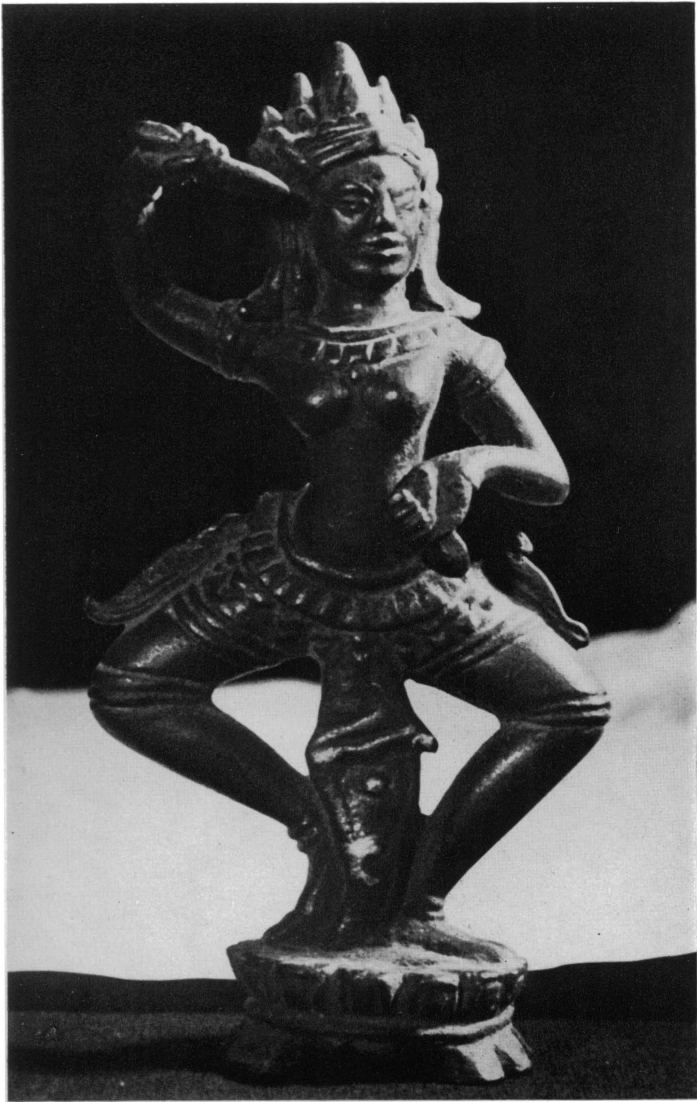


Fig. 9
Bronze figurine *National Museum, Bangkok*
Yoginī or Prajñā
(By courtesy of the Museum)



Fig. 10
Stone relief of Nairātmayā, from Bihar *Indian Museum, Calcutta*
(By courtesy of the Museum)

The goddess with the plough is more graceful and refined than her angry sister. The postures of both, with right arm and leg raised, and with only the toes of the left foot touching the ground (or a corpse), create the impression that their dance belongs to another world; it does.

Professor Snellgrove has recently given us a valuable instrument for the study of the Tantra-yāna and its images, in the form of an English translation of the *Hevajra-Tantra*, together with the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts¹. This can be most usefully read in conjunction with another Sanskrit text, the *Hevajrasekaprakriyā*².

Let us now turn to the *Hevajra-Tantra* and read the passages that describe the union of the eight-faced god Hevajra with his *prajñā* Nairātmyā within the sacred *maṇḍala*, and the emergence of eight goddesses — or “product figures”, as they are sometimes called³ — as a result of the union:

- (13) In that fair citadel we play together with much delight, and thence Gaurī emerges and takes her position at the eastern portal. Next from our union there emerges Caurī who appears to the south as keeper of that portal. Then Vetālī, that destroyer of Māra, appears in the west, and Ghasmarī of fearful appearance, in the north. Likewise there appear Pukkasī in the north-east, Śavarī in the south-east, Caṇḍālī in the south-west, and Dombinī in the north-west.
- (19) Then the Adamantine Lord sinks with his Spell into the condition of bliss, and the goddesses with the offering of various songs urge him to arise...
- (29) In this manner one should conceive the Lord in that fair citadel, that circle of goddesses, where, black in colour and exceedingly fearful, he bestows such bliss upon Nairātmyā
(These are the implements of the goddesses:)
- (30) Gaurī holds in her right hand a knife and in her left a fish
Caurī holds in her right hand a drum and in her left a wild boar
- (31) Vetālī holds in her right hand a tortoise and in her left a skull
Ghasmarī holds in her right hand a snake and in her left a bowl
Pukkasī holds in her right hand a lion and in her left an axe
Śavarī holds in her right hand a monk and in her left a fan
- (33) Caṇḍālī holds in her right hand a wheel and in her left a plough
Ḍombī has in her right hand a *vajra* and with the left she points one finger.
- (34) They are all two-armed and in a dancing-stance in the semi-*paryāṅka* position. They have three eyes, their hair twists upwards, and they wear the five symbolic adornments.
- (35) Gaurī is black; Caurī is like the sun; Vetālī is like burnished gold; Ghasmarī is like emerald; Pukkasī is like sapphire; Śavarī is like moonstone; Candālī is dark like a cloud and Ḍombinī is golden. Their seats are: Brahmā, Indra, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Yama, Kubera, Nairṛti, and Vemacitrin⁴.

These eight goddesses are *yoginīs*⁵ whose function is to destroy all ignorance in the eight quarters of the universe as symbolized by their positions in the *maṇḍala*. Their “seats” are Hindu gods — manifestations of ignorance — slain by the terrible sisters, who then perform a ritual dance on their corpses.

¹ D.L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajra-Tantra*, London, 1959. Two parts.

² L. Finot, *Manuscrits sanskrits de sādhanā retrouvés en Chine*, Journal Asiatique, CCXXV (juillet-sept. 1934), 1–86.

³ P.H. Pott, *Yoga en Yantra*, Leiden, 1946, p. 76.

⁴ Snellgrove, p. 110–112.

⁵ Often called *ḍākinīs*; for a discussion, see Snellgrove, 135.

If we look again at the two statuettes, it is now permitted to establish their identity with certainty.

The *yoginī* in Fig. 1 is Caurī, “keeper of the south portal” of the universe. As one of the commentaries of the Hevajra-Tantra explains, the small drum she carries in her right hand is “for causing to sound the sound of absolute void” (*śūnyatā*), while the animal in her hand is a wild boar “for destroying delusion” (with his canine teeth)⁶. The prostrate figure beneath her foot is the corpse of the god Indra.

The *yoginī* in Fig. 2 is Caṇḍālī, whose position in the universe is at the south-west. The broken object in her right hand is a wheel or discus (*cakra*), “for turning the wheel of the doctrine”. The plough in her left hand is “for the non-existence of the *kleśas*”⁷. The original pedestal, now lost, was evidently cast separately, and doubtless held a prostrate figure representing the corpse of the god Nairṛti, with the goddess fixed to it by means of the pin attached to her left foot.

The Hevajra-Tantra also gives a specific explanation of the ornaments worn by the *yoginīs*. The five symbolic adornments of Hevajra himself, of the *yoginī* in the Hevajrasekaprakriyā and of the accompanying *yoginīs*, seem to be identical in their esoteric meaning. They are explained by Hevajra to Nairātmyā as follows: “The crown is worn for the adoration of one’s *guru* and master and chosen divinity. Ear-rings are worn to indicate one’s deafness to evil words spoken against one’s *guru* and ‘*vajra*-holder’. The necklace suggests the *mantras* intoned, the bracelets one’s renunciation of harming living-beings, the girdle one’s service of the *Mudrā*. The body should always be signed with those signs of the Five Buddhas⁸”.

Most of this description fits our two statuettes well enough: the goddesses indeed wear the five symbolic ornaments – and armllets and anklets as well. The reader will have noticed that in one passage the goddesses are of different colours; Caurī is “like the sun” and Caṇḍālī “dark like a cloud”; respectively gold and black colours. The “implements” in the goddesses’ hands are those of the passage quoted. Both goddesses, as we have noted, have the third eye. One of them (Fig. 1) is “exceedingly fearful”, with “inflamed eyes”. Why the other (Fig. 2) should be given so tranquil an expression is uncertain. But the postures of both, with uplifted right hand, and with raised right foot touching the inner side of the left leg below the knee, are characteristic of the majestic but frenzied heavenly dance performed on a prostrate body in *rigor mortis*.

The second requirement for an understanding of the two figures we have identified as Caurī and Caṇḍālī is their position in the Hevajra-maṇḍala or replica of the universe.

The National Museum at Bangkok possesses such a maṇḍala, in the form of a bronze mould, of which a positive in plaster is reproduced in Fig. 4. An identical mould, unearthed in Battambang Province, has been published by G. Groslier⁹. Others are known in Thailand, as well as casts in lead made from them. One such cast, from Subarṇapuri, has been published by Mr

⁶ Snellgrove, p. 112, note 1. Cf. L. Finot, *Manuscripts sanskrits de Sādhana retrouvés en Chine*, p. 46, for explanation of the implements.

⁷ Snellgrove, *ibid.* In the *Hevajrasekaprakriyā* the *cakra* symbolizes “le fait de trancher l’ignorance”, and the plough “la résolution de déraciner tous les vices”. See Finot, *loc. cit.*, p. 46. For an explanation of the nature of Caṇḍālī, see Snellgrove, 108.

⁸ Snellgrove, p. 114.

⁹ *Les collections khmères du Musée Albert Sarraut à Phnom-Penh*, Paris, 1931, Pl. XLVI-2, and p. 118; the author describes it as a “matrice à ex-voto” with Hevajra in the centre.

Cædès¹⁰. Their sacred quality and magical protective powers are still recognized in Thailand today.

In the *Hevajrasekaprakriyā*, the Hevajra-maṇḍala used in the *abhiṣekavidhi* is designated as a *maṇḍalagrha*, a fictitious temple in the form of a *kūṭāgāra*, i.e. a square tower or *prāsāda* with several storeys¹¹. A relief at the temple of Bimāya depicts a *prāsāda* of a particular type which we have recently identified as a *kūṭāgāra*¹², and the maṇḍala in Fig. 4 bears a strong resemblance to it.

With the help of the texts, we can attempt an explanation of the Hevajra-maṇḍala in Fig. 4 (cf. the diagram in the Text-Figure, which is based on it). Like the *kūṭāgāra* at Bimāya, it is a *prāsāda* of Khmer style, with columns at the corners supporting a roof of four storeys. The space between the columns is occupied by two concentric circles. In the inner one Hevajra, with his eight faces and sixteen arms, and wearing the five symbolic ornaments, is seen dancing with his left foot on a corpse whose crowned head points to the east. His *prajñā* is not shown; he performs his cosmic dance alone within his sacred circle. His eight *yoginīs* are placed in their proper quarters as designated in the text, Gaurī (1) at the east, Caurī (2) at the south, and so on¹³. Each is in her own sacred circle, dancing with the left foot on a corpse whose crowned head points to the east. The entire troupe is enclosed within the outer circle. Both the inner and the outer circle have a double circumference with a row of knobs between, which is probably to be interpreted as a string of human skulls.

Below this circle, and outside it (*laukika*), there is a row of five niches containing crowned deities, some of them with many arms and heads; for the present, their significance cannot be explained.

Between the large circle and the bases of the columns (*c* and *d* in the diagram) are a pair of water-pots, such as the texts mention in connection with the ceremony of consecration to Hevajra¹⁴. One of them is perhaps the jar of victory (*viṣayakalaśa*) containing the water used for ablution in the purification rites performed by the *guru* in consecrating the *yoginī*¹⁵. The objects in the corresponding positions beside the capitals of the columns (*a* and *b* in diagram) are not clear; though they look like buffalo heads, they most likely represent the sun and moon.

The first of the four upper storeys of the *kūṭāgāra* contains a row of seven crowned Buddhas seated in *samādhi* (1–7 in the diagram). Their niches are separated by columns and have a double border at the top, signifying the paradise or “Buddha-field” (*Buddhakṣetra*) occupied by each. These seven Buddhas represent the Jina Amitābha in *sambhogakāya* aspect.

The second contains five crowned divinities. Each seems to have six arms raised sideways and three visible faces. Each has his own “field” (*kṣetra*) shown as a niche very much like those in the first storey. As these divinities have no recognizable attributes we cannot identify them.

The third storey has three female divinities, each with a single crowned head, and sitting with folded legs on lotus cushions. Each has her own niche, that in the centre being the most

¹⁰ *Siamese Votive Tablets*, JSS XX/1, Pl. XI and p. 22.

¹¹ L. Finot, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹² J. J. Boeles, *Two Aspects of Buddhist Iconography in Thailand*, JSS XLVIII/1, 74–77 and Fig. 6.

¹³ See above, p. 21.

¹⁴ Cf. Snellgrove, 82, 113, where there are eight of them.

¹⁵ *Hevajrasekaprakriyā*, Finot, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

HEVAJRA MANDALA

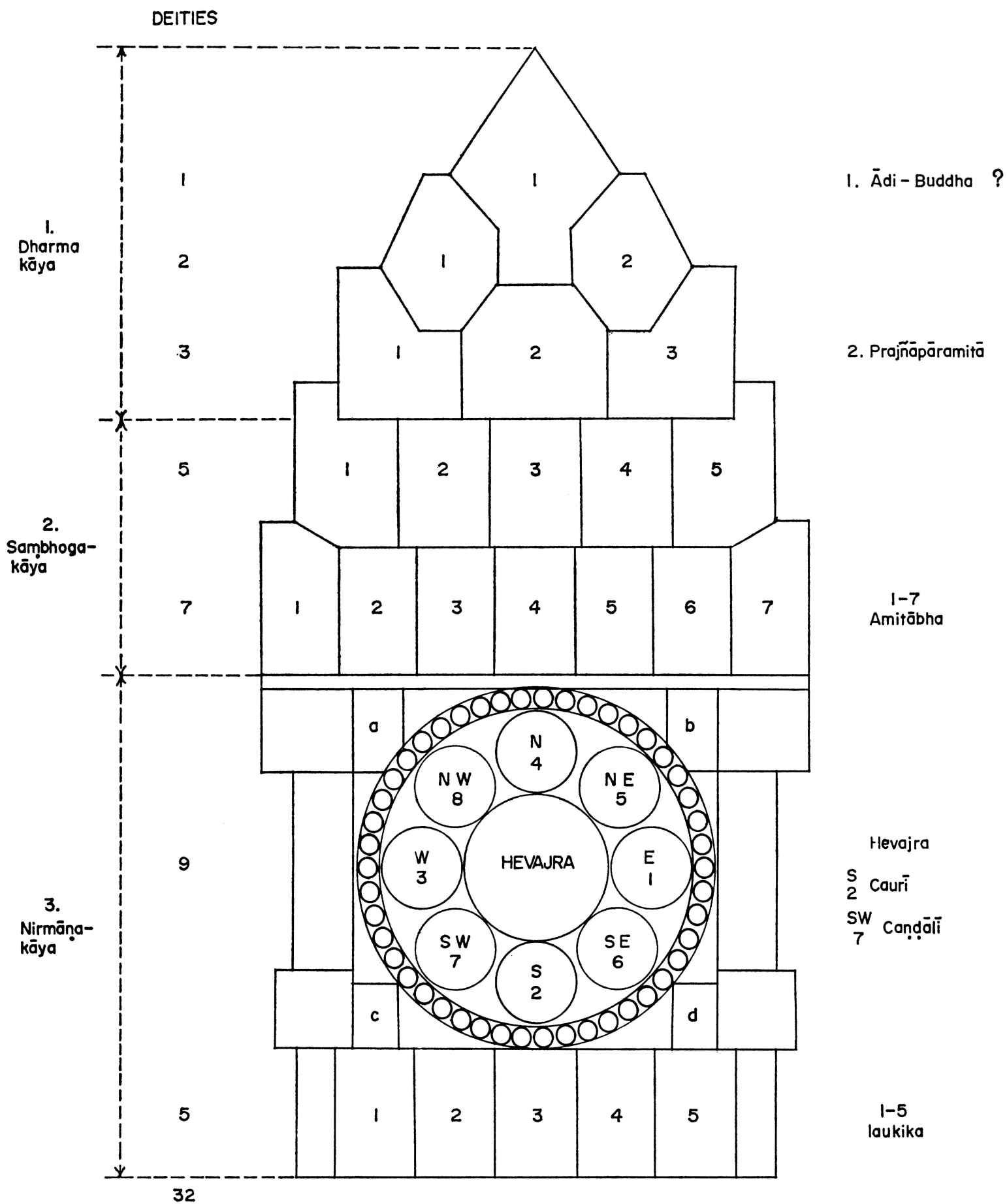


Diagram of Hevajra-maṇḍala (After the cast in Fig. 4)

elaborate. The divinity in this niche, being seated directly below the Buddha on the Nāga at the top, might perhaps be Prajñāpāramitā, the personification of transcendental wisdom, so popular in the Khmer iconography of the Mahāyāna. The position of her arms is not clear; the left hand appears to be resting on the knee, as if performing the *bbūmisparśamudrā* with the wrong hand. We shall not attempt to identify her two companions, whose hand-position is equally uncertain.

The figure at the top is the Buddha on the Nāga, placed in his own “field”. The two figures in niches at a slightly lower level may be his two chief disciples. Their hands are folded before the breast in adoration (*añjali*).

The Buddha on the Nāga is of a type that appears again and again in Khmer art. The Nāga’s hood has seven heads and his body is arranged in three coils which rest on a lotus cushion. The Buddha, wearing a crown, sits in the attitude of meditation (*samādhi*). He is no longer the historical Buddha but takes his place at the top of the universe as the “absolute and eternal Jina”. Possibly, though his attributes are lacking, this Jina may be identified with the Ādi-Buddha or Vajradhara, who together with Prajñāpāramitā represents the *dharmakāya*. That is why we have recognized the two upper storeys as the *dharmakāya* on the diagram, while the worlds below belong to the *sambhogakāya* and the *nirmāṇakāya*.

At the very top of the fictitious structure there appear to be some remains of the foliage of a Bodhi tree. This would signify that the ultimate goal towards which the Hevajra-vehicle (Hevajrayāna) is heading is that quality of enlightenment called *bodhicitta*.

This Hevajramaṇḍala shows a complete system in which the universe is organized. In all it contains 32 figures, representing clearly demarcated ranks and levels. Anthropologists might call it a well-stratified social structure. Three worlds are represented¹⁶. The base, with its five niches, is the human world. Above it is the round world of Hevajra, placed within the square frame of the columns. The four storeys of the superstructure form a triangle which represents the transcendental world. The total composition is a *maṇḍalagrha*, the shape is a *kūṭāgāra*.

While the *Hevajra-Tantra* explains the secret doctrine of the god Hevajra, who is also called Heruka and closely related to Vajrasattva, the actual *abhiṣeka* of the *sādhaka*, his consecration to Hevajra, is more clearly described in the *Hevajrasekaprakriyā*¹⁷.

The aim of the *abhiṣeka* was to obtain *siddhi*: perfection, fulfillment, success. This had two aspects. One was the highest ideal, *bodhicitta*, to be achieved by identification with Hevajra. The other was of a lower order, perfect health, wealth and power.

Both texts are on the secret, esoteric and transcendental level, and are intended to serve only for the instruction of Bodhisattvas and Buddhas. Both together help us to form an idea of the secret rites that must have been performed in Cambodia and North-East Thailand in the 12th and 13th century. And we can get further help from studying the ceremonial bronze implements that survive from the period in question, such as the *vajra* (thunderbolt), the *ghaṇṭā* (bell), and the vessel in the form of a *śaṅkha* (conch) for pouring the water of ablution¹⁸.

¹⁶ For the understanding of the doctrine of the trikāya cf. Paul Mus, *Le Buddha paré*, BEFEO, XXVIII, 153–278.

¹⁷ Finot, *op. cit.*, 31–48.

¹⁸ See, for instance, G. Groslier, *Les collections khmères du Musée Albert Sarraut à Phnom-Penh*, Paris, 1931, Pl. XLII (conch with a representation of Hevajra and his troupe); Cédès, *Bronzes khmers*, Paris et Bruxelles, 1923, Pl. XXXVI (conchs with figures of Hevajra, etc.), Pl. XXXVII–XXXVIII (bells).

The cult of Hevajra, though its most important rites were secret, was by no means confined to an obscure sect. It must at one time have been of great importance throughout the Far East. In 1261 the great Khublai Khan, the ruler of most of Asia and part of Europe, was consecrated as Hevajra by means of *abhiṣeka* rites exactly like those expounded in the *Hevajrasekaṅkariyā*¹⁹.

In the *Hevajra-Tantra*, Hevajra describes himself as follows:

(8) I have eight faces, four legs, and sixteen arms, and trample the four Māras under foot. Fearful am I to fear itself, with my necklace made of a string of heads, and dancing furiously on a solar disk. Black am I and terrible with a crossed *vajra* on my head, my body smeared with ashes, and my mouths sending forth the sound HŪṂ. But my inner nature is tranquil, and holding Nairātmyā in loving embrace, I am possessed of tranquil bliss. My front face is black, the one to the right is like white jasmine, the one to the left is red and fearful, and the one to the rear is distorted. The remaining faces are like those of bees, and there are twenty-four eyes and so on²⁰.

Another passage says:

He has sixteen arms and eight faces and four legs, and is terrible in appearance with his garland of skulls and he wears the five symbolic adornments²¹.

In Tibet, Miss Getty tells us, he is generally represented embracing Nairātmyā. All of his heads have the third eye. Two of his legs are in dancing position and the other two trample on corpses. All of the sixteen hands hold skull cups containing figurines — those in the right hands, an elephant, a horse, a mule, a bull, a camel, a man, a deer, and a cat; those in the left hands, Hindu gods²².

Khmer art omits Nairātmyā and portrays Hevajra dancing his dance alone²³. He has three frontal heads, one on top of another, with a total of eight faces. Some have the third eye, some not. Some are tranquil, some angry; or else all may be tranquil²⁴. He wears 8 diadems, 10 (?) ear-rings, a necklace, armlets (sometimes bracelets as well), and anklets. He has eight pairs of arms, which may all be the same size, or else one pair may be larger. His hands generally hold attributes, which are sometimes indistinct but in at least one case correspond exactly to those listed by Miss Getty; sometimes, perhaps because the attributes were detachable, his hands are empty. He appears to have only two legs, but may have a groove incised along the thigh and tibia to show that each leg is considered to be double²⁵. He stands in a dancing posture, very much like the *yoginīs* in Figs. 1 and 2. Whenever the original pedestal is preserved, he is seen trampling with his (double) left foot on a corpse or corpses²⁶.

¹⁹ A. Grünwedel, *Mythologie des Buddhismus in Tibet und der Mongolei*, Leipzig, 1900, p. 63. With regard to the position of the vajrayāna in Indonesia see: P. H. Pott, *Le Bouddhisme de Java et l'ancienne civilisation Javanaise*, Rome, I. S. M. E. O. Conferenze; 1952. 108–156. Also the vajrayāna from Thailand originated in Nālandā (Bengal).

²⁰ Snellgrove, 110.

²¹ Snellgrove, 110. Cf. the *sādhana* for Heruka given in N. K. Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 1929, p. 36 and the illustration facing it; cf. also *ibid.*, p. 270 and Pl. L.

²² A. Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, Oxford, 1928, p. 143. For illustrations, cf. *ibid.*, Pl. XLIV-a, d; and P. H. Pott, in *Burma, Korea, Tibet* (London, 1964), Pl. 22. For complete description of the Yi-dam Hevajra see A. Grünwedel, *op. cit.* p. 105 and fig. 86.

²³ Cœdès, *Bronzes khmers* (Paris et Bruxelles, 1923), Pls. XXXI, with description at pp. 44–45; J. Boisselier, *La statuaire khmère et son évolution* (Paris, 1955), Pl. 111; G. Groslier, *Les collections khmères...*, Pl. XII; B. Ph. Groslier, *Indochina* (London, 1962), coloured plate p. 186.

²⁴ Cf. the description above: "my inner nature is tranquil."

²⁵ Cœdès, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

²⁶ The corpses usually have the heads pointing leftward of Hevajra, but in one case (B. Ph. Groslier, *loc. cit.*) it points in the opposite direction.

I illustrate a bronze in the National Museum at Bangkok which should probably be identified as Hevajra (Fig. 5). If it does not coincide very closely with Hevajra's description of himself (p. 26), it conflicts with it no more than the other Khmer representations of the same subject. All sixteen hands hold indistinct attributes; in addition the two principal hands perform a double *vitarkamudrā*. The groove along the feet shows the legs are double. There is no trace of a corpse, but it is uncertain whether or not the pedestal is original.

“The position of Vajrasattva in the Mahāyāna pantheon”, says Miss Getty, “is difficult to determine²⁷”. Sometimes, she continues, he is regarded as the Bodhisattva of Akṣobhya, sometimes as the chief of the five transcendental Buddhas or the sixth transcendental Buddha, sometimes as the Ādi-Buddha, or identical with Vajrasattva, an exoteric representation of the Ādi-Buddha. In the Hevajra-tantra, Hevajra is “the essence of Vajrasattva”, but at the same time he is identical with Hevajra or any other *iṣṭadevatā*²⁸. In Cambodia, says Mr Cœdès, Vajradhara and Vajrasattva have the same attributes, namely the thunderbolt (*vajra*) and the bell (*ghaṇṭā*), and are distinguished from each other only by the position of their hands. “Mais comme ces deux noms ne se rencontrent pas dans l'épigraphie cambodgienne”, he adds, “et que nous avons vu d'autre part Vajrapāṇi invoqué au début des inscriptions de Bāt Čuṃ et vénéré dans un des trois sanctuaires, j'ai cru pouvoir réunir toutes ces statuettes sous la domination unique de Vajrapāṇi, dont Vajradhara et Vajrasattva ne sont d'ailleurs que des succédanés²⁹”. He then illustrates seven figurines of the subject, all of them in the seated position³⁰.

Two reliefs in the Southern Gopura of the temple of Bimāya (one of them illustrated in Fig. 6) depict a crowned divinity standing on a corpse. He has a single head, two arms and two legs, and wears the usual jewels. As he carries the *vajra* and the *ghaṇṭā*, he is identified here as Vajrasattva; the characteristics of the figure comply with the *sādhana* of Vajrasattva.

The lintel over the east door of the main *prāsāda* of this sanctuary is a *mahāmaṇḍala* (Fig. 7)³¹. The central figure in it has three visible faces, eight arms, and two single legs. He is dancing with his left foot on two corpses whose crowned heads point in opposite directions. They lie on top of the head of a slain elephant, whose hide the central divinity holds outspread behind his back with six of his eight hands³². The other two hands perform a double *vitarka mudrā* which is identical with that of Fig. 5.

Mr Cœdès has tentatively identified this divinity as Trailokyavijaya, partly because that name is mentioned in the inscription in the southern *gopura*³³, and partly because Trailokyavijaya — who is sometimes thought of as the active aspect of Vajrasattva — has four faces and eight arms, two of his hands perform a gesture like that portrayed in the lintel, and he dances on the corpses of Śiva and Pārvatī³⁴. But the attributes which Trailokyavijaya is supposed to carry in

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

²⁸ Snellgrove, 47, 28.

²⁹ *Bronzes khmers*, p. 43.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Pls. XXVII–XXIX.

³¹ Cf. Seidenfaden, *An Excursion to Phimai*, JSS XVII/1, p. 13; Manit Vallibhotama, *Guide to Phimai and Antiquities in the Province of Nagara Rajasima* (Khorat), Bangkok, 1961, fig. 40.

³² The elephant's head and hind legs are decorated.

³³ G. Cœdès, *L'épigraphie du temple de Phimai*, BEFEO XXIV/3–4, pp. 345–352.

³⁴ Cœdès, quoted in Seidenfaden, *loc. cit.*; cf. Foucher, *Étude sur l'iconographie bouddhique de l'Inde*, 24, and Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, 114ff.

his eight hands (bell and thunderbolt, sword, elephant-goad and arrow, bow, lasso and disk) are lacking here. And the elephant-hide, which forms so conspicuous a part of our composition, is not mentioned in connection with Trailokyavijaya. As Mr Cœdès remarks, the elephant-hide belongs rather to Samvara, but the iconography of our divinity deviates in several respects from the description of Samvara in the *sādhana*³⁵. On the other hand since the two prostrate corpses placed on top of the elephant's head are clearly male, we are inclined to identify them as Bhairava and Kālarātri who, according to the *sādhana*, are trampled upon by Samvara who is another form of Hevajra³⁶.

The upper level of the maṇḍala is occupied by two identical groups of five crowned Buddhas, seated in *samādhi*. These Jinas may be recognized as Amitābha.

The lower level has two groups of five dancing crowned figures. Each is placed directly below one of the Buddhas, probably indicating that it belongs to the *kula* or family of that particular Buddha. The crowned heads of the corpses on which they dance point in different directions — those at the left point to the right, and vice versa. The two dancing figures nearest the center are males, carrying the *vajra* and the *ghaṇṭā*, which in accordance with the *sādhana* identifies them as Vajrasattva. The other eight dancers, four to the left and four to the right, are *yoginīs*. Each has a single smiling face without the third eye, two arms and two legs. Unlike the two male figures, and unlike the *yoginīs* in Figs. 1 and 4, all of whom trample the corpses with their left foot, these females trample them with the right. The attributes in their raised right hands are clearly not those prescribed for the *yoginīs* of Hevajra, but just what they are is not certain. The two outermost figures appear to be each carrying a cup or box, the next two a fish, the next two a lotus, and the last two an animal, perhaps a squirrel or a mongoose. The fish and the animal are more clearly seen in the lintel over the north door of the same *prāsāda* (Fig. 8).

Despite all the differences, these dancers are similar in so many ways to the *yoginīs* of Hevajra that we think they belong to the same general class. Here they are seen dancing by night in a forest, represented by the leafy branches behind them, and they trample the corpses of Hindu gods, personifications of ignorance.

Since the main inscription of Bimāya dates 1108 A.D. we may assume that as early as the beginning of the 12th century A.D. we encounter in Bimāya a developed vajrayāna which is witnessed by the presence of Vajrasattva and his troupe of four or eight *yoginīs* in frenzied dance forming together part of a completed mahāmaṇḍala in stone. After comparison of the bronze figurines of Caurī and Caṇḍālī with the *yoginīs* of Bimāya we believe we are on safe grounds in dating these bronzes as belonging to the 12th or 13th century A.D. It is remarkable but consistent that in the vajrayāna of Bimāya as represented in its East and North lintel maṇḍalas, there is no place for the Bodhisattva Lokeśvara. The sanctuary of Bimāya — built some time before Angkor Wat — may have been the centre from which the Vajrayāna spread to the capital of the Khmer Empire.

³⁵ Cœdès, loc. cit. Cf. A. Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, p. 127. Also A. Grünwedel, *Mythologie des Buddhismus in Tibet und der Mongolei*, Leipzig, 1900, p. 106 and Abb. 84. The hide in the illustration belongs to a white elephant. For a Hindu divinity in a similar dancing position and holding the outspread elephant-hide, see C. Sivaramamurti, *Geographical and Chronological Factors in Indian Iconography*, Ancient India, No. 6, 1950, Pl. XXVIII-D and p. 59.

³⁶ B. Bhattachararyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 1958, 160/1.

It has often been observed that Khmer art refrains from depicting any divinity embracing his *prajñā*³⁷. What is perhaps more remarkable is the total absence of Nairātmyā, Hevajra's *prajñā*, from the Hevajramāṇḍala in Fig. 4. Nor do we know of any separate figures that can be identified with Nairātmyā with certainty.

It is just possible, however, that the bronze in Fig. 9 is intended to be that goddess. She has the third eye and wears the usual ornaments. She dances with bent legs, with both feet on a double lotus cushion instead of a corpse. The object she holds in her right hand might be a dagger, the other — now broken — is part of a chopper (*karṭṛī*). But there are difficulties in the identification, not the least being the absence of the corpse, so the question must be left open³⁸. A figure of Nairātmyā from Bengal is shown for comparison (Fig. 10). Her Jina Akṣobhya is present.

Three unidentified *yoginīs* are shown in Fig. 11. All three have a “peaceful” expression. All three wear the usual jewels and dance upon the left toe, like the *yoginīs* of Hevajra. The corpses, if there ever were any, are now lacking. Each dancer has the right arm raised, and performs a *vitarkamudrā* with the left hand. The first, who lacks the third eye, carries a small drum (*damaru*) in each hand. The other two, who have the third eye, have the right hand empty.

Quite a number of other bronze figures of *yoginīs* from Cambodia and Thailand have been published³⁹. All of them, as well as those we have been studying (Figs. 1–3, 7–11), have characteristics to distinguish them from that other class of heavenly dancers, the *apsaras*. It may be a third eye, or a specific attribute or *mudrā*, or something else. The *apsaras* may wear the same sort of ornaments, but most often they wear rather different ones; they never have an angry expression; and they never dance on corpses.

³⁷ There is one exception. After completion of this article we saw in Bangkok a photograph of a Khmer bronze statue, now in Ubol, showing a standing tantric deity (Hevajra?) with his *prajñā* (Nairātmyā?) in deep embrace.

³⁸ The attributes specified for Nairātmyā in the Hevajra-Tantra are respectively the knife in the right hand and the *khaṭvāṅga* in the left hand. (Snellgrove, p. 74).

³⁹ See, for instance, *The Arts of Thailand*, Bloomington, 1960, Fig. 50; *Schätze aus Thailand*, Köln, 1963, Fig. 38; Georges Groslier, *Recherches sur les Cambodgiens*, Paris, 1921, Pl. XXVIII-D; George Cœdès, *Bronzes khmers*, Paris, 1923, Pl. XIX, 1 and 3 (as the third eye is visible and the hands perform a *vitarka mudrā*, these two dancing figures are not *apsaras* but *yoginīs*).