



The Phur-Pa, Tibetan Ritual Daggers

John C. Huntington

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JOHN C. HUNTINGTON

THE *PHUR-PA*,
TIBETAN RITUAL DAGGERS



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FOREWORD

The idea of being able to dispatch one's enemies over vast distances through rituals using either arrows or darts is a common theme in many cultures. It is especially widespread in circumpacific cultures where there are many variations in detail but where the main theme remains constant—effective removal of negative forces both spiritual and human. The *phur-pa*, a three bladed dart or dagger, is the implement of this action in Tibet and its use is quite common throughout areas of Tibetan religious influence. How the idea, probably of shamanistic origins, and the *phur-pa* with its connected rituals became part of the Buddhist religion is a study that remains to be done. It may have been a facet of the conversion of deities carried on by Padmasambhava but there is no direct evidence of this and it is only known that the *phur-pa* was one of the implements he used in subduing and converting spirits antagonistic to Buddhism. It has not been possible to deal with these problems of origin. Therefore, what I have attempted to do in this brief monograph is to supply a tentative basic iconography and a general introduction to the ritual functions of *phur-pa* as a stepping stone to future work.

The cliché about a study being just a scratch on the surface was never more true than in this case. Already, even as this monograph is still months away from final publication another type of *phur-pa* has come to my attention, one topped by the head of the Buddha above the three faces of the deity. Further, texts are currently being published that will shed much more light on the ritual use of the implement. As there is obviously so much work still to be done I would like to call the reader's attention to my concluding comments (p. 60) and to ask that my request for additional information be accepted seriously.

My gratitude is due a considerable number of people and institutions, especially the National Endowment for the Humanities which supported my 1969–1970 field work during which most of the photographic material and informants' data was gathered. The grant was to study sources of style and iconography for Tibetan art and this monograph represents the first of several related studies planned for publication. I am also indebted to the College of the Arts and to the Graduate School of Ohio State University for their partial support of the cost of publication. As is obvious from the figure list, several prime examples are in the splendid Tibetan and Nepalese collection of the Indian Museum in Calcutta and I am most grateful to Dr. A.K. Bhattacharyya, the museum's director, for his permission to photograph and use so large a portion of their material. Most of all, I am indebted to my friend N. Jigme, To-mo dGe-shes Rin-po-che, who as the director of the Tibet House Museum in New Delhi, spent many hours working with me and who provided every conceivable courtesy. Naturally, I am most appreciative to Dr. Alexander C. Soper, the editor of this series and to Madam C. Louise Tarabori-Flesch, its publisher, for their work in seeing this monograph into print, to Mrs. Constance Bond Conway who compiled the Index, and to my wife, Dr. Susan L. Huntington, whose critical acumen and encouragement contribute greatly to my work. *J.C. Huntington*

INTRODUCTION

Among the most distinctive ritual objects known from Tibet is the *phur-pa*, a dagger like implement used in exorcistic rituals. It is surprising that so little is known about it and its use since other less frequently encountered implements of ritual function in the Tibetan forms of Vajrayāna have been somewhat better understood. This study is an attempt to put forth some of the basic information about the *phur-pa*, its use and iconography.¹

Nomenclature:

The simple translation of the word *phur-pa* would be “peg” or “spike,” and, in fact, the word *phur-pa* is used to denote tent stakes. Dagyal’s *Tibetan Dictionary (Bod-brdai’ Tshig-mdzod)* states that a *phur-pa* is for “casting at personifications of obstructions” and “[tying] tent ropes.” Some insight into the nature of the *phur-pa* as a ritual implement may be gained from this dual use of the word, especially its function as a piercing or penetrating utensil of strength and durability. Further understanding may be obtained from a similar examination of the other common name for it, *phur-bu*, literally, son of the *phur*. Dagyal tells us that the *phur-bu* is for “casting at the five planets, personifications of obstacles and the like.” While this definition does not suggest reasons for these actions, a clear reference to operating at great distances is present. The inference that the *phur-bu* (*phur-pa*) is effective over considerable distances will be borne out by information from other sources. It is also tempting to suggest that by being called “son of the *phur*” there is the implication of being once removed from actually being a *phur*, per se. While this in fact may be the case, there is no particular evidence to support such an idea. However, one may infer that the *phur-bu* embodies the characteristics of the *phur-pa* and has something of its own to add as well.

Other bits of information may be gained from examining the Sanskrit equivalents that have been given for the two terms. These have been summarized in the Tibetan-Sanskrit dictionary prepared by Dr. Lokesh Chandra and are given below in tabular form.

phur-pa:

1. *kīla* (a stake or pin; rarely, a weapon)
2. *vajrakīla* (unalterable *kīla*)

¹ This study is the result of some of the investigations carried out by the author in India during 1969-1970 while researching Indian sources of Tibetan iconography and style on a National Endowment for the Humanities grant.

phur-bu:

1. *kīla* (a stake or pin; rarely, a weapon)
2. *kīlaka* (a bolt or pin, wedge, etc.)
3. Gīshpati (Lord of Verbal Invocation [Praise])
4. Bṛhaspati (Lord of Prayer and Devotion; an intercessor between the gods and men)
5. *vajrakīla* (unalterable *kīla*)
6. *śāṅkhu* (a pin, nail, spike, weapon)
7. *saraka* (little arrow)

Key characteristics of the implement seem to be emphasized in the literal nature of the nomenclature and this conveys the idea of a spike, stake, pin or something of the sort, with vague overtones of weaponry. Two of the names, Gīshpati and Bṛhaspati, lead in a different direction by indicating the character of the personification concepts associated with the implement. Gīshpati, although having a clear meaning, remains obscure as to its significance in relation to the *phur-pa* and one may only speculate that there is some relationship between the chanted invocations used in the *phur-pa* rituals and the name. Bṛhaspati suggests an affinity to parallel rituals in India. Bṛhaspati is the Vedic teacher of the gods, but he is also the planet Jupiter in the series of the Navagrahā. This association between the *phur-pa* and one of the planets seems to be highly significant since the planets are propitiated in a rite, described in the *Yājñavalkyasūtra*, for the purposes of peace and prosperity, ample rains, long life and [good] nourishment as well as doing harm to one's enemies.² This series of desires is very similar to that given by Tibetan informants as the purposes for carrying out *phur-pa* rituals. Tibetan references to use of the *phur-pa* in achieving peace and prosperity, and long life and nourishment are usually couched in the terms of destroying or removing obstructions (*bgegs*), but the use of the negative does not obscure the positive implications of the meaning.

The significance of this curious parallel is difficult to assess without further information about the exact nature of the ritual involved in the sacrifice to the *grahas* for comparison to Tibetan techniques. It is certain that at least portions of the accoutrements in both of the sacrifices have considerable antiquity; both may be traced at least as far as the seventh or eighth century, by literary references in the case of the *phur-pu* ritual and by sculptural evidence from northern and eastern India in the case of the Navagrahā. Since there was contact between these regions of India and Tibet at that time and a resultant movement of ideas, it is unlikely that such close parallels would be merely coincidental. However, the extent of this contact must remain speculative since no *phur-pa* like instrument has been demonstrated to be of Indian origin up to the present time.

The name *saraka*, or little arrow, carries with it the suggestions of the efficacy of the *phur-pa* across distances. This name simply reiterates one of the major functional aspects of the *phur-pa* and must be considered a simple, descriptive appellation.

rDo-rje *phur-pa*, another common name for *phur-pa*, is actually the name of the deity that is manifest in the *phur-pa* implement. While the iconography of this deity will be dealt with in the proper place, it may be noted here that his name offers an additional insight into the nature

² Jitendra Nath Banerjee, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1936, p. 443.

of the ritual utensil since it is the only name for the implement that in any way reflects specifically Buddhist concepts. *rDo-rje phur-pa* (Sk. *Vajrakila*), literally translates to “*phur-pa* of royal stone,” or “*phur-pa* of diamond,” but the implication is that there is immutable truth, ultimate reality and the destructive power of a lightning bolt behind the symbol. While the term *vajra* is used by most Indian religions, it is most well known as a part of the standard Buddhist vocabulary even though the word originally referred to Indra’s attribute as a manifestation of thunder/lightning. This situation suggests that the deity may well have pre-existed the advent of Buddhism in Tibet and that it was assimilated into the Buddhist pantheon at an early date. Added support for this inference may be found in the negative point that the deity has yet to be identified in Sanskrit literature. However, he seems to have held an important position as a *yi-dam* in the *rNying-ma-pa* pantheon at a very early date, probably taken over or “converted” from the Bön religion and “Buddhicized” by the addition of *vajra* to his name. Another name for this deity as he exists in the *rNying-ma-pa* pantheon is given by Tucci, *mThar-byed rDo-rje-gzhon-nu*³ or, “youthful liberation-making *vajra*”. In the very straight-forward idiom of deity naming as practiced in Tibet, this seems to indicate a great deal about the nature of the deity and further reinforces the idea of the use of the implement and the likelihood of its having been adopted into the Buddhist religion when it came to Tibet. First, it is called a *vajra* (*rdo-rje*) in apparent direct comparison to a well established Buddhist ritual implement which was in use among members of the Indian Buddhist sects that sent missionaries to Tibet. For example, depictions of *vajras* as Buddhist symbols occur in considerable profusion in the sculptures of the Pāla dynasty and especially those of Magadha. The modification of *rdo-rje* by *gzhon-nu* (“youth” or “young”) can only indicate that the object being so named was a less established version of the same or a similar type of utensil, thus suggesting that there was a process of adoption taking place and that it was done in a very conscious manner. The idea expressed in *mthar-byed*, “making free” or “making liberated,” is a simple, positive assertion of the function of the *phur-pa* since by destroying the “obstructions” one is liberated from them. In the equation of the *phur-pa* and the *vajra* there is another indication of the nature of the implement and its parallels in India. The *vajra* is the symbol of *Vajrapāṇi*, the king of the *yakṣas*, who uses it in his function of overcoming obstacles on behalf of his propitiators, thus equating the capacities of the *vajra* and the *phur-pa*. Further, as an emblem of the Buddha, the *vajra* is known as the destroyer of *Māra* (*Māra nīkrīntana*), a term which acknowledges the weapon nature.⁴ Thus, it may well have been that the established function of the *phur-pa* in the pre-Buddhist Bön religion exactly corresponded to at least part of the function of the *vajra* as it was used in contemporaneous India and therefore, the assimilation of the *phur-pa* into the Buddhist vocabulary of implements was largely a matter of the Buddhist acceptance of a new utensil that fulfilled an already familiar function.

It is not meant to imply that there is anything final in this brief survey of the names of the deities and the nomenclature of the implements. However, it may be noted that in the literal nature of the descriptive terminology applied to the *phur-pa*, there is a definite sense of the phenomena that surround it. In one way, it is this “sense” of the phenomena that is lacking in a non-Tibetan understanding of the subject and it is also this cultural background that is most

³ Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome, 1949, p. 588.

⁴ N. G. Majumdar, “Notes on *Vajra*”, *Journal of the Department of Letters*, Calcutta University, vol. XI, 1924, pp. 189ff. and 197ff.

difficult to impart to the observer. I do not presume to believe that it is possible to dispel this lack through a simple exercise as the foregoing, but I do feel that it is possible to demonstrate the nature of the problem and to show, in a small way, something of the potential of such information.

Use of the *phur-pa*: (dGe-lugs-pa tradition only)

The following information was given to me in the spring of 1970 by the Reverend N. Jigme, present incarnation of Domo Geshe Rimpoche.⁵ My additions to his comments are given in parentheses.

I. Traditionally, the *phur-pa* is said to have come from India. Some type of *phur-pa* ritual is thought to have been introduced by both Padmasambhava and Atiśa during their respective periods of activity in Tibet. (This is in contradiction to the evidence of Bön use of the implement prior to the advent of Buddhism into Tibet.)

II. There are limitations on the purposes for which one may practice *phur-pa* rituals. With only one exception, the practitioner may not perform the rituals for his own benefit, but must always have "genuine" altruistic motives. In theory, there are four reasons for performing the rites. These are, to stop evil (*bgegs*) affecting others,⁶ for the welfare of the religion, for the welfare of the state and for one's own benefit. However, one may only perform the ceremonies for personal benefit if there are ten reasons for so doing. (These ten reasons do not seem to be specific, but are more a simple enumeration of the purposes of desiring the ceremonies to be performed.)

III. The effects that a *phur-pa* may have are as varied as the reasons for performing the rituals. They may be divided into three basic functions: subduing malevolent spirits, doing harm to enemies and controlling the weather. (A fourth phenomenon also seems to exist, that of affecting astrological forces, but it was not mentioned by the Reverend N. Jigme and it may not be a dGe-lugs-pa concern.) In the first category fall many of the most commonly performed rituals, those against disease, danger, control of local spirits that affect crops, literally serving notice on local *sa-bdag* (an animate presence of the earth with affinities to a particular locality) that their piece of earth is about to be used for some human purposes, etc. It is interesting to note that in the *sa-bdag* rituals, it is held that the spirit is subdued by being called to a particular point at the site and then "pinning" or "nailing" him in place by the action of the officiant stabbing the *phur-pa* into the ground. An aspect of the second phenomenon, harming enemies, carries considerable significance in determining the nature of the *phur-pa*, and that is, that the action may take place over great distances. It is conceived that the implement is actually hurled, metaphorically by a symbolic gesture, at the foe and that no matter what the distance, it will hit the mark. This point explains the name *saraka* and further, may explain the physical resemblance of the point of the *phur-pa* to the three bladed arrow-head that is common

⁵ I wish to express my gratitude for the following information, given to me by my friend, the Reverend N. Jigme, the present incarnation of Domo Geshe Rimpoche (To-mo dGe-shes Rin-po-che), in spring of 1970.

⁶ Please refer to my article, "Iconography of Evil Deities from Tibet", in *Studies in Indo-Asian Art and Culture*, vol. 3, New Delhi, 1973, pp. 55-75.

in Asian weaponry. The ultimate effects of a *phur-pa* are the death, damaging, or wounding of the adversary or the restriction of its activities in some manner. The *phur-pa* also has the power to cause and to halt rain and hail, and to reduce the force of the wind. (The means of performing these actions were not specified.)

IV. The number of phenomena that can be affected by *phur-pa* rituals necessitates that there are numerous different *phur-pa* rituals and there are many texts dealing with the performance of those rites. Yet the practices follow a basic pattern which can be described rather simply. (The reader is reminded of the dGe-lugs-pa source of this information, and it is suggested that this might not hold true for other Buddhist sects or for the Bön-po.) The ritual is performed in the following manner. After the selection of a prescribed location, the officiant places an equilateral triangle made of iron (preferably, meteoric iron, but in practice this is seldom possible) in front of himself, which is to act as a “jail” or “prison” (Tibetan term not known) for the spirit of the person or phenomenon upon which the *phur-pa* is to act. Depending on the exact nature of the specific ritual, the triangle is guarded on either four, eight or ten sides (cardinal directions, cardinal and intermediate directions, or the cardinal and intermediate directions plus the zenith and nadir) by “small” *phur-pa* (an example of this type may be seen in Figure 9). The small *phur-pa* may not always be available and it is possible to fulfill their function by verbal incantations. This substitution may also be used for the iron triangle, but in both cases it is desirable and generally deemed more effective if the actual articles are present. Bringing the spirit of the person or phenomenon to be acted upon into the triangle is the key to the success of the ritual and there are several methods for causing this to happen. Among them are the recitation of specific *mantras*, the casting of spells, the placing of paper charms showing shackled men and having *mantras* on them (Figure 1) into the triangle, putting pieces of paper with the names of the persons or spirits that one wishes to affect into the triangle, or putting previously collected personal substances such as bits of clothes, hair, nail cuttings, etc. into the triangle. Once the spirit is securely bound into the triangle by means of the spells, etc., it is stabbed by the practitioner with the *phur-pa* and the collected materials in the triangle are ground with the point of the implement.

V. The active principle in the *phur-pa* rite is not the implement itself but rather the deity, Phur-pa or rDo-rje phur-pa, that it represents. It is actually this animating energy of the *phur-pa* that effects the destruction of the enemies, prevents the rain, or, in general, performs the necessary function for the successful conclusion of the ritual. In Tibetan examples, according to dGe-lugs-pa tradition, the deity represented on the *phur-pa* implement is always Phur-pa, regardless of sculptural inferences. (As will be shown in this paper, those implements which have been identified in Western literature as either rTa-mgrin [Hayagrīva] or mGon-po [Mahākāla] are not what they seem.)

VI. The construction and physical details of *phur-pa* are open to considerable variation and while some of the iconomorphs are limited according to certain texts or oral traditions, it is quite common to find a wide range of variations in *phur-pa* of any given type. One of the principal concerns of the smith who is the maker of the implement is to satisfy the aesthetic requirements of the patron, that is, “to make it nice.” The metalsmith has at his disposal a variety of techniques, materials and iconographic formulae upon which he may draw and still remain within the established limits of the “proper” forms for the instrument. The only material limi-

tation is the preference for meteoric iron, especially for the blade, but other than that there are very few restrictions. There is no ritual significance to the different materials which might be used, other than that for meteoric iron which is sought after because of its efficacy in the rituals.

VII. The symbolism of the *chu-srin* (*makara*) head which occurs at the hilt of the *phur-pa*⁷ is that of its being the most powerful creature in the ocean and that it lends its strength to the effect of the *phur-pa*. A tradition exists that the *chu-srin* is the hat of the deity. (At this point, it seemed that the discussion had broached upon information held to be esoteric by the dGe-lugs-pa, for I was given a set of stock answers regarding the *chu-srin*. Actually, the *makara* is widely known to be a cosmogeneric source of animate vitality of the minor deities of the spirit world, and its presence has been a symbol of auspiciousness throughout the development of Buddhist iconography. The fact that the blade issues from the mouth of the *makara* signifies its transcendent or spiritual nature and removes it from the mundane. The idea that the *chu-srin* is the hat of the deity suggests that the deity itself issues from the mouth of the *chu-srin*. The power that the *chu-srin* thus provides is the power of the cosmic sea delivered as a birthright to its progeny.)

It is entirely possible that the dGe-lugs-pa teachings about the use of the *phur-pa* outlined above reflect the general usage patterns of the implement by other schools, but it must be remembered that there are several other traditions for which information is unavailable and that these might differ considerably. The place of Phur-pa in the dGe-lugs-pa pantheon is that of a minor *yi-dam*, but in the rNying-ma-pa, he is one of the principal *yi-dam* of the sect and is considered to be an aspect of Heruka.⁸ This difference in position suggests a strong possibility that there would be substantially different attitudes toward the practice of the *phur-pa* ceremonies which would manifest themselves in procedural modifications.

gDul-dkar sNgon-pa and mGon-phyogs dMar-po:

There are two representations of *phur-pa*-brandishing priests in the pantheon of the lCang-skyā Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje⁹ and from these we may gain some insight into the attitude of the dGe-lugs-pa towards the *phur-pa* ritual. On Folio 95a, the first and third illustrations (Figure 2) show violently gesticulating priests, each holding a *phur-pa*. The priests are identified as gDul-dkar sNgon-pa and mGon-phyogs dMar-po,¹⁰ respectively. The two figures are positioned in the pantheon toward the end, among the popular protective deities. They are preceded by a folio showing three of the four *lokapālas* and, for reasons of bilateral symmetry followed throughout

⁷ Georgette Meredith ("The Phurpu: The Use and Symbolism of the Tibetan Magic Dagger", *History of Religions*, Chicago, 1967, Vol. VI, No. 3, pp. 239-241) inexplicably identifies the well known and usually clearly portrayed *chu-srin* as a *khyung* (*garuḍa*), and on the basis of this identification, builds a completely erroneous association of the *phur-pa* with the Na-khi *nāga* cult rituals. *Phur-pa* with what appear to be *khyung* on them do exist (see *infra* and Figures 24, 25, 26, 27), but the location on the handle is radically different.

⁸ Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 588.

⁹ Published by E. Pander as *Das Pantheon des Trihangtscha Hutuktu*, Berlin, 1890 and by Dr. Lokesh Chandra on two folding sheets with an accompanying summary, New Delhi, about 1967-1968, but I shall refer to an original xylograph version in the collection of Professor Ensho Ashikaga, which he kindly loaned me some years ago so that I could make a photographic copy of it. This is only one of the many things for which I am deeply indebted to Professor Ashikaga.

¹⁰ The phrase "*la-na-mo*" following each name means "reverence to [the deity named]" and occurs throughout the pantheon.

the xylograph, are placed on either side of Yul-khor-bsrung (Dhṛtarāṣṭra), the fourth *lokapāla*. Subsequent folios show three of the traditional gods of the elements, Agni, Vāyu and Varuṇa, followed by a group of three *nāgarājas* who in turn precede the *aṣṭamaṅgaladevī*, goddesses of the eight auspicious emblems. Since the priests have been placed among these groups of deities which are generally concerned with prosperity and well being, it must be concluded that this is their primary aspect as well.

The names and invocations, the latter occurring on the reverse of the folio behind the appropriate figure, of the two figures also give some indication of their nature. gDul-dkar sNgon-pa (“[The] Former One [Who Was] Difficult to Convert”) is a simple description of the Bön-po who preceded the Buddhists in Tibet and who were indeed hard to convert. Thus, the figure effectively reduces the entire Bön-po system to the subservient position of protectors of the dGe-lugs-pa. mNgon-phyogs dMar-po (“[The] Red One [Who] Went Forward [by being Buddhist]”) is just as simple a reference to the rNying-ma-pa who are the continuation of the earliest Buddhist converts. Known as the “Reds” because of the color of their hats, the rNying-ma-pa closely parallel the Bön-po in many basic ways and are looked down on by the later sects of Buddhism. By means of this iconographic device, they too have been reduced to the position of protectors of the dGe-lugs-pa. The invocation gives the final key to the purpose behind their inclusion into the pantheon. The principal portion of the invocation is the well known Buddhist creed, “*ye dharmā hetu prabāhā*,” etc., which was used as a vivification formula for images in India, commonly found, for example, on the Nalanda bronzes, and is one of the very conservative conventions of the dGe-lugs-pa. The first line of the invocation in the pantheon usually contains either a *mantra* or the name of the deity being invoked. In the case of the two figures in question, both invocations read “*Namaḥ Samantavajrānām*,” (veneration to ‘of all’ *vajras*). As has already been seen in the discussion of the translation of mThar-byed rDo-rje-gzhon-nu, the word *vajra* can apply to *phur-pa* and, since the usually secret invocation of the deity can be counted upon to emphasize its most important aspects, it is the protective powers of the *phur-pa* practices of the Bön-po and the rNying-ma-pa that are actually being included in the pantheon. The relative position of the figures towards the end of the sequence, among the popular protective deities, in the overall arrangement of the deities and teachers which make up the pantheon reaffirms this view. These two deified priests are the only clear references to either the Bön-po or the rNying-ma-pa. Padmasambhava is absent from the pantheon, and therefore, it seems that the dGe-lugs-pa have accepted the protective *phur-pa* practices as the only worthwhile aspect of the two earlier religions.

Padmasambhava :

It would be very much of an aside to go into detail concerning the complex of unsolved problems surrounding the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet, the place of Guru Padmasambhava (also see Appendix III) as the vehicle of introduction, and the *a priori* origins of the esoteric practices incorporated into the ceremonies of the oldest sect of Tibetan Buddhism, the rNying-ma-pa. A few general observations related to this body of information will serve to fill out the awareness of the *phur-pa* from both an historical and a religious point of view.

In the third quarter of the eighth century, a tantric yogin, Padmasambhava, who had come from either Swat or the Orissa/Bengal border area¹¹ arrived in Tibet at the invitation of one Śāntarakṣita, who felt that Padmasambhava's interpretation of Buddhism was better suited to the Tibetans than the type he himself had been preaching. Padmasambhava was apparently effective, for in about 779 A.D. he founded the monastery of bSam-yes which, in spite of the vicissitudes of history, was still active with a few ancient buildings still standing as recently as 1967. Among the many stories connected with the life of the Guru, there are two kinds which are of importance to the study of the *phur-pa*: those dealing with his ability to subdue demons by means of ritual and those describing his ability to transform himself into other physical forms. rNying-ma-pa theory also sees him as another Buddha and, in one aspect, as the supreme Universal which is manifest in all things.¹² Traditionally associated with his quelling of malevolent spirits is the use of the *phur-pa*, and several of the preceptors of the rNying-ma-pa lineage hold the *phur-pa* as one of their attributes (see, for example, Figures 52 and 65). The phenomenon of subduing and converting to Buddhism numbers of local deities seems to have been a proselytizing device, for use among the members of the indigenous Bön clergy. One of their main concerns was the control of the personified animate forces of nature, believed to inhabit almost every physical and psychological aspect of Tibet and Tibetan life. Who taught whom the method of exorcism that the *phur-pa* is part of is one of the major unanswered questions related to this material, but there is no doubt that Padmasambhava was highly successful at the process.

By the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when many rNying-ma-pa texts were "re-discovered," Padmasambhava emerged as having one of his emanation forms the deity rDo-rje gro-lod¹³ (Figure 3), who is the personification of the performance of the ritual. This deity is only rarely encountered and, as far as I am able to determine, is restricted to the rNying-ma-pa pantheon. The name of the deity has proven impossible to translate with certainty, but one of the possible meanings would be "immutable beneficial ceremony," a name which would certainly fit his function.¹⁴ The iconography of rDo-rje gro-lod offers some interesting insights into the nature of the deity and his possible origins. The garments, ornaments and lack of multiple forms strongly suggest his human origin as opposed to his being a manifestation of one of the various

¹¹ There is some debate as to the location of the eighth century kingdom of Uḍḍiyāna, and while the current academic view favors locating it in Swat, the location of a kingdom known as Uḍḍayāna through at least the fifth century, there is substantial indication in Tāranātha's *History of Buddhism in India* (*rGya-gar-chos-'byung*) that the Uḍḍiyāna of the eighth and ninth centuries would have been in the Orissan or Orissan-Bengal border region. The general level of consistency of the activities of the Mahāsiddhis in Uḍḍiyāna, Bihar, Vāṅga (part of Bengal), Orissa and Kosala (inland Orissa) described in the *Chos-byung* gives the strong impression that Uḍḍiyāna is in eastern India. Padmasambhava's connection to Uḍḍiyāna is that he is both of the royal family and the disciple of Indrabhūti, who is always said to have been the king of Uḍḍiyāna in the lists of the Mahāsiddhis.

¹² Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 548

¹³ René de Nebesky-Wojtkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, The Hague, 1956, p. 516.

¹⁴ *Gro* = *rim-gro* ("ceremony"), *lod* = *saug-po* (see L. S. Dargyab's *Tibetan Dictionary*) ("beneficial"). However, the affinity of *gro* to 'gro, which figures in many compounds relating to movement and *lod* also being given as equivalent to *zhan-po* and *dman-pa* ("weak" or "ugly" and "small"), gives rise to a series of permutations of interpretations, with no particular basis for selecting any among them. Also, the point that the synonyms offered by Dargyab for *lod* have opposite meanings and that the word does not occur in other lexicons gives rise to another set of difficulties. Given this situation, my reading of *gro-lod* is tentative at best, although considering the rather literal nature of some of the other names that have been dealt with, it may be argued that there is a certain degree of probability to the interpretation, and that many of the other possible translations would be severely out of keeping with the context.

yi-dam. The latter are usually nearly nude and have some multiplicity of limbs or heads. Yet, there is a definite affinity for the basic concept of the *yi-dam* convention which is apparent in the characteristic facial features, apparent corpulency and stance. The *rdo-rje* (*vajra*) that he holds is a symbol of his universality, veracity and power (the original weaponry symbolism of this implement was not lost on the Buddhists). The *phur-pa* which he holds, ready to strike, with his left hand is a specific reference to his patronage of the *phur-pa* rituals. The *phur-pa* (Figure 4) is of a particular type and one may infer from its presence in the hand of the deity who is the patron of the ritual that by the use of a *phur-pa* of this type, an officiant may, during the process of the ritual, consider himself transformed into the deity. This type of transformation is quite common in tantric practices and in fact, it might be assumed that it would have taken place even if the forms of the *phur-pa* in use and held by the deity were not the same (see Appendix III). An identity transferral would serve to further increase the efficacy of the ritual by the practitioner's having become the same as the patron of the rituals, none other than Padmasambhava himself.

An indication of the traditional nature of the rituals and, apparently, of a certain degree of uniformity of practice is given by a comparison of the photograph of the lama in the act of performing a *phur-pa* ritual published by Helmut Hoffmann in his *The Religions of Tibet*¹⁵ and the image of *rDo-rje gro-lod*. It will be noted that the hand positions are quite similar. The lama is at the climax of the ritual when he reaches this position. It may safely be assumed that the depiction of *rDo-rje gro-lod* shows him at a similar point in the ritual, i.e. in the traditional position at the moment of effecting the desired influence on the adversary.

One of the specific functions that the *rDo-rje-gro-lod* form of Padmasambhava is supposed to perform is the suppression of the *sri*.¹⁶ This is a vast class of spirits¹⁷ who are generally malevolent in nature and who affect many aspects of daily life. If they are not controlled, they will cause varieties of harm. The kinds of things the *sri* may affect are indicated by their names, for example, *Pho-sri* (*Sri* of man), *Mo-sri* (*Sri* of woman), *Chung-sri* (*Sri* of young [child]), *Dur-sri* (*Sri* of grave), *bTsan-sri* (*Sri* of nobility), *dGra-sri* (*Sri* of Enemy), *Dam-sri* (*Sri* of vows), *rNal-'byor-pa 'i-dam-sri* (*Sri* of vows of the [Buddhist] devotee), *Med-sri* (*Sri* of not being), and so on. The best description of the actions of the *sri* came from the Reverend N. Jigme when he stated that "they just mess things up." Implicit in this are accidents, errors, failures, illness and a variety of other mishaps. The *phur-pa* ritual is intended to avert these before they happen, or if they have already occurred or are in the process of occurring, to correct the situation or stop the action.

Another aspect of Padmasambhava's nature, his ability to transform himself into different forms, accounts for his representation as the *yi-dam* *rTa-mgrin* (*Hayagrīva*) in a *rNying-ma-pa* painting that Tucci illustrates.¹⁸ This is highly significant because one of the more common features of the *phur-pa* is a *rTa-mgrin* association. Thus, since in *rNying-ma-pa* iconographic theory, *rTa-mgrin* is Padmasambhava, Padmasambhava can be *phur-pa*. This multiple association would install in the *phur-pa* the effectiveness of the master exorcist himself and give it

¹⁵ Helmut Hoffmann, *The Religions of Tibet*, New York, 1961, his illustration number 8.

¹⁶ Nebesky-Wojtkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, p. 516.

¹⁷ For the names of some, see Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 715.

¹⁸ Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, pls. 149-150, p. 548.

greater power over the evils that it must vanquish. It has not been possible to determine if this association of Padmasambhava and rTa-mgrin has carried over to other sects of Tibetan Buddhism. However, since large portions of the rNying-ma-pa doctrine are disavowed by other schools, it seems unlikely that this particular concept would have been transmitted in isolation. In addition, such a theory has the effect of demonstrating the superiority of Padmasambhava, an admission that the other schools are unlikely to accept. Thus, it may be assumed that the association of Padmasambhava with rTa-mgrin would be in effect only for *phur-pa* made for rNying-ma-pa use. One should be cautioned, however, that until such time as the oral traditions that are passed from preceptor to disciple are known in detail, it would be unwise to make any final assumptions.

For the rNying-ma-pa, and at least as an underlying basis for the rest of the Tibetan Buddhist sects, Guru Padmasambhava holds a fundamental position in the *phur-pa* iconology. He was, in effect, the popularization of the ritual for the Buddhists, able to transform himself into rTa-mgrin, one of the principal deities associated with the ritual. One of his forms is the personification of the ritual and it is this form with which officiants of certain lineages may identify, thus becoming Padmasambhava. Further, there is a very rare and specialized form of *phur-pa* that is in the form of one of Padmasambhava's principal attributes, the *khatvāṅga* (Figures 5, 60-64, to be discussed later). In summary, it is quite proper to say that the *phur-pa* and the *phur-pa* ritual literally ARE Padmasambhava (Also see Appendix III).

rNying-ma-pa Tutelaries:

It has been noted that Phur-pa is one of the rNying-ma-pa tutelary deities whose duty as a *yi-dam* is to protect the practitioners and to guide them along the difficult path towards enlightenment. Li An-che has given a list of the tutelaries (sGrub-pa bKa' brgyad) and their principal characteristics,¹⁹ which is summarized below. He notes that the first five are of the nature of otherworldliness, and the last three of worldliness.

¹⁹ Li An-che, "Rāñ-ma-pa: the Early Form of Lamaism", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1948, p. 147.

DEITY	ALTAR SYMBOL	ABOLISHES	GIVES ATTAINMENT OF
'Jam-dpal sku'i lha	dark yellow triangle	haughtiness	wisdom of universal
Padma gSung gi lha	dark blue triangle	jealousy	wisdom of discernment
Yang-dag thugs gyi lha	greenish triangle	anger	wisdom of mirror-like reflection (introspection)
Che Mchog yon-tan gyi lha (See Figure 103)	dark brown triangle	ignorance	wisdom of realizing true nature of phenomena
Phur-pa 'Phrin las lha	dark blue triangle	jealousy	wisdom of accomplishment
Ma-mo Drag-sngags lha	bloody sea	untoward accidents	prayer and propitiation
dMod-pa Drag-sngags lha	fire from navel	evils and demons	prayer and propitiation
'Jig-rten mChod-bstod lha	secret cemetery	evils and demons	prayer and propitiation

One aspect of this group is not apparent from the list as presented here. In his English rendition of the names of the deities, Li does not follow his normal pattern of translation for Padma gSung gi lha, but calls the deity "The Word of the Horse-headed Lord." This is a reference to rTa-mgrin or Hayagrīva who is one of the deities associated with the *phur-pa*, and, as has just been mentioned, can be a manifestation of Padmasambhava. This association is further complicated by the fact that this particular deity is also of the *padmakula* of Amitābha (see Appendix I), and both Padmasambhava and Hayagrīva are held to be manifestations of Avalokiteśvara. Further, an aspect of Phur-pa 'Phrin las lha is identified with Padma gSung gi lha (see below, *dgra-lha* section). Thus, we get a situation in which these deities are all identical and, it could be argued that any or all were present in the *phur-pa*. This realization is not surprising, nor is it at all unexpected. On the contrary, this is the nature of *sahaja* realization (literally, "born together"), and it must be argued that any emphasis on a particular deity in the iconology of the *phur-pa*, with the exception of Phur-pa himself, would be in error.

Another aspect of this series of *yi-dam* is the emphasis on the triangle as the symbol of the altar. The triangle as an iconomorph has not been studied in its relation to Buddhism (except for its occurrence in the Japanese Womb Maṇḍala), and it is not possible to give a clear idea of

its full significance in the present context; but repeated use in connection with this series of deities, in contrast to the rarity of its use in Buddhist iconography, serves to suggest a close relationship between the *phur-pa* cycles and the general nature of the rNying-ma-pa *yi-dam*. The fact that a variation of Phur-pa occurs in the series of *yi-dam* only serves to reinforce this assumption. It may be suggested that the “jail” idea of the use of the triangle is, at least, part of the symbolism, since all of the *yi-dam* are intended to function as guardians, and if the jail motif is present for one of them, it is very likely that it will be the same for the others.

Bön-po:

It is the present consensus of opinion that the source of the *phur-pa* rituals had its ultimate origins in the pre-Buddhist phase of the Bön religion. Unfortunately, investigation of the latter has only begun and, as of yet, too little is known to be of much use in determining the real source of the *phur-pa* rituals. The excerpts from the relatively late *gZi-brjid* translated by D. L. Snellgrove as *The Nine Ways of Bon*²⁰ give a tantalizing suggestion of the possible extent of *phur-pa* rituals in Bön practice, especially the second and third sections which describe the basic aspects of a variety of rituals. However, the text generally omits specific implements and one must read into the word “strike,” an action which occurs at the apparently climactic point of some of the rituals, “strike with a *phur-pa*.”²¹ In the third section, “The Way of the Shen of Illusion,” the defeat of the gods of illusion is clearly a ritual using a *phur-pa* since both the implement²² and the triangular nature of the wound²³ that it makes are mentioned specifically. The description of the rituals is cryptic at best; it is obvious that the text was intended to be accompanied by very extensive oral teachings and presupposes a thorough background in the practical aspects of Bön-po ritual. The basic outline of the actual ritual, seems to be, calling the spirit by means of incantations, promising it desirable things in the form of offerings, getting it into a properly guarded circle previously prepared on the ground, forcing it to stay there and striking it with the *phur-pa*. There are, obviously, many details of operation that go into such a ritual, but they are only obscurely suggested in the text. Yet, even this small bit of information demonstrates only one point of obvious difference, and that is the variation between the circle in the Bön-po system versus the triangle in the dGe-lugs-pa version. Considering the sketchy nature of the information on the Bön-po ceremony, the iron triangle may well be one of the “proper implements” mentioned in the text.

The importance of Phur-pa as a deity in Bön-po practice is also well known.²⁴ He is placed in the group of five deities known as the *gsas-mkhar mchog-nga*, “five perfect [ones] [of] *gsas* palace,”²⁵ which seem to act in a capacity similar to that of the Buddhist *yi-dam*.

²⁰ D. L. Snellgrove, *The Nine Ways of Bon*, London, 1967.

²¹ Snellgrove, *The Nine Ways of Bon*, pp. 35 and 87 especially, but the whole of Section II, “The Way of the Shen of the Visual World”, strongly suggests *phur-pa* rituals in that the main emphasis is on quelling evil spirits.

²² Snellgrove, *The Nine Ways of Bon*, p. 106 (line 39) and p. 107.

²³ Snellgrove, *The Nine Ways of Bon*, pp. 108–109.

²⁴ Samten G. Karmay, *The Treasury of Good Sayings: A Tibetan History of Bon*, London, 1972, p. 45, fn. 2.

²⁵ Karmay, *The Treasury of Good Sayings: A Tibetan History of Bon*, p. 45, fn. 2.

SECTION I

Phur-pa iconography:

Phur-pa have seemingly endless varieties of formal variations, yet it is possible to determine within that diversity both elements that are consistently present and definite patterns of permutation of the iconographic theme. *Phur-pa* range in size from an inch or so in length to what amounts to sculptures of *phur-pa* over six feet in height, and in quality, from twigs with rough indications of the basic forms to sculpture of the highest quality. In addition to these variations, there are a number of iconographic themes which recur with a broad spectrum of permutations. Thus, to a casual observer, it may well seem that no two *phur-pa* are alike, but this is definitely not the case. On the contrary, there are certain forms that can only be called common and others that occur with considerable frequency. Stylistic and aesthetic considerations must also be mentioned as factors in the appearance of any given *phur-pa*, and it must be pointed out that there is a considerable range of apparent variation to the same iconomorph. Stylistic variation itself has three factors: regionalism, chronological position and level of patronage, each of which may contribute to the differences. Generally, it has not been possible to state the region in which any specific *phur-pa* originated, although exceptions will be noted in individual discussions below. Without exception, only the most general estimates of the date of individual pieces have been given.

Phur-pa:

Full representations of the deity Phur-pa are quite rare, and while the iconography of those that are known is quite consistent, it is, on the whole, more closely related to the Nepalese complex of Samvara forms than any other group of Buddhist deities. For example, the virtually unique phenomenon of the dangling pair of second legs seen as part of the anatomy of Phur-pa (Figures 6 and 7) may be compared to the same feature of "Viśvarūpasamvara" (Figures 71 to 74).²⁶ In his *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*,²⁷ Tucci has given the basic iconography, following an unspecified liturgy, which is summarized here. The principal pair of arms embraces his *prajñā*, and presses a *phur-pa* between the palms, the upper right hand holds a nine-pointed *vajra*, the second right hand holds a five-pointed *vajra*, the upper left hand is in a "threatening *mudrā*" and the

²⁶ See Section II, *Iconographic Considerations*.

²⁷ Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 588.

second left hand holds a trident (broken, in the case of the sculpture illustrated).²⁸ Tucci also mentions that the deity has six arms (attributes already specified), four legs and three heads. Further, he states that the deity is an aspect of Heruka. The foregoing description covers, with one minor exception, the physical aspects of the deity illustrated. The only deviation is the replacement of the “threatening gesture,” *tarjanī mudrā*, with some sort of foliage held in the hand. It is entirely possible that the specific foliage depicted in the hand would have the same symbolism as the *tarjanī mudrā*, but it is impossible to demonstrate this at the present stage in the study of Vajrayāna iconographics.

One of the most important points about the figure of Phur-pa is the nature of the hair arrangement and the very specific position of the snake that coils around it. This will be one of the determining features of subsequent identifications of the deity Phur-pa as he is represented on the handle of the implement *phur-pa*. Also important are the presence of three faces and the specific nature of the physical characteristics of the *phur-pa* that the deity holds in his hands. The presence of his *yum* indicates that he personifies the realization of the non-duality of duality, and in this sense, he is identical to the central concepts of the Universal of later Buddhist theory. The *prajñā* holds the *ghaṇṭā* in her right hand and the *kapāla* in her left, a slight variation from the more usual *kapāla* and flaying knife, but still one that is in the normal limits of Buddhist iconics. With this figure as a starting point, it is possible to begin to examine some of the *phur-pa* that have been selected for inclusion in this study (see also Appendix IV).

Category I, Phurpa's *phur-pa*

Example 1 (Figure 8):

Material: wood
 Techniques: carving, polychromy
 Length: approximately 14 inches?
 Condition: shows considerable signs of wear
 Region of Origin: unknown
 Date: 17th–18th century

The *phur-pa* that Phur-pa holds is frequently represented in actuality as a separate implement.²⁹ From this example, the basic structure of the *phur-pa* as it is used by the Buddhists may be determined. The blade is triangular and immediately above it there is a *chu-srin* (*makara*) from whose open mouth the blade issues. Also coming from the mouth are serpents whose entwined bodies make up the ornamentation of the surface of the blade. This is essentially a symbol of auspiciousness, the *nāgas* being the guardians of the treasure of the Buddhist cosmogony and their emanation from the mouth of the *makara* a symbol of the *makara*'s ability to produce such treasures. The “endless knots” of the upper portion of the handle are also

²⁸ It must be noted that Tucci describes four left hands plus a pair of hands.

²⁹ Meredith, “The Phurbu: The Use and Symbolism of the Tibetan Magic Dagger”, flatly states that this is a Bön-po instrument, overlooking the *makara*, a common Buddhist symbol which she had identified as a *garuḍa*, and the presence of the two “endless knots” which are common Buddhist auspicious symbols. In addition, she cites the inscription on the blade as identifying the *phur-pa* as Bön, but there is nothing intrinsic in the inscription to identify it as Bön [the photograph of the implement that is available to me shows most of the inscription but not enough to make a full translation. However, from the portion that is to be seen, there is nothing that even suggests that there might be a Bön emphasis in it]. See Meredith's plate 1, etc.

symbols of auspiciousness as well as the endlessness of the universe. These are well known Buddhist symbols which are unnecessary to discuss in this paper. The handle of the *phur-pa* is octagonal in shape, and at the top of the handle there is a small conical protuberance. As shall be shown in the following, this element is a symbol of the deity Phur-pa and thus, further reiterates the nature of the *phur-pa* in question.

Example 2 (Figure 9):

Material: iron
Techniques: Casting and chasing
Length: 4 inches
Condition: Rusty, minimal signs of wear
Region of Origin: unknown
Date: 20th century?

A tiny version of the same type serves to identify some of the simplifications of form that occur on some *phur-pa*. This little iron *phur-pa* is of the type used to surround the iron triangle when a ritual with the full paraphernalia is being performed. It seems to be of very recent manufacture in that it shows almost no signs of use, in contrast to the implement shown in Figure 17, which is known to have been actively used for several generations. The small iron version has no *makara*, a noticeable lack that apparently is common to the miniature versions of the implement, and the endless knots have been reduced to simple geometric conventions. These latter conventions will be found as the representation of the knot symbol on a large percentage of *phur-pa* and its use is apparently very widespread. The grip portion of the implement has a few incised lines that may indicate lotus petals, but their interpretation is uncertain. At the end of the handle, there is a conical protrusion exactly similar in nature to the previous example. Actually, the most notable difference between this and the previous piece is the lack of the representation of the *chu-srin* and, based on personal observation only, it is possible to suggest that this omission is a characteristic of the miniature *phur-pa*.

Example 3 (Figure 10)³⁰

Material: wood (rough twig with bark intact in some areas)
Technique: crude carving
Length: about 5 inches
Condition: as if new, some deterioration at point
Region of Origin: Eastern Tibet/Western China
Date: about 1935–1949 (collected by a missionary active at that time)

Simple and rude in the extreme, *phur-pa* made from small twigs nevertheless convey something of the same vitality as their more elaborate counterparts and exhibit the same basic structure. From these much simplified versions, one can get a clear idea of the true essential elements of the implement. The blade, vivified with the *bija* “*Hri*” is the most carefully carved portion of the *phur-pa*, the proportions of the taper and triangular cross section maintained with considerable accuracy. Above the blade there is no *makara* nor obvious endless knot. However, because of the emphasis on the uncarved knob at the upper end, it may be suggested that this and the uncarved portion between the blade and the handle does represent an endless knot. The handle portion is shaped similarly to more accomplished versions and gives a rather competent impression of the whole. The conical protrusion at the top of the implement is missing. On the

³⁰ Drawing is based on notes made from lost examples.

basis of the foregoing, it is apparent that the most important part of the *phur-pa* is the “business end”, the blade, which in the case of the much abbreviated version under discussion is the only portion that had been made with any great care. Several of these “twig” *phur-pa* are known to have come from the Sino-Tibetan interface region of Kham and all are apparently of very recent origin, between 1935 and 1949.

Category II, *Phur-pa* with representations of Phur-pa:

By far the largest class of *phur-pa*, this group constitutes perhaps fifty to sixty percent of the several hundred which I have examined. It should also be noted that, at least according to dGe-lugs-pa tradition, all *phur-pa* are Phur-pa, whether he is actually represented or not (see discussion above). This classification may be further subdivided into the following subtypes:

1. *Phur-pa* with plain handles terminating with a head of the deity.
2. *Phur-pa* with double lotus handles terminating with a head of the deity.
3. *Phur-pa* with *vajra* handles terminating with a head of the deity.
4. *Phur-pa* with open-work handles terminating with a head of the deity.
5. *Phur-pa* with the body of the deity serving as the handle.
6. *Phur-pa* with the body of the deity serving as the handle and a *dGra-lha* riding a *khyung* (*garuḍa*) above the main figure.
7. *Phur-pa* with the body of the deity serving as the handle and a *khyung* above the main figure.

As will be shown, there is a considerable variation within each of the above subtypes, yet there is enough consistency to each to suggest that each subtype constitutes a separate iconomorphism. It has not been possible to determine in detail whether the variations are textually prescribed, dictated by oral tradition or simply selected out of a well known vocabulary of conventions. Discussions with various lamas on this point seem to indicate that all three are true to some extent, but that the last, personal preference, actually predominates. Again, this is mainly dGe-lugs-pa information and may not hold true for other schools, and it must be remembered that I do not have information regarding which school employed most of the implements discussed here. Thus, it has been impossible to form categories based on that criterion.

Another aspect of the *phur-pa* with representations of the deity Phur-pa as well as subsequent categories is the uniformity of certain facial conventions that occur on the three-headed varieties. Each of the three faces shows a quite specific expression and, while the sequence is not always consistent, the same countenances are repeated on most instruments in spite of the wide range of other variations. Because this consideration cuts across the typological groups that constitute the main subject of this study, I have dealt with it as a separate item (see Appendix II).

SUBTYPE I, *PHUR-PA* WITH PLAIN HANDLES TERMINATING
WITH A HEAD OF THE DEITY:

Example 4 (Figure 11):

Material: iron with bronze inlay, copper and bronze overlays
Techniques: Casting; chasing work in facial features
Length: 12¾ inches
Condition: shows considerable signs of wear
Region of Origin: unknown
Date: 18th-19th century (or possibly earlier?)

This example is representative of one of the most common types of *phur-pa*. It has a deeply channeled triangular blade (the holes in the upper points of the blade are of undetermined use), which has a copper serpent to the proper right of the *makara*'s head and a bronze one (visible in photograph) to the left. The *makara* is summary in treatment, but still has the distinctive curling snout, wide open mouth and prominent eyes and ears that characterize Tibetan representations. The handle has the simplified versions of the endless knot, separated by an octagonal shaft that tapers uniformly toward both knots. Originally, the knots were inlaid with bronze in the pattern that may be seen in the photograph, but considerable wear and frequent polishings have left only traces of the material. At the terminus of the shaft of the handle, there is the representation of the head of the deity, Phur-pa, who is easily distinguished by the presence of the serpent coiled about his hair in the manner previously discussed. Compared to the previous non-anthropomorphic examples, it might be thought that the head is a simple addition illustrating the presence of the deity, but given the concepts presented in the foregoing iconographic discussion, it must be concluded that it indicates not just the presence of the deity, but the deity himself as the implement. Thus, the *phur-pa* and Phur-pa are the same.

The style of the sculpture of this instrument is typical of many that I have seen, but it has not been possible to determine the region of origin or to give anything more than the most general indication of dating. The facial expressions will be discussed in Appendix II.

Example 5 (Figure 12):

Material: iron, with copper earrings
Techniques: casting and chasing
Length: 12¼ inches
Condition: shows slight wear; possibly originally polychromed
Region of Origin: gTsang district
Date: Last half of the 16th century, first half of the 17th

While closely related in iconographic convention to the previous example, this implement demonstrates two additional features in the chased finishing. On the handle appear conventional lotus petals at the upper portion of the shaft and small triangles at the lower terminus. This gives rise to the question, since such a finely finished example of this type of implement has such elements, would less carefully completed ones have such symbols implicit in their fabrication? While this question may not be directly answered, the presence of the eight sides (= eight lotus petals, which is the usual number) and the beaded ring at the juncture of the shaft of the handle and the endless knot symbol (a common convention used in conjunction with the representation of lotuses) seems to indicate that the lotus is in fact implied in the handle. The triangular "lotus petal" is most unusual, but the triangle is strongly associated with protective deities of both the rNying-ma-pa and the Sa-skya-pa, and does not raise any particular problem.

The other feature of this *phur-pa* is the high quality of craftsmanship that is apparent in the face of the deity. This is only one of several examples that will be discussed in the course of this paper which

serve to demonstrate the artistic attainment that could be reached in these implements. One of the implications of this fact is, of course, the difference in the levels of patronage and, what may be assumed to be the relative economic position of patrons. This view must not be taken in its simplest vein since these implements were among those transmitted in initiation rituals. It is quite possible that the present holder of any given implement was the most worthy recipient rather than the wealthiest. Thus, in the discussion of patronage, it must be remembered that such considerations only concern the original fabrication, rather than the continued use. As in previous examples, the facial features of the implement will be treated in Appendix II.

SUBTYPE 2, *PHUR-PA* WITH DOUBLE LOTUS HANDLES TERMINATING
WITH A HEAD OF THE DEITY:

Example 6 (Figure 13):

Material: wood

Techniques: carving; originally polychromed?

Height: approximately 7 inches

Condition: shows considerable signs of wear; discolored from incense smoke

Region of Origin: Central Tibet?

Date: 18th–19th century

In spite of its small size, this example is quite vigorously carved and is typical of another sizable subtype of *phur-pa*. The principal concern is the opposing lotus petal motif on the shaft portion of the handle. This element is very common on other types of *phur-pa* as well, and by its use in this location, it seems to be equated to both the plain and *vajra* handled examples. All three handle types normally occur between the two endless knot designs and sometimes, the double lotus, with the directions of the petals reversed, occurs as part of the design of the center of the *vajra* handle. It is notable that the *makara* does not appear. While its absence is infrequent and there does not seem to be a consistent pattern of omission, except in the case of small *phur-pa*, the fact may possibly have symbolic significance.

The triangular base demonstrates one of the types normally used for the *phur-pa* when a base is present. There are three distinct kinds, each occurring only rarely. One is an open pan-like triangle with a flat base for receiving materials used in the rituals. I have never actually seen one of this type and have only been told about it by various lamas. The second is the present type, which is used as a stand for the *phur-pa*, but from which the *phur-pa* may be removed during the course of the rites. In the third type, there are sculptures of *Phur-pa* on a triangular base, in which the deity's lower half is represented as a blade instead of legs. The bases for such images are usually firmly attached to the figure, in spite of the fact that the deity is represented as the implement form instead of the completely anthropomorphic one. This latter version is very rare, and it has been impossible to obtain a photograph of an example.³¹

The skull tiara that the deity wears has been present in very abbreviated form on the two previous examples and occurs on nearly all of those following. The crown is commonly seen on deities of the *yi-dam* class and is one of the *chos-dbang* of the initiations to the worship of this class of deity.³² This feature is intended to indicate the high level of tantric attainment that the deity offers his worshippers and, in addition, indicates his powers as a protector.

³¹ Alice Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, Tokyo, 1962 (reprint), Pl. LI, b. While not illustrated in this paper, this image is discussed as Example 46.

³² The term *chos-dbang* defies simple translation. Literally, it means "power of *dharma*" but it refers to the various utensils that are used in the worship of a deity and implicit in their use is the idea that the right (*dbang*) to use them has been given and taught to the practitioner by his special teacher. This further implies the presentation of the esoteric knowledge of the meaning of the worship, the ritual and the method of attainment. *Phur-pa* rituals are transmitted in this manner. It should also be noted that it is not necessary for the implement to be physically present for the rituals to be performed. This information was given to me by the Reverend N. Jigme.

SUBTYPE 3, *PHUR-PA* WITH *VAJRA* HANDLES TERMINATING
WITH A HEAD OF THE DEITY:

Example 7 (Figure 14):

Material: iron
Techniques: casting, some chasing; crude workmanship
Length: 8¼ inches
Condition: considerable wear and discoloration
Region of Origin: unknown (folk tradition?)
Date: 18th–19th century?

The key feature of this example is the presence of the *vajra* in the middle of the handle. This is the third major type of handle shaft that occurs in *phur-pa* that seems to follow the same general theme. As has been noted in the discussion of the name of the deity mThar-byed rDo-rje-gzhon-nu, *rdo-rje* or *vajra* can refer to *phur-pa*, and in the sense of identifying a weapon used in protecting the religion and its followers, the terms may be nearly synonymous. Yet, the *phur-pa* is distinctly a separate subtype of *rdo-rje*, and while it may have implicit in it the symbolism of the *rdo-rje*, it also has its own special significance as a protective device. This particular type of handle occurs in several types of *phur-pa* and may actually be the most common type of handle shaft. It is a curiosity to be noted that the vast majority of implements that I have seen of this particular type (*vajra* handle associated with the head of the deity which has a snake coiled about the hair), have been of fairly crude manufacture. Further, it is common for this type to have the depiction of the hair modified in some manner, rather than a relatively clear depiction of the hair and snake.

Example 8 (Figure 15):

Material: light colored metal
Techniques: cast, carved and chased
Length: 9½ inches
Condition: no particular signs of wear
Region of origin: unknown
Date: very recent or new

This example demonstrates a common variation in the treatment of the handle in that the *vajra* which makes up the shaft portion of the handle has a double lotus motif in its center. This feature is common in some types of *vajras* made in Tibet and should be considered well within the range of stylistic variation. In spite of the crudity of execution, considerable detail has been developed in the treatment of the endless knots and the head of the *chu-srin*. This stands in sharp contrast to the summary manipulation of the surface of the *rdo-rje* and the curiously rough finish of the blade, which looks almost as if it had been repaired after being broken. However, I have not been able to determine if this was done, except in the case of *phur-pa* that were thought to be most effective, and subsequently, worthy of repair. In the present example, it may simply be a matter of poor casting.

Example 9 (Figure 16):

Material: steel
Techniques: casting, chasing, polishing
Length: 8⅞ inches
Condition: much worn from use (*bija* on blade have been almost completely worn away)
Region of Origin: unknown
Date: 18th century?

Not all *phur-pa* of this subtype are of the poor quality seen in the two preceding examples, as demonstrated by the careful, vigorous workmanship seen here. It also has a rather uncommon variety of blade in that the side grooves are absent and there is a gentle curving outline to the edge. Chased on the surface of each side of the blade is a *bija*: (?) *i* appears on the right front, *phu* on the left front and *tho* is on the back. The *makara* and the endless knots are of the kind already discussed as are the three faces of the head, but the treatment of the hair is different. It is arranged in three distinct coils, similar to those frequently used for the Ādi-Buddha, rDo-rje-chang. The serpent is coiled between the first and second layers. This is a specific reference to the deity of the *phur-pa*, Phur-pa, as the Ādi-Buddha, and exemplifies commonly practiced identity transferrals that are carried out in Buddhist initiations. The implication is, of course, that the deity is the Ādi-Buddha and that the power of the Ādi-Buddha is also behind the *phur-pa*.

SUBTYPE 4, PHUR-PA WITH OPEN WORK HANDLES TERMINATING WITH A HEAD OF THE DEITY:

Example 10 (Figure 17):

Material: iron blade, bronze handle

Techniques: casting, chasing and forging

Length: 10⁵/₈ inches

Condition: well worn

Region of Origin: not known. In possession of a dGe-lugs-pa monk in New Delhi.

Date: said to be about two hundred years old (ca. 1770?)

This veteran of many rituals exhibits a number of variant characteristics that make it well worthy of notice. The blade is of forged iron and consists of three rather thin blades attached radially to a round shaft that extends upwards, through the handle and into the head of the deity. There is a chased triangular or saw-toothed motif on the edge of the blade, and the serpents that might have issued from the mouth of the *makara* are absent. The shaft of the handle has an open-work design that seems meant to show that the iron shaft rises into the head of the deity. (For another example where this occurs, see Figure 35). Around it there is considerable space which visually reiterates its presence and emphasizes its passing through into the head. The implication is that the deity is the source of power for the actions of the blade and that the shaft is a direct transmission line between the two. Both of the endless knots are also open and exhibit much of the same characteristics as the shaft. The head of the deity has the same triple coil hair arrangement as the previous example.

SUBTYPE 5, PHUR-PA WITH THE BODY OF THE DEITY SERVING AS THE HANDLE:

Example 11 (Figure 18):

Material: sandalwood

Technique: carving; no trace of polychrome

Length: 8¹/₄ inches

Condition: extreme wear; all six arms are broken off; surfaces worn down through use; blackened by constant contact with mixture of incense smoke and oil (butter or from hands)

Region of Origin: Western Tibet

Date: 14th century or earlier

This *phur-pa* begins a category of implements which have an image of the upper portion of the figure of Phur-pa as the handle, or at least part of it. This particular piece depicts Phur-pa in the Kashmiro-

Tibetan idiom of the 13th and 14th centuries, and is by far the earliest example that has come to my attention. It was made at a time when Kashmiri artists had ceased to come to Tibet because of the Moslem domination of their homeland, but when the Kashmiri idiom was still viable as the main style of Western Tibetan craftsmen. One may note particular features, the type of trilunate headdress, the rectilinearity of the faces and the musculature of the torso as distinctive of this stylistic mode. It has been possible to follow the history of the exodus of this particular *phur-pa* backwards, through a series of owners, to a Tibetan refugee who left Tibet through Ladakh, but was probably from the mNga-ris district. The regional origin of this individual reiterates the stylistic evidence for the provenance of the piece.

In this example, it is notable that the *makara* is absent and that there is a much different shape to the blade than the later norm. Conclusions may not be drawn on the basis of a single, chance survival, but it is enough to alert one to the possibility that there may have been substantial differences between the early *phur-pa* and the later versions. The blade is very rounded, with only suggestions of the flatness of any given side. It terminates in a much blunted point, slightly above which there is a line demarcating the lower portion of the blade from the rest. This is apparently where the blade was placed in some sort of a holder which protected it from the heavy quantities of incense that the rest of the blade was exposed to, perhaps a stand, as in Example 6 (Figure 13) or a metal tip as on the Bön-po example (Figure 89). The crease of flesh at the waist determines the difference between the abdomen of the figure and the blade, and the figure is proportioned in such a manner that the length of the blade suggests the full length of the legs, a simple suggestion of the unity of the being, even though his lower portion is that of a dagger rather than anthropomorphic.

It is obviously impossible to discuss the attributes that the deity would have held, even though it may be suggested that one of them would have been the *phur-pa* held in front of the chest with the principal right and left hands. The type of crown that this particular representation of the deity wears is probably the same as that of the tiara of skulls worn by previously described representations. However, there has been no study of the function and symbolism of the crown that would support this suggestion, which must remain conjectural for the present. This representation of Phur-pa has the same variation in the expression of the three faces seen in other examples, and will be included in the separate treatment found in Appendix II. It should be noted that in this early example, the hair coil on top of the head is formed by the endless knot.

Example 12 (Figures 19 and 20):

Material: light colored wood

Techniques: carving; no trace of polychrome

Length: 11 inches

Condition: light wear, some broken elements, especially the mortised-in nose of the *makara*

Region of Origin: probably gTsang district

Date: 19th century (collected in the 1930s)

The version of Phur-pa present in this implement is a two-armed, one-headed icon that is seldom encountered in iconographic descriptions, yet the presence of the *phur-pa* held between the hands is a determining factor. There are several one-headed (or one-faced) versions of the *phur-pa* implement (Figures 36, 37, 38), but it has not been possible to determine a positive iconographic relationship to any particular deity. It may be that they are simply versions of this particular form of Phur-pa. Here the blade is nearly obscured by the intertwined serpents that descend from the mouth of the *makara*. Between the torso of Phur-pa and the blade there is an endless knot and, on the reverse of the figure there are traces of wings that protrude from the sides of the shoulders (see Figures 22 and 23 for a six-armed version with wings). The wings are characteristic of the Heruka class of deities and, as has been previously noted, Phur-pa is considered by the rNying-ma-pa to be one of the Herukas. One interesting feature of this subtype is that it is only the Heruka examples that have consistently had dedications placed in the backs of the figures. Only one other implement known to me, of a non-Heruka type, has any evidence of having

had a dedication, but in that case, it had been long removed, presumably in a devivification ceremony which had taken place before disposing of the implement (Figure 48). The five-skull tiara is again present, and while the serpent coiled around the hair is absent, there is one coiled about the shoulders on the back of the deity, but its disposition on the front is not apparent. (It does not become the lower band of the tiara, which one may follow to the knot at the back of the head.)

Example 13 (Figure 21):

Material: iron

Technique: casting and chasing

Length: 11½ inches

Condition: substantial smoothness and softening of the details from wear

Region of Origin: unknown; stylistically, very similar to Example 4 (Figure 11)

The now familiar characteristics of the basic format of the *phur-pa* are varied here by a representation of the deity with three faces and three frontal torsos. The figure wears ornaments composed of serpents entwining the torso. However, there is no clear representation of the snake in the hair. The iconic identity is positively determined by the presence of the *phur-pa* held in the hands of each of the frontal aspects of the deity. This *phur-pa* will be discussed in the section on facial types in Appendix II.

Example 14 (Figures 22 and 23):

Material: bronze

Techniques: casting and some chasing

Length: 6 inches

Condition: apparent wear, but minimal

Region of Origin: unknown

Date: 19th (possibly 20th) century

Heruka Phur-pa as a *phur-pa* characterizes this implement which shows the deity in his full form: only the *prajñā*, as seen in Figure 6, is absent. One important difference is the fact that he holds a different kind of *phur-pa* than has been seen before, having a *vajra* at the upper termination rather than the low, conical shape. The presence of the *vajra*-topped *phur-pa* in the hands of Phur-pa, who is obviously the same as the *phur-pa*, begins to give rise to a series of problems in the identification of any *phur-pa* as representing Mahākāla (see mTa-mgrin emanated *phur-pa* in Part II). Particular features of note are the presence of the human skin used as a cape by the deity, the dedication of the deity through a rectangular opening in the back of the figure and the particular attention paid to the accurate detailing of the anatomy of the bird tail and feathers, also at the back of the figure. In all, this type is probably the clearest and simplest version of Phur-pa as *phur-pa*.

SUBTYPE 6, PHUR-PA WITH THE BODY OF THE DEITY SERVING AS THE HANDLE AND A DGRA-LHA RIDING A KHYUNG ABOVE THE MAIN FIGURE:

Nebesky-Wojkowitz mentions a *hya-rgod phur-pa*,³³ “*phur-pa* of birds of prey”, which the following examples may represent, although there is at present little proof of this association. Only two *phur-pa* of this type have come to light during my examination of hundreds of these implements,³⁴ while in most

³³ Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, p. 18.

³⁴ Compare to an example illustrated by Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, Pl. LIb, which shows a *phur-pa* with a single-faced, full figure, with a *khyung* riding on its head, discussed below as Example 46.

other cases, the example illustrated in this study is one of many similar ones. In both instances, the details of the representations are very close in iconomorphics, in spite of fundamental stylistic differences, and therefore, may be assumed to have similar iconographic interpretations.

Example 15 (Figures 24 and 25):

Material: forged iron, bronze
Techniques: casting, chasing and forging
Length: about 15 inches
Condition: substantial wear; broken at neck of main deity
Region of Origin: unknown
Date: about 16th century

The full and elaborate detailing of this example is the primary key to the understanding of the next *phur-pa* to be shown, where the design is much more abstracted. This piece has an iron blade similar to the *phur-pa* in Figure 17, with its upper portion a shaft that extends into the handle. As in the case of other *phur-pa* with this feature, portions of the handle are open to reveal the iron shaft of the blade passing through them, into the body of the deity. The endless knot is very open and has become almost a lattice-work convention, rather than the full representation of the knot. It was not possible to examine the portion of the *phur-pa* obscured by the cloth, so the juncture of the endless knot and the figure of Phur-pa cannot be discussed. However, the proportions of the knot and of the deity strongly suggest that there may be another element present at that point. It should be noted that the cloth seen in this and some other examples is for wrapping the implement when it is not in use, but it is allowed to hang free, attached by one corner to the upper portion of the *phur-pa* during use. The cloth would not normally be wrapped around the implement in the manner illustrated. The deity, Phur-pa, is of the three-faced, three-bodied variety previously seen.

Above the hair of Phur-pa is a representation of a three-headed, six armed deity of the *dgra-lha* class, riding a *khyung* (*garuḍa*) (Figure 25). These deities have not been widely studied and representations of them are most uncommon (see Appendix I). *dGra-lha* are one of the classes of deities which Padmasambhava was forced to deal with, that is, to “convert” to Buddhism,³⁵ and they are conceived of on both a personal level and on the cosmological level. There are *dgra-lha* which, by their names, may be determined to be personifications of the weather³⁶ and those which are one’s own, usually riding on the right shoulder of the individual.³⁷ Since the *dgra-lha* became protectors of Buddhism by having been converted by Padmasambhava, it would fall logically into the pattern of the protective implement that the *dgra-lha* should be represented accompanying Phur-pa, who was presumably also converted from the pre-Buddhist pantheon. The implication of this inclusion is that the protective powers of the *dgra-lha* are added to those of Phur-pa, thus creating a doubly effective implement. The *khyung* is characterized by the presence of the horns and protuberance, a treasure gem, between them (compare to Figure 93 for a fuller representation) and the figure on its back carries a dagger-like instrument in each of its six hands.

Example 16 (Figure 26):

Material: iron, bronze (possibly octo-alloy?)
Techniques: forging, casting, chasing, inlaying
Length: about 12 inches
Condition: considerable evidence of wear, especially in the softening of the details of the surface
Region of origin: unknown
Date: 16th–17th century

³⁵ Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 729.

³⁶ Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 741, fn. 44.

³⁷ Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, pp. 318–319.

The facial features of the main representation of Phur-pa are repeated on the face above the *khyung*, which serves to suggest that the deity above (i.e., on the *khyung*) is another version of Phur-pa himself. The head with four faces at the top of the handle is too worn to allow analysis, but from its position, it would seem to indicate a cosmogeneric function. Again, the compounding of the deities would work to increase the effective power of the *phur-pa* as a deterrent against evil. One possible theory in relation to this particular implement would be that it forms some sort of *trikāya* of Phur-pa, the Dharmakāya at the top, the Sambhogakāya (as “*phur-pa’i dgra-lha?*”) in the center and the Nirmāṇakāya *phur-pa* as the lower three-fifths of the instrument.

SUBTYPE 7, PHUR-PA WITH THE BODY OF THE DEITY SERVING AS THE
HANDLE AND A KHYUNG ABOVE THE MAIN FIGURE:

Example 17 (Figure 27):

Material: iron

Technique: casting, chasing

Length: not known (about 12 inches?)

Condition: very smooth with much rounding of edges from wear

Region of Origin: unknown

Date: about 17th century

There are many features of this example that are very similar to the preceding piece. However, the absence of the *dgra-lha* on the back of the *khyung* sets it well apart from the others. As has been noted, the rDo-rje gro-lod form of Padmasambhava personifies the *phur-pa* ritual and, for the rNying-ma-pa, Padmasambhava literally is the *phur-pa* and *phur-pa* ritual. This implement is simply an illustration of this iconographic concept. In one of the initiations to the “Fierce Guru”, i.e. Padmasambhava, he is visualized as having a *garuda* on his head.³⁸ This implement combines the standard iconography of Phur-pa with a distinctive element of the “Fierce Guru” aspect of Padmasambhava, effectively combining the two iconomorphs into a single image. The iconological statement is that the elements of the ritual, the implement, the teachings, the Guru (immediately present), the original preceptor (Padmasambhava) and the practitioner are all identical (see Appendix III and also, Example 46, for a parallel example).

Category III, rTa-mgrin/Hayagrīva Emanated *Phur-pa*

PART I: PHUR-PA WITH HORSE HEAD TOPS

In the foregoing section, the *phur-pa* that have been discussed show a consistent pattern of iconography, reiterating an easily interpretable purpose. It is my thesis that this pattern of iconography and clarity of purpose is present in all *phur-pa*, even those that cannot be easily understood at present. These same elements will be seen in the following section. So far, the discussion has centered on those implements that may be identified as having Phur-pa as the principal deity, but it now turns to those that might seem to have other principal deities. Yet, it must be remembered that in at least one tradition, all *phur-pa* are Phur-pa. Thus, the problems of the relationship of the deities involved and the interpretation of their relationship to Phur-pa arises.

³⁸ C.C.Chang (trans.), *Esoteric Teachings of the Tibetan Tantra*, n.p., 1961, pp. 3–4.

rTa-mgrin (Hayagrīva):

One version of the *trikāya* system as practiced by the rNying-ma-pa has Samantabhadra as Dharmakāya, rTa-mgrin (Hayagrīva) as Sambhogakāya and Padmasambhava as Nirmāṇakāya.³⁹ This serves to explain the relationship of rTa-mgrin to the *phur-pa*, and is the principal reason for his relatively common representation as the presiding deity of the *phur-pa*. He is the manifestation of the power behind the hierarchy of lesser emanations of the deities involved. It has been noted previously that Padmasambhava can be considered as Hayagrīva, that Padmasambhava as rDo-rje gro-lod is identical to Phur-pa and that Phur-pa is considered to be present in all *phur-pa*, regardless of their iconography. It has also been noted that rTa-mgrin functions as one of the tutelaries of the rNying-ma-pa, and it will be shown that another of the tutelaries, Phur-pa 'Phrin las lha, has an aspect that may be directly equated to rTa-mgrin (see Appendix I). Lest the reader think this redundant, it should be pointed out that this is exactly the nature of the subject, emphasis through repetition of closely related variables. It is, in fact, the state of non-differentiation put into practice, as interpreted by practitioners of *sahaja* realization.

The full form of the deity rTa-mgrin is seen in Figure 28. He is depicted three-faced and six-armed and is in the company of his *prajñā*, who holds a *kapāla* in her left hand. His heads are crowned by a triple version of the five-skulled tiara indicating his esoteric initiation, and on the top of the central head is the head of a horse. On his back are a pair of wings, identifying the Heruka nature of his being. He is adorned with the usual tantric ornaments, e.g. garlands of skulls, freshly severed heads, *nāga* ornaments, etc. Five of his hands are shown in the generalizing *tarjanī mudrā*, while the sixth holds a *kapāla*. The presence of the female in intercourse with the main figure is the usual reference to the combination of *prajñā* (the female) and *upāya* (the male) into the ultimate gnosis, *sahaja*. In short, there is nothing in particular to link this deity in his principal form to the *phur-pa* or *phur-pa* rituals. The evidence for this association comes from *phur-pa* and must be considered as internal to the *phur-pa*. The various lamas with whom I have discussed this problem de-emphasized the presence of rTa-mgrin and pointed out the continued presence of Phur-pa.

Example 18 (Figure 29):

Material: copper

Technique: casting, chasing

Length: not known, approximately 6–8 inches?

Condition: little sign of use or wear

Region of Origin: Central Tibet? (Nepalese workmanship)

Date: late 19th century (collected in the early 20th century)

In this example, the upper half of the *rdo-rje* handle has been omitted and replaced by a lotus pedestal supporting the deity. The deity is full figure with an emphatic *lalitāsana* pose. The lower portion of the implement is well within the norms that have already been established, but the upper portion, with its representation of the deity, presents a serious problem. The deity, exactly as shown, does not occur in any iconographic text or representation known to me, and it exhibits key characteristics of two “different” deities. These features are the *phur-pa* held between the pressed together principal hands (in the arms

³⁹ Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 548.

around his *prajñā*) and the three horses' heads issuing from the top of the head. The *phur-pa* is, of course, the symbol of Phur-pa and the horse heads are the symbol of rTa-mgrin. Other features of the representation are potentially possible on either deity, e.g. the Heruka wings, presence of the *prajña*, *lalitāsana*, etc. Even the other *mudrā*, a flat palm with the thumb crossing the center to the juncture of the ring and middle fingers is a common, generalizing *mudrā*, used when the specific attributes are not shown. It has not been possible to find any representations of a deity that could specifically be identified as rTa-mgrin holding a *phur-pa*. However, the phenomenon of one head rising above another is relatively common in Buddhist iconographics, and it may usually be determined that the topmost head will have one of two interpretations: to show another aspect of the deity, or to depict its progenitor. Since rTa-mgrin is the Sambhogakāya of one of the rNying-ma-pa systems, and since this is the exact position in which the progenitors of the *kula* in other systems appear, it would follow that this might be a logical explanation of the presence of the horse heads above the deity, who could then be identified as Phur-pa. In the following example, there is additional evidence that will bear out this point.

Example 19 (Figure 30):

Material: copper
 Technique: casting, chasing
 Length: approximately 7 inches
 Condition: little sign of wear or use
 Region of Origin: Central Tibet? (Nepalese workmanship)
 Date: late 19th century

This and the preceding example are nearly identical in every respect except one: the presence of the deity head above the main three heads in this example, in contrast to the three horse heads in the previous example. This is clearly the head of a separate deity above the main figure, and as such, strongly supports the theory presented in the preceding section. While single headed versions of both rTa-mgrin and Phur-pa exist, there is no known version with four heads arranged in this manner. In addition, there is a very abbreviated but distinct horse's head above the top head; i.e. the head of Hayagriva (rTa-mgrin) as Sambhogakāya above the head of his emanation, Phur-pa. This is not to deny that there are representations of rTa-mgrin as a *phur-pa* (see, for example, the painting shown in Figure 31). Yet, it calls into question the unequivocal identification of any *phur-pa* with a horse's head at its top as rTa-mgrin. It might be best to describe such implements as rTa-mgrin-emanated *phur-pa*. The implication is that rTa-mgrin is the superessential and supermundane aspect of Phur-pa as *phur-pa*. To give the obvious, well known example, Avalokiteśvara with a figure or head of Amitābha in his headdress or hair is still Avalokiteśvara, not Amitābha, and is only considered as an emanation of the latter. This consideration, of Phur-pa being an emanation of rTa-mgrin, gives rise to the problem of the ambiguous identity of the deity portrayed on many *phur-pa*. However, this is a problem only to non-Buddhist art historians who do not follow the Vajrayāna path: considering the implements in context, it is immaterial whether the deity is identified as rTa-mgrin (Hayagriva) or Phur-pa, since they are technically both the same deity and Phur-pa is considered as simply an aspect of rTa-mgrin. To paraphrase the Reverend N. Jigme's statement that Phur-pa is present in all *phur-pa*, it can be said that all *phur-pa* are Phur-pa are rTa-mgrin.

The nearly identical nature of these two implements brings up an important point about the methods of fabrication and the "styles" of implements versus their iconographic content or iconomorphics. Both implements are of Nepalese workmanship and, presumably of Central Tibetan design.⁴⁰ At first examination, one might be tempted to suggest that they were even the work of the same hand. However, a close

⁴⁰ This is in no way inconsistent since there had been considerable exchange between Tibet and Nepal during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with trade, religious craftsmen, and Buddhist scholars being the main thrust of this contact. This only carried on the traditional relationship that had existed between the two countries since the twelfth century. There was simply a new surge of contact during the relatively quiet political events of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

examination of the detailing of the two suggests that this is not the case at all. (For another example in the same stylistic idiom with identical materials and craftsmanship, see Figure 34.) Several elements differ considerably in the details, such as the small *makaras* on the points of the *rdo-rje*, the lotus petals on the pedestal supporting the deity, the sashes hanging from Phur-pa, the garland of severed heads (damaged in Figure 29 but still visible enough to determine that it had been very abbreviated) and the detailing of the faces of the deity. While none of this denies the obviously close relationship of the two implements, it does underscore the improbability of their having been produced in the same workshop or by the same craftsman. Thus, even though the iconomorph is basically the same, produced in the same stylistic idiom, at nearly the same time, there is still sufficient variation to indicate the operation both of individual differences on the part of the craftsmen and, some iconographic control on the part of the patron. It is frequently in such nuances of variation in Tibetan art that one may identify individualizing, regional, and stylistic criteria.

Example 20 (Figure 31):

Material: cotton fabric, mineral colors

Technique: painting

Size: not known, but small (less than one foot on long side?)

Condition: surface cracked and creased from handling; major portions of inscription illegible as a result

Region of Origin: Central Tibet

Date: last half of the 19th century

Strictly speaking, this is not a *phur-pa* in the sense that has been the subject of discussion up to this time, but I have brought this painting into the discussion to make the following point. To find representations of a definitive form of Hayagrīva as a *phur-pa*, it is necessary to go beyond the implements per se, to the more theoretical forms of iconographics. The *phur-pa* is an implement of direct and literal action, and while it functions in a metaphorical manner, it must be remembered that when one is in the process of using a *phur-pa*, the purpose is to inflict real harm on the evil adversary; wounding or killing the phenomenon causing the problem. The inscription in this painting, while very damaged and only partially legible, indicates that the purpose of the icon is to “lessen the disagreeability” of a long list of evils. Thus, the purpose of propitiating this deity is much the same as that for Phur-pa. The first few letters do not contain the name of the deity in the normal manner, but published representations of exactly the same form of the deity identify him as Hayagrīva.⁴¹ However, the first line of the inscription on this painting reads “*Padmant(r?)agridha badzra (vajra) krodha (obl.) la hu hulu hum phat*”, which, it may be noted, contains a slight orthographic variation on the *mantra* of one of the more complex forms of Hayagrīva in the pantheon of the lCang-skya Rol-pa’i-rdo-rje (Folio 71b), “*Padmānatrakṛita*”, further confirming the identification as Hayagrīva. The *mantra* also offers one other bit of information by the use of the word *padma*, which identifies this deity as a member of the *padmakula* of Amitābha. Thus, it is quite certain that this deity is not “some form” of Phur-pa, but an unequivocal representation of Hayagrīva/rTa-mgrin as a *phur-pa* convention. This gives rise to the problems of the relationship of rTa-mgrin as a *phur-pa* convention to the *phur-pa* rituals. Does he function in the same manner? In what manner are the two deities interchangeable? Which iconographic tradition does this convention follow? Is this the Sambhogakāya of Phur-pa, and therefore, in reality no different than Phur-pa? According to the rNying-ma-pa tradition noted above, the answer to this last question would be yes.

There is no solution to these problems at our present state of knowledge, but the following “working hypothesis” may be suggested. Several factors indicate that the rNying-ma-pa traditions are probably followed by other sects of Tibetan Buddhism. For example, the presence of mNgon-phyogs dmar-po among the protective deities in the pantheon of lCang-skya Rol-pa’i-rdo-rje as one of the two indications

⁴¹ For example, see Walter Eugene Clark, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons*, New York, 1965 (reprint), 6A 31.

of the *phur-pa* strongly suggests that the teachings of the dGe-lugs-pa are founded on the rNying-ma-pa tradition. If this is the case, then it would indicate that Hayagriva/rTa-mgrin would be considered the Sambhogakāya of Phur-pa and that Phur-pa's presence is implied and consciously understood by the practitioners in representations such as this one. Information of this nature is usually orally transmitted in the initiation to the performance of the rituals. As further evidence for this hypothesis, the statement of the dGe-lugs-pa Reverend N. Jigme to the effect that Phur-pa is always present in *phur-pa* should also be remembered.

TYPOLOGY OF RTA-MGRIN-EMANATED *PHUR-PA* WITH HORSE'S HEADS

With two exceptions, the typological categories of *phur-pa* established for Phur-pa *phur-pa* hold true for rTa-mgrin-emanated *phur-pa* as well. The categories that do not apply are the two extremes of variation: "*phur-pa* with plain handles terminating in the head of the deity," and Subtype 6, "*phur-pa* with the body of the deity serving as the handle and a *dgra-lha* riding a *khyung* above the main figure." In addition, there are some unique versions of this type of *phur-pa* that do not fit any particular category. It must be noted that among the *phur-pa* that I have examined, the rTa-mgrin-emanated variety is the third most common form of *phur-pa* found in the three major classifications, with Phur-pa *phur-pa* and *vajra*-topped *phur-pa* (discussed in the following section) ranking first and second, respectively. In the present category, the following subtypes account for the vast majority of implements examined.

1. *Phur-pa* with double lotus handles terminating with a head of the deity.
2. *Phur-pa* with *vajra* handles terminating with a head of the deity.
3. *Phur-pa* with open-work handles terminating with a head of the deity.
4. *Phur-pa* with the body of the deity serving as the handle.

Again, as in the last class, there are many variations within each of the subtypes, but the consistency of the major elements demonstrates the iconomorphic nature of the subtype. It should also be noted that the major category, that of the *vajra*-topped *phur-pa*, has only two subtypes, but that these are equivalent to the first two of this section and the second and third of the Phur-pa *phur-pa* classification. These two categories provide a very different kind of orientation to the analysis of *phur-pa* typology since they cut across the iconographic divisions which have been established on the basis of the anthropomorphic elements and form what might be called a perpendicular section through the various types. On the basis of the physiomorphic parallels of the handles, it is possible to suggest that the types of *phur-pa* that exhibit these common features are a transiconic theme that reiterates the underlying unity of *phur-pa* iconographics.

SUBTYPE 1: *PHUR-PA* WITH DOUBLE LOTUS HANDLES TERMINATING
WITH A HEAD OF THE DEITY:

Example 21 (Figure 32):

Material: ivory
Techniques: carving and turning
Length: about 6 inches
Condition: noticeable wear to upper portion
Region of Origin: not known
Date: 19th century

This particular implement is one of several made of ivory that are very closely related (Figures 41–45). All are iconomorphically identical except for one feature: the topmost element seems to be interchangeable between the horse's head, the *vajra* and a carnelian. The head of the horse of this example is seen from the back as determined by the ears on either side.⁴² The implications of this parallel typology will be discussed in the following section where it will be suggested that their iconographic content is virtually identical. The formal conventions of the implement are familiar: the triangular blade with the serpent on it, the head of the *makara* (also a back view), the shaft of the handle elaborated with the double lotus, and at the top, the triple faces of the deity. The endless knots are absent, but turned rings occur in their place. This particular type of *phur-pa* is quite common and is well represented in museum collections throughout the world. This poor photograph of a lesser example of the type has been selected because of the closeness of its relationship with subsequent examples.

SUBTYPE 2: *PHUR-PA* WITH *VAJRA* HANDLES TERMINATING
WITH A HEAD OF THE DEITY:

Example 22 (Figure 33):

Material: bronze
Techniques: casting, chasing, carving
Length: about 20 inches
Condition: minimal wear? (could not be examined closely)
Region of Origin: Central Tibet (Nepalese workmanship?)
Date: late 19th–early 20th century

The form of the *rdo-rje* in the shaft of the handle of this implement strongly suggests Nepalese work, but other elements suggest a g'Tsang or dBus origin. The implement is one of the most common varieties of *phur-pa*, being another representative of a type that cuts across the iconographic typology in that only the horse's head at the top of the handle may be supplanted by other elements. Details, such as the multiplicity of lotus blossoms in the structure of the handle, are only minor variations.

Example 23 (Figure 34):

Material: bronze
Techniques: casting and chasing
Length: 13¾ inches
Condition: minor wear on shaft portion only
Region of Origin: Central Tibet? (Nepalese craftsmanship?)
Date: late 19th or early 20th century

⁴² Unfortunately, the implement was enclosed in a glass case and could not be moved for the photograph.

The trilateral support for the horse head has been broken, but its remains are clearly evident in an examination of the top of the implement. This vigorously modelled and carefully detailed implement demonstrates the full richness of the subtype under discussion. The blade, with its serpents, is crude in execution. However, the *makara*, the *vajra*, and the strongly three-dimensional features of the deity all give an impression of the strength that such implements are conceived to possess. The preciseness of the detail may be seen in the heads of the *makaras* which emanate the branches of the *vajra*. Each is rendered in meticulous, if simplified, detail.

The now familiar elements of this form of the *phur-pa* have been developed in the clearest possible manner. The *makara* stands as a separate unit, distinguished from the endless knot by a ring. The endless knots are also developed in precise detail and, between them, the *vajra* has also been given the full attention of the craftsman in his attempt to achieve the maximum in iconographic rendition. This example has been included for specific contrast to the Phur-pa *phur-pa* classification in which this subtype is characterized by crudity of execution. While it is possible that my examination of *phur-pa* has overlooked the more refined renditions of the versions of the Phur-pa headed type with *vajra* handles, it is nevertheless true that out of the several hundred implements examined, only those that had the horse's head at the top were finished carefully while those of the *vajra*-handled type that had a distinct Phur-pa head at the top were crude. No explanation for this phenomenon is offered, but it is a consideration to be kept in mind.

SUBTYPE 3: PHUR-PA WITH OPEN-WORK HANDLES TERMINATING
WITH A HEAD OF THE DEITY:

Example 24 (Figure 35):

Material: iron, bronze
Techniques: forging, casting, chasing
Length: 10¼ inches
Condition: very worn through use
Region of Origin: Central Tibet
Date: 17th–18th century

This example of the rTa-mgrin emanated *phur-pa* follows the pattern of the previously discussed open work handled *phur-pa*. The main purpose of the openings in the handle is to demonstrate that the shaft of the iron blade extends into the representation of the deity. As with the *phur-pa* in Figure 17, the design of the handle is somewhat nondescript, giving the impression that the passage of the iron shaft through the handle is its most important feature.

SUBTYPE 4: PHUR-PA WITH THE BODY OF THE DEITY SERVING AS THE HANDLE

Note: Two examples of this type have been discussed in the opening portion of this section (Examples 18 and 19).

Example 25 (Figure 36):

Material: copper
Techniques: casting and chasing
Length: 5–6 inches
Condition: slight wear
Region of Origin: Central Tibet? (Nepalese workmanship)
Date: 19th century

Closely related to Examples 18 and 19, this small implement illustrates a more complex version of the deity than hitherto seen. Yet, because of its diminutive size and corresponding lack of detail, little iconographic information may be gained from it. The two most noteworthy features are the multiplicity of arms on the figure of Phur-pa, and the fact that he clearly holds his *prajñā*'s head as if he were holding a *phur-pa*, but the *phur-pa* itself is absent. The implied equation of the *phur-pa* and the *prajñā* opens up avenues of investigation in Vajrayāna Buddhist eschatology that are far beyond the scope of this study. In addition, it suggests a whole, unsuspected realm of esoteric communication provided by the *phur-pa* to those initiated to its rites (see Appendix III). However, since the sectarian orientation of this particular implement is not known, it is impossible at present to do more than make note of the particular icon.

Stylistically, this implement is of the same general type as those illustrated in Figures 29, 30 and 34. The close relationship of these four raises questions that must be considered. The first possibility is simply that Nepalese craftsmen made these *phur-pa* for Tibetan patrons during the late 18th or the 19th century, and that their apparent similarity is merely due to cultural contacts. I tend to favor this view, but only the fact that all four of the *phur-pa* in question are thought to have come from Tibet lends any support to it. Another possibility is that they were originally made in Nepal for Nepalese patrons, and were carried to Tibet for trade or were acquired by Tibetans in Nepal who then took them back home. The only evidence bearing on this is the present lack of knowledge of any *phur-pa* of these types being used in Nepal or occurring in Nepalese collections. Obviously, this situation could change at any time, and it must be noted that the placing of the full figure on the top of the *phur-pa* corresponds to the configuration of known Nepalese examples. The fact that three of the four are basically of the same iconography and that two are nearly identical does strongly suggest that there was a particular line of teaching about the use of *phur-pa* that dictated iconomorphics of this type and that the followers of that line of teaching patronized Nepalese artists. The reason for such patronage might have simply been that there was a group of craftsmen in the vicinity or, conversely, that the effectiveness of the *phur-pa* would only be satisfactory if it was produced by a certain group of craftsmen. Again, since there are many places of pilgrimage in Nepal, the possibility of there having been a need for the artisans at a particular shrine to produce the implements in order for them to be effective must be considered. However, I have been unable to discover any shrines of either Phur-pa or rTa-mgrin in Nepal, although it is possible that rTa-mgrin was associated with shrines and temples dedicated to Avalokiteśvara. In short, there are many unanswered questions behind these particular implements, some of which have considerable bearing on the history of Buddhism in Nepal and Tibet and also on the relationship between these two countries.

A UNIQUE VERSION OF A PHUR-PA WITH A HORSE'S HEAD HANDLE

Example 26 (Figure 37):

Material: bronze

Technique: casting, some chasing

Length: 3¾ inches

Condition: heavily worn

Region of Origin: unknown

Date: problematic. Said to have been one of the "old" pieces of "Dhongtor" monastery (Tibetan orthography for Dhongtor is uncertain).

The head of the animal that occurs on the central portion of the shaft of the handle has no parallel in any other *phur-pa* that I have examined. There are traces of the *makara* head just above the triangular blade and the horse's head is still easily distinguishable at the top of the implement. The animal's mouth is

open and the lower portion of the shaft of the handle appears to issue from its mouth. At either end of the shaft of the handle there are simplified, rectilinear versions of the endless knot. With the exception of the presence of the animal head on the shaft, it is possible to suggest that this would have been a rather ordinary and much abbreviated version of the rTa-mgrin emanated *phur-pa*, but this unusual feature indicates quite clearly that there is yet another aspect of some types about which nothing is known.

Category III, rTa-mgrin/Hayagrīva Emanated *Phur-pa* (cont.):

PART II: RDO-RJE TOPPED PHUR-PA OF THE TYPE CARRIED BY RDO-RJE GRO-LOD

It has been common practice to identify Mahākāla/mGon-po, or one of his many aspects, as the presiding deity in the type of *phur-pa* that is dealt with in this section. This bit of information was one of those things that one just “knew” about Tibetan iconography, but to try to demonstrate this from some Tibetan source or from some secondary work that had a Tibetan source has proven to be impossible. Tibetan informants were either inexplicit in their answers (“any deity can be a *phur-pa*”), or they were not sure if Mahākāla was ever represented on *phur-pa*. It seems that the reason why most authors have identified certain *phur-pa* as Mahākāla *phur-pa* is because of the *rdo-rje* that issues from the top of the deity’s head. It is true that some representations of mGon-po/Mahākāla have *rdo-rje* issuing from the tops of their heads, but trying to relate this to *phur-pa* proved to be impossible. The more involved the search became, the more the evidence seemed to suggest that the implication of the presence of the *rdo-rje* was iconographically identical to that of the head of the horse. Additional evidence came forth with the discovery of a previously unknown iconographic xylograph,⁴³ the *gCod dpang brgya-rtsa* [*bgra*]gs-pa’i rab-[pa] gi tshag li-rnams legs-par bzhu gam-pa’o (“The beginning of approaching the fires [of cremation, i. e. cosmic destruction] by means of these” implements belonging to the best one hundred renown supporters [of the religion who have] broken off [from existence]”)⁴⁴ which is hereafter referred to as C.P.G. In this text, which is principally concerned with initiations to particular groups of *dākinīs*, there are illustrations of the esoteric form of some of the implements involved in the rituals. The thirteenth *chos-dbang* of the first group of *dākinīs* given in the C.P.G. is a headdress of five skulls (Figure 38; illustration 33 in the C.P.G.). This shows the headdress in its full form, and at its top there is a *rdo-rje* upon a lotus. This is a literal representation of the *sahasrārāpadmacakra* yogic center and the *vajra* nature of its realization. It is implicit that in every sentient being the *cakra* is present unmanifested, but that in Buddhist deities, the yogic center would have been realized or activated. The presence of the *vajra* on the head of the deity is a statement of the universal nature of his yogic accomplishment and is potentially physically present on all deities. Further, the *vajra* is specifically

⁴³ This document is a Kar-ma-pa iconography and illustration of ritual implements following the Mahāsiddhi cycles and especially the Naro, Mar-pa and Mi-la-ras-pa lineage of the *Gubyasamāja* and related texts. The whole document is currently under study by the author and it is hoped that on completion it will be published in its entirety.

⁴⁴ For *tshag* read *tag*.

⁴⁵ The rendition of the title of this xylograph must be considered somewhat tentative. Unfortunately, the printing of the title block is very poor and there is considerable uncertainty as to the reading of several letters. This problem is compounded by the presence of rather unusual orthography throughout the document, e.g. *chos-dbang* is spelled *chas-dbang* throughout.

associated with the five-skull headdress, indicating that it is implicitly present in representations of that headdress whether actually shown or not.

A second illustration in the same series (Figure 39; illustration 23 in the C. P. G.) expressly associates the head of the horse and the *vajra*. A single *rdo-rje* is shown with a horse's head emanating from the upper portion. The "horse-headed *vajra*" is not held by any of the mKha'-'gro with which the series of *chos-dbang* is associated, but in all cases there is an identical horse's head issuing from the top of their heads (Figure 40). Thus, there is a direct equation of the horse's head and the *vajra* as it occurs on the top of the head of a deity. It follows that it is entirely possible that the *vajra* and the horse's head on the *phur-pa* might be equated as well. The only difference between them would be the visual aspects of the particular tradition to which the specific implement belonged. If this is the case, then it is suggested that *phur-pa* which have a *vajra* at the top instead of a horse's head are still rTa-mgrin/Hayagrīva emanated representations of Phur-pa as a *phur-pa*. There would also be a symbolic aspect to the ambiguity of the representation. One of the consistent themes throughout this paper has been the universality of the nature of the deities associated with the implement. The idea behind the multiplicity of imagery is the concept of the Universal as expressed in the postulations of *sahaja* realization, which is, in effect, that there is no difference between any of the deities, or, for that matter, any living being of any sort. One rare and very specialized exception must be noted, the deity Gur mgon phur zhabs khyung gshog can, described by Nebesky-Wojkowitz.⁴⁶ However, the name of the deity alone, "The lord of the tent, possessing *phur-bu* feet and *khyung* wings," indicates that it is a late composite form of the familiar Gur gyi mgon-po.

The implements themselves provide two different types of indications that suggest the equation under discussion. First, implements that are nearly identical except for the presence of the *vajra* on one and the horse's head on the other strongly suggest interchangeability (see Figures 32 and 41). Second, the Nepalese generally use representations of "Viśvarūpasamvara" on their *kila/phur-pa*, thus indicating that the implement is the Universal, which is a direct analogue to the presence of the Sambhogakāya rTa-mgrin/Hayagrīva as the emanator of *phur-pa* (see section on Nepalese *phur-pa* below).

One other point about this category must be noted, it is identical to that carried by the rDo-rje-gro-lod form of Padmasambhava. This, coupled with the fact that there are only two, very similar, varieties of *phur-pa* in this category, suggests the possibility that there is some specific association with rDo-rje-gro-lod and the series of rituals associated with him.

TYPOLGY OF RDO-RJE TOPPED PHUR-PA:

As I have noted previously, there are only two subtypes in this category: *phur-pa* with double lotus handles terminating with a head of the deity and *phur-pa* with *vajra* handles terminating with a head of the deity. In order to facilitate a more interrelated examination of the implications of the common features, the following three examples will be discussed as a group.

⁴⁶ Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, p. 51.

SUBTYPE 1: *PHUR-PA* WITH DOUBLE LOTUS HANDLES TERMINATING
WITH A HEAD OF THE DEITY

Example 27 (Figure 41):

Material: silver, ivory
Techniques: ivory carved and turned, silver cast and repoussé
Length: about 7 inches
Condition: considerable surface luster and some wear from handling
Region of Origin: unknown
Date: 17th or 18th century?

Example 28 (Figures 42–44):

Material: ivory, silver and carnelian
Techniques: ivory carved and turned, silver hammered and soldered, carnelian ground and polished
Length: about 7 inches
Condition: considerable surface luster and some wear from handling
Region of Origin: unknown
Date: 17th or 18th century?

Example 29 (Figure 45):

Material: ivory
Technique: carved
Length: 5 1/4 inches
Condition: slight wear
Region of Origin: unknown
Date: late 19th or early 20th century

These three implements, together with the horse head-topped version in Figure 32, are representatives of a distinctive corpus of *phur-pa*. The main variable is the top element which is either the horse's head (Figure 32), the *rdo-rje* (Figures 41 and 45) or, in a most unusual version, a carnelian (Figures 42–44) which may be equated to the *rdo-rje*. The implication derived from the similarity of the four implements is that the horse's head and the *rdo-rje* are completely interchangeable and that the presence of one or the other is a matter of minor ideomorphic variation rather than major iconographic conceptual differentiation. Such formal parallels are quite common in *phur-pa*.⁴⁷ If the components of the *phur-pa* in Figures 32 and 41 are compared, it will be found that, while there is considerable formal variation in the representation of each of the different elements, the iconomorphics of the two implements is nearly identical. It appears that the two implements represent different formal traditions treating the same iconographic convention and that the main difference between the two is the presence of the *rdo-rje*/horse head convention at the top of the respective implements.

Two pieces apparently from the same workshop, or possibly by the same hand, demonstrate a different aspect of the variations possible in the terminating element. Figure 41, as has been mentioned, shows a *phur-pa* with a *rdo-rje* top, and Figures 42 and 43 illustrate a piece which has a carnelian set in a

⁴⁷ For example, see Figures 33 and 49 in this paper and P. H. Pott, *Introduction to the Tibetan Collection of the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden*, Leiden, 1951, Pl. XXVI, 1 and 3 [2798/66 and 2798/68, respectively]. The Leiden pair are so close that they might best be described as identical except for the horse's head on number one versus the *rdo-rje* on number three. This can only be the result of their being pieces by a single "hand" or, at least, "workshop" pieces of the same period, thus indicating the interchangeability of the elements within a very limited set of circumstances.

silver mount in place of the *rdo-rje*. A carnelian is among the precious and semiprecious stones that have Buddhological symbolism and as such, falls among those stones that the Tibetans consider to be “*rdo-rje*” when the term applies to gem stones. Thus, there is an exact parallel between the carnelian and the *rdo-rje*. The only major variation is the substitution on the *phur-pa* in Figure 42 of the bands of skulls for the endless knots seen on the implement in Figure 41. There are some minor variations such as the fuller treatment of the hair of the deity in Figure 42 and the placement of the skulls in the headdresses of the two deities, but these seem more related to the energy and skill of the carver than to any iconographic consideration. It is the similarities, which far exceed the differences that make these two *phur-pa* so significant. Compare, for example, the treatment of the *chu-srin/makara* and the serpents on the blades, the details of the treatment of the facial features of the deity and the skull headdresses and also the relatively unusual presence of the *ju-i* shaped motif at the base of the lotus petals. Even the treatment of the syllable *hūṃ* on the back of the blades is exactly similar, and there are some distinctive features to the construction of the letter “ha”. The closeness of these implements indicates the presence of a series of well established conventions that can be varied within certain (probably well known) limits.

The fourth example of this type (Figure 45) points out an additional aspect of the iconographic tradition of the three previous implements. It is a much reduced and less completely finished version, having a *rdo-rje* at the top. This small utensil shows no sign of use whatsoever and was probably intended to be carried in an amulet box as a protection against *sri*, *bgegs*, etc. The fact that small versions were made indicates that it was a well known type, popular because of its effectiveness as a protective device. It is, therefore, possible to suggest that there was an “original” after which these versions were patterned. There may be some connection between *rDo-rje gro-lod* and these *phur-pa* since these implements are similar to that which he carries.

Example 28 has been available to me for detailed study⁴⁸ and has provided some additional information on the construction of ivory implements. The x-ray of the *phur-pa* (Figure 44) clearly shows the tapering nerve cavity of the tusk running through the center of the implement. At the top, one can see the silver and carnelian cap which is held in place by either a pitch or bitumen binder. Just below the lower edge of the cap is what appears to be a twist of wire.⁴⁹ The nonstructural piece of wire might indicate the presence of some sort of vivifying dedication in the cavity of the tusk. Since most of the *phur-pa* studied which were vivified have been those where the torso of the deity is part of the handle, the present example raises the question: what is the relationship between these two types of *phur-pa*?

Example 30 (Figures 46 and 47): A *Phur-pa* and *rDo-rje* Set

Phur-pa:

Material: copper
 Techniques: casting and chasing
 Length: 4¾ inches
 Condition: minor wear, some burnishing due to handling
 Region of Origin: unknown
 Date: 19th century

rDo-rje:

Material: bronze
 Techniques: casting and chasing (?)
 Length: 3 inches
 Condition: very worn, all detailing nearly lost
 Region of Origin: unknown
 Date: ca. 17th century

⁴⁸ Professor and Mrs. J. LeRoy Davidson very graciously loaned me the *phur-pa* in their collection for extended study.

⁴⁹ At first glance, the twist of wire appears to be attached to the cap, but the tiny space that separates the two may be seen on close examination of the x-ray.

One aspect of several types of *phur-pa* that it has been impossible to illustrate up to the present example is the fact that these implements are frequently associated with a *rdo-rje*. As may be seen from the simplest examination of the illustrations, there is no formal relationship to demonstrate the association of these two implements. This is not always the case, as I have seen, but have been unable to photograph, matched pieces which had clearly been intended for one another, sharing common and distinctive decorative motifs. The association of the two implements shown here was explained by the Tibetan owner, who said that to split the set would have caused the power (*dbang*) that they contained to do harm. The theory of the bond of power that cojoins the implements into a "set" is as follows: at the time of the initiation into the rituals which use the pair the initiate is either given, has made, or in some other way provides the necessary equipment. Most desirable is a set that has been used by others and is passed along to the new practitioner since it has already built up power and is more effective. However, implements used even for the first time begin to accumulate power, "exactly like a battery is charged", as explained by one of my informants. With each subsequent use in the rituals, more power is added until old, much used implements are often considered "unsafe" for all but the most advanced practitioners. Unfortunately, my questions about the nature of the rituals involved were said to go beyond the limits of secrecy.⁵⁰

It may be noted that the xylograph of *rDo-rje gro-lod* (Figure 3) shows him with both implements and that the picture in Hoffmann's *The Religions of Tibet*⁵¹ also shows the lama holding both implements. One additional point is that about half of the sets seen have had the nine pointed *rdo-rje* rather than the five pointed variety. It seems that as soon as the implements leave Tibetan hands, such associations are lost since the implements become *objets d'art* rather than utensils in the pursuit of spiritual fulfillment. Yet, the retention of the oral information associated with the implements greatly expands the knowledge surrounding them and increases the general state of awareness of the religion with which they are associated.

Example 31 (Figure 48):

Material: wood, iron

Techniques: wood joined and carved, traces of polychrome, iron forged

Length: 19 inches

Condition: very worn, much detailing in the carving worn smooth from handling, burnished "patina" on surface of handle and faces

Region of Origin: gTsang?

Date: 16th century

This large example exhibits several characteristics that warrant attention. Among them is the fact that enough of the original polychromy remains to allow a determination of the colors of the faces. The face directly above the snout of the *chu-srin* was a dark blue, to its proper left (counterclockwise) the face was red and the remaining face was white. Other colors present were: the endless knots red, the *chu-srin* black with white teeth and yellow eyebrows, the blade red and the entwined serpents black. The lotus petals were, at least partly, red and the hair on the head of the deity was black. The small skulls on the crown were white while the rest of the crown and the earrings were gold. Unfortunately, only slight traces of the various colors remain in some of the more protected crevices and on the less commonly handled portions of the implement. There is evidence that at one point in the history of this example, the color of the blade was changed to black and that there have been at least two repaintings. The black on the blade has almost entirely vanished and only faint traces are still to be seen on one side. The evidence for the repainting is that there are three layers of the same color in some of the deep, incised cuts. However,

⁵⁰ Several individuals were involved in my gathering of this information and it may be noted that none was willing to talk at length about this subject. All of the informants were *dGe-lugs-pa* and this information must be considered to reflect the ideology of that sect.

⁵¹ Hoffmann, *The Religions of Tibet*, his illustration number 8.

there is enough difference in the chroma of the colors to indicate that these were different applications of color and a layer of dirt separating the layers of pigment demonstrates that some time had passed between the applications.

It is interesting to note that the color scheme noted is consistent with that of a modern *phur-pa* of the same type that was made by a Tibetan refugee in Mysore (not illustrated).⁵² The fact that a modern example, possibly made for trade, maintains the same conventions as a 16th century version points to a rigid tradition that has been sustained for at least that length of time. How long it might have existed before the 16th century remains to be determined.

The crown of this *phur-pa* is of the same basic type as occurred in Figure 18, a 14th century example, but small skulls have been added in the center of the headdress and over the ears, giving the impression that each of the three faces is associated with a tiara of three skulls. This, of course, indicates the presence of five skulls for each face, the missing ones being at the back of the head and the center of the head. The presence of the skulls indicates a modification of the early Western Tibetan type of crown, but as of yet, it is impossible to determine if this change is iconographic in concept, stylistic, or simply an indication of a loosening of iconographic restrictions, portraying what had been implicitly present for a long time. Since Kashmir, the Indian stylistic source for these Tibetan versions of the crown, was known as a tantric center, it seems quite possible that the Tibetans are simply depicting what has always been known to have been implied by the plain version of the crown. The hair of the deity, while lacking the coiled serpent, is piled in a tightly plaited arrangement that strongly suggests the hair arrangement of the other representations of Phur-pa. This point reiterates the identification of the deity as Phur-pa, since both *rTa-mgrin*/Hayagrīva and *mGon-po*/Mahākāla have other distinctive hair arrangements.

The top of the handle shows signs of having been enclosed by a circular covering held in place with two small nails. Cut down into the body of the handle is a square cavity of considerable depth, four inches, which contained the vivification prayers, and is incidentally another example of a non-figurative *phur-pa* having a vivification. The closing element, which would have had either a *rdo-rje* or a horse's head on it was evidently removed or lost in the remote history of the implement. This may be determined by the presence of a thick layer of incense smoke on the surface where the covering had been. Around the truncated cone at the top of the head is an iron band, which in terms of quality seems entirely out of keeping with the rest of the implement. It does not seem to be a later addition as the wood under it has not been discolored in the manner of the rest of the *phur-pa*, and it must be concluded that it was originally intended to give the quality of the strength of the iron to the wooden implement by its presence. The three faces of this *phur-pa* will be discussed in Appendix II.

SUBTYPE 2: PHUR-PA WITH VAJRA HANDLES TERMINATING WITH A HEAD OF THE DEITY

In this subtype, it will be found that there is very little variation from other parallel subtypes in other categories with the exception of the presence of the *rdo-rje* on top of the head of the deity. Accordingly, I shall treat the three examples rather briefly in regard to their common features and only go into detail on their unusual aspects.

Example 32 (Figure 49):

Material: bronze, iron

Techniques: casting, chasing, forging

Length: approximately 24 inches

⁵² The *phur-pa* in question was given to me by Larry Epstein, Department of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin (Green Bay), who has been very generous with his considerable knowledge about Tibet and who has shared a number of his Tibetan contacts with my wife and myself. Needless to say, I am most grateful for his help.

Condition: little signs of wear

Region of Origin: unknown (Nepalese workmanship?)

Date: 19th century

This example has already been mentioned as being virtually identical to the horse head-topped version, with the only significant variation being the *vajra* in place of the horse's head. It differs from other *phur-pa* that combine bronze handles and iron blades in that the blade does not extend through the handle into the head of the deity. This feature seems to be structural rather than symbolic. Unfortunately, it was not possible to photograph the features of the three faces, but even those that may be seen show substantially different expressions compared to those that had been present on other examples (see Appendix II). The peaceful appearing face above the snout of the *makara* is most unusual on *phur-pa*. The intent to portray a pacific visage may be seen in the half-closed, unstressed appearance of the eyes. Even the wrathful features on the other face visible in the illustration are quite different from the norm, as the mouth is closed and there is what appears to be a mustache, giving the features a distinctly Rajput countenance. (Compare this to the "Śiva" implement in Figure 87.) The unusual size of this implement suggests that it may have had some function other than use in a ritual as a hand held device, possibly either display or processional use.

Example 33 (Figure 50):

Material: bronze, iron

Techniques: casting, chasing, forging

Length: 10¼ inches

Condition: very worn, most detailing lost due to handling

Region of Origin: unknown

Date: ca. 17th century

The blade of this well worn piece is unusual in three ways: its shaft extends into the *vajra* at the top of the deity's head, the shaft of the blade is wrapped with fabric where it is exposed to view in the center of the *vajra* of the handle, and it appears that the blade was originally coated with copper. The purpose behind any of these unique features is unknown, but it is possible that the cloth around the shaft was intended to provide a better fit in the handle. Since the blade is tied into the present handle by means of a cord wrapped around the shaft of the blade and one of the lower prongs of the *rdo-rje*, this implement may be a composite of two others, the handle of one and the blade of another. Such construction is not at all ordinary and must be considered makeshift, thus indicating a repair, possibly by someone who was not even a metalsmith. The probable reason for the need for such a repair becomes quite obvious upon examination of the tip of the blade which has begun to mushroom like the hammered end of a cold chisel. At least one of the owners of this *phur-pa* must have carried out his ritual stabbing of "obstructions" with considerable vigor.

Other than these unusual features, the arrangement of the elements of the *phur-pa* and the iconographics may be considered completely typical of the subtype. The features of the three faces are discussed in Appendix II.

Example 34 (Figure 51):

Material: a white metal alloy

Techniques: casting?, carving, chasing, hammering

Length: 7¼ inches

Condition: slight wear, minor dents (metal appears soft)

Region of Origin: unknown

Date: 19th or 20th century

This unprepossessing little *phur-pa* has a most unusual *rdo-rje* in the midsection of the shaft of the handle. Instead of the prongs usually seen in the other examples, this implement reverts to an everted foliate motif that is principally known from Central Asian art of the 6th and 7th centuries. It is my opinion that the everted foliate design actually represents peacock feathers and that the peacock feathers are an esoteric substitute for a *rdo-rje*. Evidence for this may be seen in the representation of gNuhs-chen Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes (Figure 52), a follower of the Blo-ldan mChog Sred form of Padmasambhava, in which the *vajra* at the top of the hat is surmounted by the tips of peacock feathers. Since the *vajra* is the epitome of the Absolute, it could not be superseded by anything other than itself. One may be quite certain of this equation. However, additional evidence may be found in the fact that some Nepalese *phur-pa* are topped by a trefoil of peacock feathers rather than a *vajra* (see section on Nepalese versions of *phur-pa*).

This iconographic equation is not the important aspect of the *phur-pa* in question. Rather, it is the problem of whether this implement reflects much earlier conventions or not. The similarity to the earlier, more esoteric form of the *rdo-rje* suggests the strong possibility of a tradition being maintained. This implement may, therefore, be a copy of a very early type, possibly of the 8th or 9th century.

Category IV: *Phur-pa* of the Type Carried by Blo-ldan mChog Sred

The figure of Blo-ldan mChog Sred shows a distinctive type of *phur-pa* carried in his waist sash (Figures 53 and 54). This type is characterized by the fact that there is only one face (head) on the deity, represented as the termination of the implement. The implication is that the implements of this type would be used when one is practicing *phur-pa* rituals following conventions set by Padmasambhava in his Blo-ldan mChog Sred form. The identification of the deity represented on the *phur-pa* is uncertain, but it is probable that it is Seng-ge sGra-sgrog, yet another form of Padmasambhava (Figure 55). It must be remembered that this is at best a dual identification, for the tradition that Phur-pa is present in all *phur-pa* must be taken into account. The reason for offering a different identification is the very close resemblance of the features of the deity represented to those of Seng-ge sGra-sgrog, especially the inward coiled tongue (compare to Appendix II examples), and the fact that this particular aspect of Padmasambhava is well known as an exorcistic manifestation.⁵³ However, it must be noted that a number of painted versions of Phur-pa show the deity with a single head; thus, only further knowledge of the oral traditions surrounding the use of the *phur-pa* will clarify the actual identification. This category of *phur-pa* is subdivided into the same two subtypes as the previous one.

SUBTYPE 1: *PHUR-PA* WITH DOUBLE LOTUS HANDLES TERMINATING WITH A HEAD OF THE DEITY

Example 35 (Figure 56):

Material: bronze, iron
Techniques: casting, chasing, forging
Length: 7⁷/₈ inches
Condition: well worn bronze surfaces
Region of Origin: Central Tibet
Date: 18th century

⁵³ Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 544.

This example repeats virtually all of the conventions of the previous category: the serpent-entwined blade issuing from the mouth of the *makara*, the two endless knots and the double lotus between them, but the head of the deity is most distinctly portrayed and is single rather than triple. All examples of this category that have come to my attention have comparatively large heads and considerable attention has been paid to the details of the features of the face. While this may not be a determining characteristic of the category, it certainly exhibits a general trend of the particular convention.

Example 36 (Figure 57):

Material: bronze, case is copper and bronze
Technique: casting, chasing; case is beaten, repousse, soldered and riveted
Length: *phur-pa* 6 inches, case 9 inches
Condition: little or no sign of wear
Region of Origin: Central Tibet or rGyan-rtse
Date: late 19th or early 20th century (prior to 1935)

The presence of the case with this implement is noteworthy since it is unique among the *phur-pa* that I have been able to examine. The case is quite crudely made but very sturdy and seemingly very serviceable. The implement is unusual in that a *rdo-rje* is not present on the top of the head of the deity. This omission and the fact that the implement is very new in appearance suggests that it was possibly made for its original collector, Rahula Sankrityayana, during his trip to Tibet, and appears to have had little, if any, use. All other features of the implement indicate that it is an example of this category, especially the size of the head of the deity in relation to the rest of the implement and the details of the facial features.

SUBTYPE 1: *PHUR-PA* WITH *VAJRA* HANDLES TERMINATING
WITH A HEAD OF THE DEITY

Example 37 (Figure 58):

Material: bronze
Techniques: casting, chasing
Length: approximately 9 inches?
Condition: wear to prominent elements of the *phur-pa*
Region of Origin: Central Tibet?
Date: 19th century

Fitting all other criteria of the category, this example demonstrates the presence of the *rdo-rje* as the central portion of the handle. The now familiar blade-*makara*-endless knot-*vajra* combination is surmounted by a single head, having only one set of facial features. The treatment of the tongue, curling upwards, is a distinctive variation on the convention of the inward curl that is commonly found in a number of classes of deities. In this instance it may be considered to further characterize the difference between this category and those representing Phur-pa.

Category V: *Khaṭvāṅga Phur-pa*

Khaṭvāṅga are little known relative to their position in the vocabulary of attributes belonging to various Buddhist deities. One type of *khaṭvāṅga* shows one obvious correlation to the trident of Śiva (Figures 59 and 60) and many other versions are well established in Indian

Vajrayāna iconography. For example, images of Heruka found at Nalanda, Dacca and Ratnagiri (Orissa) all carry versions of the implement. In spite of its Indian origins, in the context of this paper, it is more significant that it is one of the principal attributes of Padmasambhava in two of his manifestations, Rigs-'dsin mChog sprul-pa'i sKu bskal bzang Pad-ma dBang Yig⁵⁴ and Nyi-ma 'Od zer (Figure 59), as well as the best known aspect of the precious teacher, Guru Rin-po-che (Figure 5). *Khaṭvāṅga* are subject to considerable variation in formal arrangement but two basic types dominate the later Tibetan conventions (Figures 60–62). Among the generally present key elements are either a trident or a *vajra* at the top of the staff and three heads impaled on the staff just below the top (one of these is usually a skull and it is commonly placed at the top of the three heads). There are variations on this convention such as no skulls, three skulls, skull in the center and the skull at the bottom. Below the three heads is a *pūrṇaghāṭa*, or the vase of abundance, arranged in a manner suggesting that the heads issue from the vase. Beneath that there is a *viśvavajra*, placed on structural examples with its two axes at right angles to the axis of the staff. In drawn examples, one of the axes is in line with the staff while the other is at a right angle to it. Frequently, the drawn examples show a curious abbreviation of the laterally extended elements of the *viśvavajra* (this feature may be seen in Figure 59). Beneath the *viśvavajra* may be any of a number of elements, scarves, bells, prayers tied in place, etc. These exhibit a good deal of variation among different instruments, and seem to be signs of the adornment and enrichment that is part of Tibetan iconological aesthetics. The lower end of the *khaṭvāṅga* may either be plain or have a five pronged *vajra* at the tip.

The symbolism of the various elements has not been studied and it has been possible to determine only a few aspects of the nature of the implement. It must be noted that while the following description deals with several of the elements, the significance of the implement as a whole is not fully known. In the following, it will be suggested that there is some offensive weapon concept to it, in which the device is used in overcoming obstacles in the path of Buddhist achievement. According to dKar-brgyud-pa tradition,⁵⁵ the three heads are severed from the beings which personify aversion, attachment, and confusion. This implies the success of the weapon as a device for overcoming the three vices and the attachment of the heads is simply a victory symbol. Further, the same tradition implies the equation of the implement as a whole to the female counterpart of the deity (or teacher) carrying it.⁵⁶ The equation of the trident-*vajra*-weapon concepts is well known, as are the abundance of the treasures of the successful attainment of the *pūrṇaghāṭa* and *viśvavajra* as a symbol of the Universal, and need not be gone into here. Yet, in spite of the knowledge of the parts, even the equation of the implement as a whole to the *prajñā*, there seems to be more to the full significance of the *khaṭvāṅga*. As a *chos-dbang*, it figures prominently in the C.P.G. text, where only the upper portion of the instrument is illustrated (Illustration No. 36, for example), and is carried by a considerable number of the deities.

In the iconography of Padmasambhava, the *khaṭvāṅga* is carried by three of the eight major aspects of the Guru, previously mentioned. However, it is not possible to determine which one of these manifestations, the principal form or the two ascetic manifestations, is intended

⁵⁴ Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, plate 143.

⁵⁵ Janice Dean Willis, *The Diamond Light of the Eastern Dawn*, New York, 1972, p. 93.

⁵⁶ Willis, *The Diamond Light of the Eastern Dawn*, p. 93.

by the representations of *khaṭvāṅga phur-pa*, but it seems clear that a *phur-pa* in this form would demonstrate a double affinity to the central theme of Guru Rin-po-che.

Example 38 (Figure 63):

Material: bronze
Techniques: casting, chasing, inlay
Length: approximately 8 inches?
Condition: considerable wear to prominent areas
Region of Origin: Central Tibet
Date: ca. 18th century

This implement has been identified correctly as a “*khaṭvāṅga phur-pa*” in type by Meredith,⁵⁷ although she associated it with Mahākāla because of the presence of the trident on the top of the deity’s head. This identification with Mahākāla is doubly improbable, as I have pointed out, since there is no evidence to demonstrate the consistent association of Mahākāla with any form of *phur-pa*; and secondly, since Mahākāla is not associated with the *khaṭvāṅga* form of the *triśūla* in any of his many known aspects. The presence of the three heads in a vertical arrangement and the trident at the top of the implement are enough to determine the *khaṭvāṅga* aspect of it. But there are some distinct differences that must be considered. First, there are only two impaled heads, the central two on the shaft. The head at the top is three faced, wears a crown of esoteric initiation and rests on a lotus pedestal which also separates it from the other two heads. This, then, is not the impaled head of a defeated enemy, but rather, the personification of the deity of the *phur-pa*, Phur-pa. The central portion of the shaft of the handle of the implement is formed by two heads, one a skull and the other that of one who had apparently been a practitioner of Śaivite *sādhana*s, as evidenced by the markings on his forehead. It follows, then, that the skull represents aversion (to death), the Śaivite represents confusion (in practice) and the head of the deity, initiated to the highest levels of practice, attachment. The head must therefore serve a double purpose: it is both the animating force of the implement and the representation of the last aspect that is to be destroyed. This concept has identical parallels in the Zen concept of “Killing the Buddha”, and is generally found in the highest levels of Vajrayāna. It will be noted that the vertical order of the three heads is reversed as compared to those on the *khaṭvāṅga*, but the progression is through the same order, the goal of the *khaṭvāṅga* being the attainment of the center of the *viśvavajra* just below the lowest head.

The *khaṭvāṅga phur-pa* is simply another reiteration of the highest principles of the Buddhist ideals, formulated into a convention intended for practical use in the rituals. The specific form may be associated with Padmasambhava by the fact that it is a *phur-pa* and by virtue of the association of the “parent” implement with him. It is significant that the two ascetic forms of Padmasambhava are also associated with the *khaṭvāṅga*, as opposed to the *krodha* forms. This fact strongly suggests that the implement is associated with *sahaja* realization practices rather than pragmatic, secular, exorcising rituals. It must be remembered that the obstructions to attainment were often treated in the same manner as those who got in the way of profit on a trading journey.

Example 39 (Figure 64):

Material: bronze
Techniques: casting, chasing (?), riveting
Length: about 7 inches
Condition: extremely worn, almost all surface detail lost
Region of Origin: unknown
Date: relatively early?, ca. 14th or 15th century?

⁵⁷ Meredith, “The Phurbu: The Use and Symbolism of the Tibetan Magic Dagger”, Caption to Plate I and pp. 244–5.

Strictly speaking, this is not a *phur-pa*, but is a miniature *khaṭvāṅga*. There is one element on the lower portion that clearly distinguishes it from all other *khaṭvāṅga* known to me and which places it in the company of *phur-pa*. The irregular portion on the end of the shaft is a very realistic representation of a heart and, while it would have been a technically easy matter for the artisan to cast the irregular form as an integral part of the implement, it is not cast in place, but has been joined and is held by using the end of the shaft as a rivet. In other words, the heart has been pierced by the lower portion of the shaft of the *khaṭvāṅga*. This corresponds exactly to the nature of the damage that is to be inflicted on evil personifications by a *phur-pa*.⁵⁸ It strongly suggests that this miniature implement was associated with the same type of ritual and implies that one of the functions of the *khaṭvāṅga* may have been similar to the exorcistic applications of the *phur-pa*.

Category VI: Generalized *Phur-pa*

The implements covered in this category are abbreviated versions that lack specific detailing. This is usually because of their diminutive size, which may be either sculptural or drawn. Yet, the fact that there is such a category, especially as we will see, one which is consistently represented in the hands of the preceptors in the lineage of the rNying-ma-pa, suggests that there is an underlying unity to all *phur-pa*. This concept is consistent with the continued presence of certain iconographic elements that have been followed through this paper and, once more, reiterates the “all *phur-pa* are Phur-pa” idea. In the final analysis, these reiterate the basic theme of all Vajrayāna Buddhism.

There are two subtypes to this category: those implements with two small balls at the termination of the handle and those with a *vajra* in a comparable location. Apparently, there is no distinction between the two types, at least according to the iconographers of the rNying-ma-pa series of prints used to illustrate this study, since both types occur indiscriminately in the same design.⁵⁹

SUBTYPE 1: *PHUR-PA* WITH TWO BALLS AT THE TERMINATION OF THE HANDLE

Example 40 (Figure 65):

Material: paper
 Technique: xylographic reproduction
 Length (of *phur-pa* only): 1 inch
 Region of Origin: Modern India (Tibetan refugee work)
 Date: modern (1969) blocks recut from 18th century designs

The implement in the hand of this unknown rNying-ma-pa preceptor is typical of many such representations and is the simplest depiction of the tripartite blade with two small balls above the hand of the wielder of the *phur-pa*. I have found no example of this type in three-dimensional form, yet it occurs in many paintings.

⁵⁸ Chang, *Esoteric Teachings of the Tibetan Tantra*, p. 44.

⁵⁹ Figures 65 and 52 illustrate the types, although they are not from the same design. These illustrations were selected on the basis of clarity of the original print rather than the exact location of their occurrence.

Example 41 (in Figure 52):

(Technical information as given for Example 40)

gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes holds in identical position to the previous figure, the second type of generalized *phur-pa*, that with a *vajra* handle. Although the two individuals are attacking different enemies, the similarity of their attributes, *dril-bu* and *phur-pa*, and the identical nature of their positions suggests that there is very little difference in their method. From this point, it may be inferred that there is also little difference in the implements they are using.⁶⁰ Examples of this generalized version of the *phur-pa* are known in three dimensional form.

Example 42 (Figure 66):

Material: bronze

Technique: casting, little or no finishing

Length: 3¼ inches

Condition: prominences worn

Region of Origin: Central Tibet

Date: 19th century

Small size and crudity of fabrication has severely limited the detailing in this example. The coarseness is best exemplified by the fact that on each face of the blade of the implement are *bija* syllables, none of which are legible. Other elements, the endless knot, *makara*, and serpents are absent, and the central portion of the shaft of the handle has an abbreviated design that may indicate a lotus petal motif, but this is also uncertain. This example is of the type carried by the Heruka form of Phur-pa when he is represented on the handle of a *phur-pa* (Figure 22), and it is possible that the type might be associated with him. However, since there is only one example to work from, it has not been possible to determine a pattern. Many other deities carry *phur-pa* of this subtype when they are depicted in paintings or drawings, especially those of the *lha-mo* type, and it is occasionally represented in sculpture.

Category VII: Unique *Phur-pa*

A number of implements from Tibet do not fit any of the above categorizations, yet their number is very small and it is possible to describe literally all that I have come across in this section. With rare exceptions, each of the *phur-pa* dealt with in the preceding was only one selected as an example from several individuals of a type, and in some cases, they were representative of literally dozens of iconomorphically identical implements. In researching and cataloguing, four implements came to my attention that did not fit easily into any category. While it will be seen that these have very definite parallels to, or elements from, certain categories, I feel that until there is more information about them, they should be placed into a separate category.

⁶⁰ Note also the presence of *gtor-ma* offerings which are part of the rituals being performed. On these, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, pp. 347ff.

Example 43 (Figure 67):

Material: wood
Technique: carving, traces of polychrome?
Length: about 10 inches
Condition: considerable wear, corners of the blade broken
Region of Origin: Central Tibet
Date: 18th or 19th century

This piece exhibits an obvious relationship to those in the first category, Phur-pa's *phur-pa*, but the presence of the dog's head distinctly sets it apart from any other example presently known to me. Dogs and jackals are animals of the exposure grounds or "cemeteries" and, since many yogic practices conceptually take place in these cemeteries, it is appropriate that a representation of one of their number be found on an implement that is used in yogic exorcism. However, the relationship of the animal to the *phur-pa* or *phur-pa* rituals is unknown.

Example 44 (Figure 68):

Material: copper or bronze
Techniques: casting, chasing
Length: 9⁵/₈ inches
Condition: no sign of wear but there is a relatively heavy, firmly attached green patina on the surface
Region of Origin: Central Tibet (Nepalese workmanship)
Date: late 19th or 20th century

It is my opinion that this implement is either a deliberate fake, albeit made according to a traditional design, or that it is only partially complete. However, I have included it in the study for two reasons. First, all the fakes that I have come across have been made in multiple numbers and are commonly seen treated more as trinkets than as religious implements (see below, Figures 80 and 81, where the iconography of a "reproduction" of a standard type of Nepalese *kila* is treated). It seems that the fine art of faking *phur-pa* has only been practiced for the last fifteen or so years and has not reached the heights of other areas of such endeavor. The second reason for inclusion is that, while the implement is nearly identical to the lower portion of the rTa-mgrin emanated *phur-pa* shown in Figures 29 and 30, it may still be that it was intended by its fabricator to stand in the inverted position illustrated. Even if it was intended as the lower portion of such an implement, it is of a much larger size than other examples known to me and therefore worthy of notice. One must, however, consider the possibility that this implement was intended to be used in the manner seen in the photograph, standing on the "base" with the point of the implement sticking up, completely antithetical to all *phur-pa* usage known to me, or seen in an inverted position, perhaps with the "base" meant to hold some ephemeral offering such as *gtor-ma*. I present this implement simply for what it is—a puzzle, but its relative inaccessibility in the collection of Ganesh Datta College at Begusarai, Bihar, dictates that it should be made available for study by publication.

Example 45 (Figure 69):

Material: bronze
Techniques: casting, chasing, carving (?)
Length: unknown (probably less than 10 inches)
Condition: little indication of wear
Region of Origin: Central Tibet
Date: 19th century

Meredith has tentatively identified the deity of this implement as rDo-rje phyag-na/Vajrapāṇi,⁶¹ but the presence of the figure of Vairocana in the headdress of the principal face of the deity negates this assumption. rDo-rje phyag-na is of the *kula* of the Jina Akṣobhya, who is characterized by *bhūmiṣpaśa mudrā*, but Vairocana is the one who exhibits *dharmacakra*, as is seen in this example. It may be pointed out that the presence of Vairocana in the crown of the deity is a direct reference to Samantabhadra, his usual bodhisattva, which may, in turn, reiterate the Samantabhadra, Hayagrīva, Phur-pa series already discussed. On the basis of this evidence alone, it may be suggested that this is a form of Phur-pa. Further support may be found in the fact that two-armed, three-faced forms of Phur-pa holding a *vajra* in the right hand are found in various series of the *dharmapāla* depicted in rNying-ma-pa paintings. A one-faced example of this type, holding a scorpion in his left hand, is seen in Figure 70 (the attribute of the left hand seems to vary considerably, although the scorpion and his red color also identify this as a version of the “Fierce Guru” manifestation of Padmasambhava as well [see discussion of Example 46]). There seems to be considerable variation in this particular icon, such as the number of faces, the attribute in the left hand, and in this case, the face on the abdomen. Yet, given the consistent pattern of representation of Phur-pa, there seems to be little doubt that this is simply a rare version properly belonging in the second category, *phur-pa* with representations of Phur-pa. The reasons for its inclusion in this section are that it is unique, it contains considerable variance from the more “normal” versions and the presence of the face in the abdomen is unknown in any other representation of Phur-pa.

Example 46 (not illustrated⁶²):

Totally unique, this “sculpture” of Phur-pa may not actually be a ritual implement per se; only a first hand examination of the piece, to see if it is readily removable from its base, will determine this. Yet because of the presence of the blade, it is possible to determine that the image is definitely intended to be a *phur-pa* as well as an image of Phur-pa. With the exception of the presence of the attributes and the *khyung* above the head of the deity, the image is identical to that shown in Figure 70 and may, therefore, be identified as a version of the rNying-ma-pa protective deity. However, the image is much more than just that: it is also Padmasambhava. The presence of the *khyung* on the top of the deity’s head indicates that this is also the “Fierce Guru” manifestation of Padmasambhava, who is described as being red in color, holding a *vajra* in his right hand and a scorpion in his left, and having a *garuda* (*khyung*) on top of his head.⁶³ The deity in the example displays *tarjani mudrā*, which is often used as a general substitute for protective implements. The iconological implication of this implement is that it is Padmasambhava in his manifestation of the “Fierce Guru” and as the protector of the rNying-ma-pa, Phur-pa.

One interesting feature of the representation of the deity is the presence of the Mount Meru pedestal in a basically Indian form. This particular type of pedestal is usually reserved for those images that are copies of Indian icons or are following the Indian pattern of iconographic representation. Normally, one might expect that an image of Phur-pa would either be on a lotus pedestal or on a triangle, but in this case, there is a definite allusion to a possible Indian origin for the iconography of the deity, as mentioned in the introduction to this study.

Concluding Remarks to Section I, Tibetan *Phur-pa*

If anything in this study is self-evident, it is the variety of forms that *phur-pa* may take. There have been over twenty subtypes and several unique versions of the implement discussed thus far. Yet, there is an underlying consistency of symbolism and interpretation that is much

⁶¹ Meredith, “The Phurbu: The Use and Symbolism of the Tibetan Magic Dagger”, p. 245.

⁶² Not illustrated. See Alice Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, Plate LIb.

⁶³ Chang, *Esoteric Teachings of the Tibetan Tantra*, pp. 3–4. Also see Appendix IV.

more unified than the outward appearance of the objects would suggest. These include the equation of the implement with the *vajra*, its association with the “cult” of Padmasambhava, the varied yet constant representation of the deity, Phur-pa, and the constant repetition of the unity of all of the concepts involved. This is, of course, consistent with Buddhist theory propounding the unity of all living things.

The concept of the implement seems to be a composite of the universality of the *vajra* coupled with the destructive aspects of a Bön-po exorcistic weapon which the Buddhists assimilated at a very early date in the history of the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet. Together, the implements convey the quintessence of destructive power, combining the *vajra*, which has well known destructive powers of its own that are still emphasized by Vajrayāna Buddhists, with the *phur-pa* dagger, with its unknown but apparently long history of similar power. Through the equation to the *vajra*, it is tied to the central theme of the Universal *sahaja* realization itself.

SECTION II

Introduction:

Vajrayāna Buddhism as practiced in Nepal is one of the least studied aspects of Buddhism in any part of the world. One of the principal reasons for this is that it is still an active, deliberately esoteric religion, maintained by a very few individuals who are centered mainly in the Kathmandu Valley. At one point in the history of Nepalese Buddhism, it became associated with two Newari castes, the Brahmabhiksus and the Sakyabhiksus (Bare), within the sociological structure of Nepal, and as a result, was closed to all outsiders. Even among the Sakyabhiksus, the religion at its highest philosophical level is only practiced by a subgroup known as the Vajrācharyas (Guwaju), said to number only a few hundred individuals at the most. Thus, any effort to gain information by outsiders is taken as an attempt to breach the ritual security of the caste and is rebuffed. No insider is willing to divulge any information since this might affect the well-being of his caste. Sources for information on Nepalese Buddhism have just begun to be tapped and the next several years should see a considerable change in the situation. These sources include collections of manuscripts in several countries, Tibetan informants who have studied in Nepal,⁶⁴ and the iconography of the images that are to be seen at the various *bahals*.

The type of Buddhism practiced in Nepal is a form of Vajrayāna following the teachings of the Mahāsiddhis, especially Saraha, Nāgarjunā, Virūpa, Kukkurīpa, etc. It emphasizes the *Guhyasamājatantra* and the cycles of Samvara. This is not to suggest that these are practiced exclusively, as there are many other Vajrayāna texts known and presumably followed in Nepal, but to look for traces of Hinayāna Buddhism in modern Nepal, as some authors have chosen to do, is bound to be fruitless. The essence of the practices is striving toward *sahaja* realization by the *ḍākinī* practices following the examples of the Mahāsiddhis.⁶⁵ One of the central features of *sahaja* realization practices is the deliberate combination of Buddhist and Śaivite iconography into single images. This mixed iconography gave rise to some of the criticism of the religion

⁶⁴ Tibetans are allowed to study with Nepalese Buddhists and there has been a considerable amount of exchange over the past eight or so centuries. If I may be allowed a personal note, my first awareness of the continuation of the advanced level of Nepalese Buddhist practices came from the Reverend N. Jigme. I had previously accepted the idea of nearly total degeneration espoused by most authors. I had told Reverend N. Jigme that I was planning a trip to Nepal, and in passing, mentioned the "degeneration of Buddhism" there. His reply, "Hmmm, I don't think so", was his gentle way of telling me that I was dead wrong. Thus, when my wife and I arrived in Nepal, we had been alerted to things that, but for the Reverend N. Jigme, we might not have seen.

⁶⁵ On this form of Buddhism, see S. Das Gupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, Calcutta, 1969 and Tāranātha's *History of Buddhism in India*.

as degenerate, but in reality, it was only a demonstration of the extent of the awareness of the unity of all things that characterizes *sahaja* realization.

Iconographic Considerations:

Studies dealing with Nepalese Buddhist iconography are limited to a few passing comments in works treating other aspects of Nepalese Buddhism or Nepal in general. In addition to the virtually complete Indo-Tibetan Vajrayāna pantheon, excluding the local, “converted” protective deities of Tibet, Nepal has an elaborate complex of Samvara related forms. The study of this little known iconography could be the basis of a very lengthy work and it must suffice here to give a summary of some of its most significant characteristics. The source for the following information is an untitled Nepalese manuscript of the late 19th or early 20th century, written in Newari and containing sixty-five different forms of Samvara, thirteen *ḍākinīs*, eight bodhisattvas, two protective deities and a deity named Pāpagāndevī as the major image (hereafter referred to as Samvara MS).⁶⁶ It should be noted that while the Samvara MS is decidedly Buddhist, the principal deity is being propitiated by a four-armed form of the ascetic Śiva, indicating a presumed domination of the Śaivites, but also acknowledging the importance of Śiva as a deity.

The implications of the manifold forms of Samvara are that he is the Universal deity and, in one form or another, is capable of leading his followers along the path of *sahaja* realization and that he is, in fact, the Universal itself. This assumption is borne out by the presence in Nepalese Buddhist iconography of Mahāsamvara, and a form which may be called “Viśvarūpasamvara.” The Waldschmidts, in their *Nepal: Art Treasures from the Himalayas*, illustrate a painting of Mahāsamvara⁶⁷ in union with his *prajña*, illustrating the non-duality of the *prajñā-upāya* in practice. Sexual unions of this nature are infrequently met with in Nepal and other, less obvious forms of representation of the concept are used. For example, the female sitting upon the left leg of the male deity is the version most commonly found. Figures of “Viśvarūpasamvara” (see Figures 71–74) also illustrate this concept by holding small male figures in several of his left hands and female figures in his right hands. The figure of the deity has a secondary group of arms behind those that hold the small figures, each of which holds a weapon. These symbolize his aspects as an overcomer of hindrances and his nature as a protective deity.

The rNying-ma-pa also recognize an elaborate form of Samvara (Figure 103) with twenty-five heads and forty-two arms,⁶⁸ Che-mchog yon-tan gyi lha.⁶⁹ The presence of this deity in the rNying-ma-pa iconography may indicate a connection between the specific Nepalese forms of the Samvara cycle and those of the rNying-ma-pa. Such an association might have far reaching

⁶⁶ I am most indebted to Dr. Lokesh Chandra, who put me on the trail of this unique document.

⁶⁷ Ernst and Rose Leonore Waldschmidt, *Nepal: Art Treasures from the Himalayas*, London, 1969 (English edition translated by David Wilson), Catalogue number 81 and p. 156. They also illustrate a wooden carving of “Viśvarūpasamvara,” Catalogue number 59, which they identify as Śiva. This is a minor technical error, placing the emphasis on the wrong side of the syncretism, but as the Buddhas and bodhisattvas above the main deity in Figure 71 indicate, such icons are Buddhist and therefore must be considered as Samvara.

⁶⁸ Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, p. 322.

⁶⁹ Li An-che, “Rāñ-ma-pa: The Early Form of Lamaism”, pp. 147–8, states the figure holds an “image of serene type” in each hand.

implications for the interpretation of the *phur-pa* and the deity (see Appendices IV and V). As I have noted above in the discussion of the iconography of the deity Phur-pa, there are physical similarities of certain unique elements shared by “Viśvarūpasamvara” and Phur-pa. In Vajrayāna Buddhism, parallels of this sort are not accidental, but without knowing the innermost secrets of the esoteric traditions of both the rNying-ma-pa and the Newari Buddhists, it is impossible to carry the analogy further.

Taking the images of the different forms of Samvara in the Samvara MS as a criterion, it becomes evident that it is possible to conceive of nearly any combination of the faces, attributes and other aspects of the deity as a separate “subform” of the main icon. Thus, one finds various animal-headed types, a variety of combinations of attributes, different gestures, and all manner of other elements combined into individual configurations. The permutations of this deity are seemingly developed along rather loose lines and lack the tightly controlled conventionalism of other aspects of Nepalese iconographics. In contrast, the extreme conservatism of tradition for which Nepal is more generally noted may be illustrated by the fact that iconographic conventions which were current in the eighth and ninth centuries in Magadha are still actively followed in Nepal. Thus, this comparative break with the traditional trends in Nepalese iconography is important since it indicates an area of common ground tying together some of the *kīla* (*phur-pa*) that will be discussed as aspects of this deity.

Another aspect of “Viśvarūpasamvara” is the presence of the *kīla* among his attributes. These have three distinctive sides to the blade and a *vajra* terminating the upper portion of the handle. One of these may be seen in the lowest outer right hand of the deity illustrated in Figure 72. Several of his attendants also carry *kīla*. The two most easily seen in the illustration are the uppermost *dharmapāla* type figure in the left center of the *prabhāmaṇḍala* and the lower counterpart on the right center. In the Samvara MS, several of the forms of Samvara carry *kīla* and these will be treated in their turn.

A comparison of the image of “Viśvarūpasamvara” in Figures 71 and 72 with two other versions of the same deity will serve to establish iconographically determining features as well as some of the parameters of variation within the type (Figures 73 and 74). The most conspicuous difference is the number of tiers of heads, the image in Figure 72 having seven while those in Figures 73 and 74 have only five. Another prominent difference is in the expression on the face in the middle of the abdomen. In Figure 72 this has its mouth gaping open, while the other two are closed and show only bared fangs. A third difference is in the number of arms and the attributes that are held in the hands. The image in Figure 72 holds twenty-eight small figures and a considerable number of attributes—each hand holds something. The image in Figure 73 holds only four small figures and a number of attributes, but there is a circle of arms at the rear of the image which hold nothing in their hands. The last image of this comparison, Figure 74, holds six small figures, has a number of attributes, but has two circles of empty handed arms. Just for emphasis, it may be noted that the image of this deity illustrated by the Waldschmidts⁷⁰ varies considerably from the three versions given above.

These significant differences demonstrate that there is considerable range for variation within the iconomorphic type of the deity and that the iconographic criteria are somewhat

⁷⁰ Waldschmidt, *Nepal: Art Treasures from the Himalayas*, Catalogue number 59.

loosely applied. Yet, there are determining features to this deity. By “determining features” I refer to those elements which do not vary so widely and which may be considered as potentially characteristic of the deity. Among these are the face in the abdomen, the dangling legs, the heads of the animal skirt on the knees, the inclusion of several animal heads among the heads of the deity and the presence of the sword in the top right hand in the row of hands that holds the attributes. The presence of the small figures is also most unusual and must be considered to relate the deity to the Heruka class of deities, since Heruka is the only other major Buddhist deity that exhibits such a feature. Since Samvara is a Heruka, this is not surprising. The dangling legs are extremely rare in Buddhist iconography and while I have no knowledge of the nature of the relationship, I am sure that it is no mere coincidence that Phur-pa and “Viśvarūpasamvara” are the only two deities that have them as an aspect of their anatomy. Since these two deities are the principal personifications of *phur-pa/kīla* forms, there may be some relationship between this element and their association with the implement.

The Samvara MS contains an image of the female counterpart of “Viśvarūpasamvara” called Pāpagāndevī (Figure 75). She occurs after the colophon and at the beginning of a series of thirteen *dākinis*, all well known as part of the Mahāsiddhi’s methodology, and is in the position of being their progenitor. She holds a multitude of small figures, all male ascetics, in her right hands and females in her left hands. This leaves little doubt that she is the personification of the union of *upāya* and *prajñā* and that her worship is the whole complex of practices connected with the Nepalese form of Buddhism (not necessarily the “popular” level, however). She has one distinct determining characteristic, a billowing upward sweep to her hair. It rises to a point and the secondary heads clearly issue out of the hair itself. This may be determined by the rather broad expanse of hair between the principal group of faces and all those above. This particular convention is unique to this deity. A careful search of all available iconographic material shows no other deity, male or female, that has this characteristic.

The two deities described above are the quintessence of the iconographical communicative forms of Nepalese Buddhism. The term *viśvarūpa* applies to both of them and, in theory, they are inseparable, for they are aspects of the same approach to the Universal. With one very notable exception, all of the *kīla* that I have come across that are of Nepalese origin are forms of one of these two deities. It may be noted that there have been several *phur-pa* which are of Nepalese manufacture, for Tibetan patronage, discussed in the foregoing section. These should not be considered along with the Nepalese *kīla* since their iconography does not reflect any aspect of Nepalese iconography presently known. The Ādi-Buddha of the Mahāsiddhi system is rDo-rje-’chang/Vajradhara and does not place any emphasis on either rTa-mgrin/Hayagrīva or Padmasambhava.⁷¹ The exception to this is a Śiva *kīla* of a most spectacular kind and will be considered in its turn.

⁷¹ Samantabhadra in the position of Dharmakāya seems to occur only in cycles that are either part of or can be traced to the rNying-ma-pa iconography. The emphasis on Samantabhadra seems to have been a part of esoteric iconographies of the seventh and eighth centuries in eastern India, while the “cult” of Vajradhara may not have spread until the tenth or eleventh century.

“Viśvarūpasamvara” *Kila*:

Nepalese Example 1 (Figure 76):

Material: copper
Techniques: casting, chasing
Length: approximately 7 inches
Condition: no particular signs of wear
Region of Origin: Kathmandu Valley
Date: 19th century

At present, no particular name may be given to the form of Samvara that is depicted as the handle of this *kila*, although I am certain that one must exist. Each of the varieties of Samvara in the Samvara MS is given a specific appellation, for example, Dhūnusamvara and Kukkūgasamvara (Figures 84 and 82, respectively). However, the presence of the face in the abdomen, head from the skin skirt on the knee and the consistent pattern of weapons leave no alternative but to place this and the following two examples in the “Viśvarūpasamvara” category. It is apparent that the protective aspects of the deity are being emphasized and that the more transcendental aspects have been omitted. The features of the face of this example are too indistinct to determine whether they represent human, animal, or angry deities. Certainly, there is an angry appearance to the countenance and, therefore, the basic emotional content is easily recognizable. The face in the abdomen appears to be feline, but this may only be an attempt at rendering the requisite ferocity. As we have seen, there is a considerable variation in this feature on full icons, but the idea of viciousness seems to be sustained in all examples.

Since the attributes carried by this deity are not very carefully rendered, a summary may prove useful. From the top, the attributes in the proper right hands are the sword, *damaru*, arrow, *vajra*-topped pointed staff with a banner tied around it (probably a *kila*, definitely not an *ankuśa* as it may appear from the photograph). The attributes of the left hands, from the top are *triśūla*, bow, scarf and an unidentifiable “T” shaped object. The device at the top of the head is a common Nepalese abbreviation of the *vajra*. It rests on a tripartite support, each of the branches issuing from the brace of the center of the back of one of the faces. This feature has been seen holding the horse’s head and the *vajra* in Tibetan *phur-pa*. The Buddhist implications of the presence of the *vajra* have already been discussed for the Tibetan *phur-pa*, and the fundamental symbolism of its representing the *vajra* nature of the deity is exactly the same.

Nepalese Example 2 (Figure 77):

Material: copper
Techniques: casting, chasing
Length: approximately 7 inches
Condition: some attributes broken but no other sign of wear
Region of Origin: Kathmandu Valley
Date: 19th century

Again, this deity probably has a specific name and it may be different from that of the last example, since each permutation in the Samvara MS has a distinguishing appellation, but in this case, the name is unknown. This example differs from the last in that the faces of the deity are clearly animals, apparently all suidines. Such physiognomy is present on all of the examples of major icons of “Viśvarūpasamvara” that I have been able to examine and is well within the parameters of the icon. The attributes held by the deity are somewhat indistinct, but include the sword, *damaru*, bow (top broken) and flaming *cakra* (sun?) in the right hands from the top and a shield and three other unclear attributes in the left hands from the top.

Nepalese Example 3 (Figure 78):

Material: copper
Techniques: casting, chasing
Length: about 9 inches
Condition: considerable wear
Region of Origin: Kathmandu Valley
Date: 19th century

This example seems to demarcate the lower limit of iconographic complication of “Viśvarūpasamvara” *kīla*. The position, attitude and attributes indicate that this is a member of this group, but there are several major differences between it and the two preceding examples. The features of the face are more human and there are only four arms. The abdomen is open and has a triangular depression in its center and the garland of severed heads has been much more strongly emphasized. In addition, there is a *makara*’s head at the top of the blade and the serpents are present on the side of the blade. This figure closely parallels a form of Samvara depicted in the Samvara MS (Reverse Fold 1, top center) called Kapkaṭasamvara, who is shown with his *prajñā* and has six arms and only one face (Figure 79).

There is a fairly substantial number of *kīla* that fall into the above category. Unfortunately, most of these are in the hands of “mystery mongers” who are busy fantasizing some occult nature to these implements that is wholly beyond the intentions of their originators.

Nepalese Example 4 (Figures 80 and 81):

Note: This implement is a “tourist” piece, made in quantity in Patan and available in the bazaars of Kathmandu, Patan and in the tourist shops of New Delhi. I have included it here because I have seen virtually identical implements set out for use in the shrines of several *bahals*. It was not possible to photograph the original examples in any meaningful manner and thus, I have resorted to illustrating this type with a copy, albeit an accurate one.⁷²

Material: bronze
Technique: casting
Length: 11¾ inches
Condition: no signs of wear; questionable dark patina
Region of Origin: Patan (Nepal)
Date: ca. 1964–1965 (others still available in 1969–1970)

The main deity of this implement is “Viśvarūpasamvara” in his full form. In spite of the crudity of execution, he is easily identifiable by the arms brought together in front of the chest, the dangling legs, the configuration of the heads, and the multiplicity of the arms. He is attended by two small deities on either side. The central figure is in the position of being the emanator of the *kīla*, but just below him is a series of three heads, arranged in the manner of a *khaṭvāṅga* (see discussion above). The *khaṭvāṅga* is well known in Nepal and is usually carried by the female counterparts of the deities (for an example see Figure 82, Kukkūgasamvara). Undoubtedly, the symbolism is the same as for the Tibetan version, but in this case, the upper face, representing attachment, is that of an angry deity. Beneath the skull is the head of a *makara*, from which the blade issues. This *kīla* reiterates the theme of destroying aversion to death, confusion in practice, and attachment to anything in order to achieve reintegration with the Universal, the latter represented by “Viśvarūpasamvara” who is, of course, all things in the universe. Through these steps, the practitioner would achieve *sahaja* realization. The question remains, can it really be said

⁷² In all fairness, and in spite of my opinion expressed above, the similarity of the *kīla* to ones in use suggests that there is the possibility that the implement was, in fact, made for use but was simply sold to a curio dealer rather than a practicing Buddhist. But in this case, the implement was definitely treated as a curio.

that the *kila* is used for such supramundane purposes in Nepalese Buddhism? Among the upper level initiates of the religion, I am positive that it is, but until more is known about the esoteric levels of Nepalese practices, this opinion must remain just that—an opinion.

A *Kila* of Pāpagāndevī:

Nepalese Example 5 (Figure 83):

Material: copper, semi-precious stones, gilding

Techniques: casting, repousse, riveting, stone setting (in pitch)

Length: unknown, about 24 inches?

Condition: the implement has been cleaned to a raw metal state by the museum's conservation department and first hand examination yields no evidence of use. However, the photograph, which was made prior to cleaning, shows signs of wear to the prominent features.

Region of Origin: Kathmandu Valley

Date: 18th or 19th century

The unique formation of the hair arrangement clearly ties this *kila* to Pāpagāndevī (compare to Figure 75). The small heads issuing from the hair are those of a dog and a vulture, both animals of the cremation grounds. Their presence indicates the deity's nature as the essence of the fruit of the ascetic achievement of the "graveyard" and reiterates the fact that she and her emanations, the *dākinīs*, are creatures who inhabit cremation grounds. The presence of the animals reinforces the identification of the deity, since a deity other than the personification of the *dākinīs* would be unlikely to include so clear a reference to the cremation grounds. The *vajra* at the top of the head fulfills the same iconographic function as it had on previous examples, but it is very elaborately portrayed in this case. The faces of the deity show a most unusual feature for Nepalese images in general, and especially so for a deity identified as a female—that is, a beard. With the exception of the ubiquitous Bhairava images, deities in Nepalese iconography are invariably beardless (for a *kila* with a Bhairava face, see Nepalese Example 8, Figure 87). Further, the type of beard on Bhairava images is very different from that seen here. Since the hair arrangement and the presence of the animals issuing out of the central portion of it clearly determine the identification, the presence of the beard must be assumed to be a statement of the masculine aspect of the Universal. Thus, it may be suggested that it is intended that this is a composite deity, consisting of both Pāpagāndevī and "Viśvarūpasamvara". Such a suggestion is exactly consistent with the conception of duality of the deified Universal, which is male-female, *prajñā-upāya*.

The rest of the implement contains a number of unique features which also deserve considerable attention. The shaft of the handle is ornamented with a raised band bordered on both the top and bottom with *triratna* motifs. In the center of the band are three foliated forms, each containing a group of five stones set in an arrangement of the basic *maṇḍala* of the Vajradhātu. Lower in the shaft of the handle are three stones, each set in the center of a flame motif in the manner of the universal treasure. The corners of the blade are surmounted by *makara* heads sculpted in the manner of Chinese style dragons and, instead of a single head, there are three, one at each corner of the blade. (The Chinese convention for the dragon is very popular in Nepal and may be seen at nearly every *baḥal* of any size.) On each face of the blade, there are double strands of gems pendant from the hilt and enclosing a single gem-filled eye. Eyes are a protection against evil and are widely found in Nepal, especially at the side of doors, but are best known from their presence on the upper portion of several of the great *caityas* where they are said to represent the eyes of the Ādi-Buddha. Below the pendant gems are plaques depicting Śrīivṛṣamvara, a six-armed deity of a devotional nature.⁷³ He is not protective since he holds no weapons. He holds the sun and moon in the upper right and left hands respectively, symbols of modes of Buddhist practice, the middle pair are

⁷³ Samvara manuscript, reverse, Folio 3, Illustration 5.

in *añjali mudrā*, a symbol of devotion, while the lower pair both hold what appear to be flaying knives, symbols of the destruction of attachment. This imagery would indicate that it is the purpose of this deity to personify practice and devotion as the method of destroying attachment. The last element on the blade is another representation of the flaming universal treasure. The overall implications of the iconography of the implement are the destruction of the last of the three fetters that bind one to *samsāra*, attachment, and the promise of the ultimate attainment of the Universal.

As far as I have been able to determine, this implement should be considered unique. However, this does not exclude the possibility that there may be similar implements in use in Nepalese *bahals*.

Generalized *Kīla* (Nepalese):

Two types of *kīla* are commonly depicted in the hands of Buddhist deities. It may be suggested that these are intended to convey the presence of any *kīla* or *kīla* in general, rather than specific types of implements (Figures 84 and 85 in the hands of the deities).

SUBTYPE 1: *KĪLA* WITH A *VAJRA* AT THE TERMINATION OF THE HANDLE

Nepalese Example 6 (Figure 84):

Material: paper, mineral colors

Technique: painted

Length (of *kīla*): $\frac{5}{8}$ inch

Region of Origin: Kathmandu Valley

Date: late 19th or early 20th century

Dhūnusamvara (Figure 84) carries a *kīla* which is terminated by a *vajra* at the upper end of the handle. This is, by far, the most common type of generalized *kīla* that is represented in Nepalese paintings and sculpture (for other examples, see Figure 72). The discussion of the Tibetan version of the generalized *phur-pa* also applies here as well, especially the idea of the equation of the *vajra* and the *kīla* and the destructive powers of the two combined.

SUBTYPE 2: *KĪLA* WITH PEACOCK FEATHERS AT THE TERMINATION OF THE HANDLE

Nepalese Example 7 (Figure 85):

(Technical information as above, Figure 84)

Nyajasamvara⁷⁴ (Figure 85) carries a *kīla* which has the *vajra* replaced by a set of three (implying five?) peacock feathers. I have discussed previously my opinion that these are a transferral symbol for the *vajra* and will simply point out that their presence here in a position usually occupied by a *vajra* strongly supports that suggestion. Representations of feathered *kīla* are quite rare in Nepalese art and very few of them have come to my attention.

⁷⁴ Reading is tentative.

A Śiva-Emanated *Kīla*:

Nepalese Example 8 (Figures 86 and 87):

Material: bronze, iron, semi-precious stones

Techniques: casting, chasing, forging, filigree, gilding, stone setting

Length: about 26 inches

Condition: little sign of wear

Region of Origin: Kathmandu Valley

Date: 19th century

The unity of Śaivism and Buddhism in Nepal for certain portions of the religious community seems to be nearly complete, and an apparent outgrowth of this theoretical bond is a whole class of images, utensils and symbols that indiscriminately combines Śaivite and Buddhist iconography. The study of these obviously syncretic icons, however, could form the basis of another very lengthy work. One example of this phenomenon is this *kīla*. The principal deity may easily be identified as Śiva by the presence of the crescent moon in the headdress. In addition, one of the faces is that of his angry aspect, Bhairava, identified by his characteristic beard and the protruding tongue. In *sahaja* theory, there is no dichotomy in Śiva's personifying the Universal on a Buddhist implement. The nine pointed *vajra* in the handle is simply a more explicit version of the usual implement as it is conceived in *sahaja* realization practices. In addition to the usual iconography, the extra points represent the female counterparts to the Jinas. One fascinating fact about the existence of this implement is that it drives home with sledgehammer blows how much more there is to learn about Nepalese Buddhism and its rituals.

SECTION III

A Chinese "*Phur-pa*":

The presence and strength of the Tibetan church in China during the centuries since the Yüan has only begun to be studied, but the work of men like Lessing, Sekino, Petech, Tucci, Rock and many others has pointed out that the "Lamaist" form of Buddhism was a very important part of Chinese religious life at all levels. Yet, for all the *phur-pa/kīla* that I have examined, only one type may be said to be "Chinese," with no obvious counterpart in either Tibet or Nepal. This statement does not take into account the many *phur-pa* of Chinese manufacture that fall into the Tibetan categories, nor does it label as Chinese those implements of the Western Chinese-Eastern Tibetan interface region that is predominantly Tibetan in culture, such as Kham, Amdo, etc.

Chinese Example 1 (Figure 88):

Material: bronze

Techniques: casting, chasing

Length: about 9 inches

Condition: considerable wear

Region of Origin: North China

Date: style continued from ca. mid-18th century to recent times

This example is one of several implements that are virtually identical. Of these, including this one, three are specifically known to have come out of northern China. The main differences between this implement and others discussed in the section on Tibetan *phur-pa* are stylistic. Only two really different elements occur on the piece: the presence of the polygon and the sphere in the center of the shaft of the handle and the foliate design on the blade. The three-faced head of the deity is present along with the two endless knots in the handle. There is a *makara's* head, very abstracted, at the top of the blade and, of course, the blade is tripartite. The sphere in the shaft portion is incised with an abstraction of the character *shou*, "longevity", but even this motif was common in Tibet, although it was not to my knowledge used on *phur-pa*; however, it can hardly be said to be distinctive of Chinese *phur-pa*. On the whole, the only characteristic that seems to be non-Tibetan is the simplification and partial abstraction of the iconographic elements. In the preceding section on Tibetan *phur-pa*, much of the range of stylistic variation within the Tibetan complex has been shown, yet nothing like this type of simplification has been seen. I do not mean to imply that Chinese religious art of the eighteenth to twentieth centuries was characterized by simplification—exactly the opposite is true. But in contrast to the presumed Tibetan models, the type of *phur-pa* seen in this example exhibits considerable simplification.

SECTION IV

Bön-po *Phur-pa* (Folk Tradition?):

I have been told several times by Tibetan informants that Bön-po *phur-pa* were “different” from “real” *phur-pa* (“not so nice”), but I had not had the opportunity to see any examples until an acquaintance in Darjeeling with whom I was discussing *phur-pa* showed me two Bön-po implements that had belonged to Bön priests who had been active in the area. He felt that these reflected a very old and different (from the Buddhist) tradition. I present them here with no more than their technical descriptions. Obviously, they *are* different from any of the Buddhist implements that have formed the substance of this paper, but I know nothing of their actual use, age or iconography. There are some basic similarities to Buddhist implements (triangular blades, deities on top of the handle, a distinct central shaft in the midsection of the handle, etc.), but the overall feeling of the pieces is very different than the Buddhist examples.

Bön-po Example 1 (Figure 89):

Material: wood, copper, iron (chain)

Techniques: carving of wood, beating of metal

Length: 11 7/8 inches

Condition: highly burnished from wear

Region of Origin: Darjeeling area

Date: apparently considerable age, judging by wear. Perhaps several hundred years old. Similar wear on Buddhist implements is usually associated with examples that can be assigned to the 16th or 17th century on stylistic grounds.

The very abstract nature of the elements of this implement severely limits the possibility of interpretation. The three faces are quite distinct, all very similar in features and expression, but the rest of the *phur-pa* poses several problems. The shaft of the handle seems to recall a *vajra*, but it has too many vertical sections and the number of them is different in its two presumed ends. At the top of the blade is a very graceful curving device, but no figurative connotation or symbolism is known for it. On the sides of the blades, there are crosses or tridents, but again, the real meaning is unknown and I fear that the identification of the trident may be a little hopeful more than anything else. At both ends of the *phur-pa* are copper coverings, which may be presumed to add, metaphorically, strength to the implement. At the top is a chain which may have held some attachment, perhaps a cloth.

Bön-po Example 2 (Figures 90–92):

Material: wood, iron (nail and wire)
Technique: carving
Length: $8\frac{5}{8}$ inches
Condition: well worn
Region of Origin: Darjeeling area
Date: ca. 19th century?

This implement exhibits several distinctive characteristics which deserve attention. The head of the deity has two faces instead of the more usual three, or the less common, one. The motifs on the shaft of the handle are completely problematic in their content, but the central three may be interpretable as a *vajra*. However, there are the same objections to this interpretation as in the previous example. The most interesting feature of the implement, in terms of content, is the blade with a different symbol on each side. There is a human figure in a position strongly reminiscent of the figures on some of the paper charms used in exorcistic rituals, a trident and a pair of serpents. At this time, nothing can be offered in the way of an interpretation.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

There is no intention that this study be more than a first attempt to get into the problem of *phur-pa*/*kila* and their symbolism. As more implements become known, different interpretations of iconographic themes will become apparent. Further, it is to be hoped that some of the many *phur-pa* ritual texts will be translated or, at least studied. As is obvious from the foregoing, both Nepalese *kila* and Bön-po *phur-pa* are wide open fields for investigation. Both of these areas will require extensive field work and will probably prove to be most difficult because of the esoteric nature of the traditions surrounding the rituals.

One area that has been deliberately omitted from the present study is the Ma-phur, the large sculptures of *phur-pa* that are kept in the monasteries and are the source of power for all the smaller *phur-pa* belonging to the members of the community. Designs for these occur in the illustrations of the C. P. G. (see Appendix IV and Figures 97-101) and it is probable that the *kila* of Pāpagāndevī (Nepalese Example 5) functioned as one of these implements. Yet, I have been unable to find information from any source that provides any insight into real iconography or the full nature of their function. There are other areas that offer hints of open fields for investigation. The paper charms used in the rituals, for example, are of many different types, each having its own special *mantras* and purposes. These could form the basis of a separate study. What is the relationship of the planetary deities to the *phur-pa* rituals? There are images of gZa' (Rāhu) stabbing a demon held in a triangle with a *phur-pa*: how do these relate?

I feel that the questions that this study raises far exceed those that it might answer. The symbolism and ritual use of *phur-pa*, in both Buddhist and Bön-po forms, is an important aspect of the religious life of Tibet. I would sincerely appreciate any new information, divergent views or corrections that my readers might be able to offer on *phur-pa* or *phur-pa*-like implements, rituals or texts relating to them.

APPENDIX I

(*dGra-lha*)

The *dgra-lha* ("enemy gods") are a class of powerful, protective deities⁷⁵ that have seldom been shown in publications. I have, therefore, included a *thang-ka* which illustrates a cycle of the *dgra-lha* and which specifically shows a figure riding a *khyung* (*garuḍa*) as the principal deity. The iconography of this classification of deities is, at best, unclear. Tucci, in his *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, illustrates two but mentions them only in passing and Nebesky-Wojkowitz, while devoting a short chapter which gives some descriptive iconography to them did not present any illustrations of them. The main deity of this painting (Figure 93) is probably closely related to Phrag-lha as described by Nebesky-Wojkowitz,⁷⁶ the basic associations being the riding of a *khyung* by the principal deity and the carrying of the lance-with-a-banner attribute of the attendant deities. It might have been possible to give a more detailed iconography of this painting since there is a lengthy dedication on the reverse, but a careful study of the inscription demonstrates that it is surprisingly inexplicit in its invocations and, in fact, only gives invocations for seven deities in spite of the fact that ten are depicted in the painting. The invocations have proved too difficult to translate without further study, but one may determine the nature of the deities and of the actions that they are to perform from portions of it.

It may be assumed, for two reasons, that the principal deity is *dGra srog dmar-po*, since he is red and the invocation to him is held until the last. Further, it seems to be the longest invocation of the series. It is apparent that this deity is very similar to the one described by Nebesky-Wojkowitz⁷⁷ and from the nature of the attendant deities and the *vāhana* of the *garuḍa*, it seems entirely possible that this is simply another aspect of Phrag-lha. However, this point is immaterial to the discussion of *phur-pa*. It is the presence of the *khyung* and the protective nature of the deity, in the specific harm-doing sense that is associated with the *khyung*-riding deity of the *phur-pa* in question. Another significant aspect of these deities is the total lack of corresponding personifications in India, with the resultant general opinions that they are indigenous to Tibet and that they pre-existed Buddhism. Their association with the *phur-pa* strengthens the body of evidence that the *phur-pa* was a pre-Buddhist implement itself and that it must have been adopted into the Buddhist religion.

Among this class of deities, there is a cycle in which the main deity is Phur-pa 'phrin las lha tshogs ("Phur-pa [who is the] assembly of deities from 'Phrin"), whom Nebesky-Wojkowitz equates to *rDo-rje phur-pa* and for whom he gives the following five main aspects:⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, pp. 318-340.

⁷⁶ Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, p. 332.

⁷⁷ Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, p. 332.

⁷⁸ Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, pp. 322-3.

Location	Tibetan	Sanskrit	Color	Material of lower body (blade)
center east south west north	sKu mchog Thugs mchog Yon Tan gSung mchog 'Phrin las	Buddhakila Vajrakila Ratnakila Padmakila Karmakila	azure white yellow red green	conch silver gold copper iron

This is clearly a reiteration of the cycle of the five Jina Buddhas, the *kulas*, the directions and colors all being the same as the Jina cycle. But further, this particular series also refers to five of the eight tutelary deities of the rNying-ma-pa⁷⁹ as sKu-mchog refers to 'Jam-dpal sku'i lha, Thugs mchog refers to Yang-dag thugs kyi lha, Yon-tan refers to Che-mchog yon-tan gyi lha, gSung-mchog refers to Padma-gsung gi lha and 'Phrin las refers to Phur-pa 'phrin las. In effect, this consistency or parallelism of the cycles is a simple restatement of one of the basic cycles of Vajrayāna Buddhism and has the result of equating a group of the *dgra-lha* to the Jina themselves. If the deities are pre-Buddhist, as the trend of evidence suggests, this association with the Jina serves to demonstrate two factors in their assimilation into Buddhism. The first is the technique of assimilation of a foreign deity into the pantheon wherein it becomes equated with the principal cycles by means of having it exhibit certain characteristics of that cycle. This is a simple device and yet it seems to have been very commonly used in Buddhism and must have been effective in giving acceptability to the deity being assimilated. The other side of the assimilation is that it was so complete as to nearly obscure the previous non-Buddhist nature of the deity. Knowing that any given protective deity is a *yi-dam* ("bound by oath") to protect the Buddhist faith would seem to indicate that the deity in question might have been "converted" to Buddhism but it tells nothing of its previous nature, whether it was malevolent or beneficial, of the sky or earthbound or anything else. Almost all that there is to go on is the name of the deity and the physical characteristics that it exhibits.

This particular series of associations also demonstrates the continuing reinforcement of iconographic precepts that is common in Buddhism. The Jina are equated to the tutelary, specific aspects of one of the tutelaries are equated back to the other tutelaries and to the Jina. As a result, any given aspect of Phrin-las lha tshog can be said to be of any level of the pantheon and yet self-existent as the separate entity of a pre-Buddhist deity.

⁷⁹ Li An-che, "Rñin-ma-pa: the Early Form of Lamaism", p. 147.

APPENDIX II

(Facial feature conventions)

The implements that have been examined in this article demonstrate a remarkable uniformity of facial expressions. One might expect just the contrary, given the variety of iconographic and stylistic types that have been considered. This is not to suggest that all *phur-pa* have similar expressions on the three faces as there is considerable variation, but a major percentage of the implements examined reflect similar conventions. This similarity cuts across all types and iconographic considerations. To demonstrate this aspect of *phur-pa*, I have prepared comparative composite illustrations (Figures 94 and 95) which show only the features of the deity in each of the selected implements. It has not been possible to include all those *phur-pa* that one may wish to see in such a context as several *phur-pa* could not be photographed from more than one side due to museum display and other considerations.

The expressions of deities often play an important role in their iconography and are frequently part of the description of their iconomorph. For example, in Bhattacharyya's *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, citing the *Sādhnamālā*, the expressions of Hayagrīva are given as: "His first face has a smiling appearance, the right has a protruding tongue and he bites his lips in his left."⁸⁰ The uniformity of expression types found on *phur-pa* is probably due to the fact that there are only a limited number of expressions that are used to display the angry mood of the deities and that these are repeated on the faces of the deity of the implements. By far the most common expressions are "biting the lower lip", "bared fangs", "snarling with bared teeth" and "protruding tongue." Occasionally, there are divergencies from the four more common types, but in general, *phur-pa* with triple faces would be expected to exhibit three of the four types of expressions. The examples that I have chosen to illustrate this appendix are intended to demonstrate something of the extreme limits of variation which may occur. Thus, in these it will be shown that there are sometimes combined forms of expressions as well as variations on a single type, e.g. "curved bared fangs" versus "straight bared fangs."

Primary Convention:

Statistically, the largest number of implements have facial expressions that may be directly related to those of the following three examples. This is not to imply that even a majority of *phur-pa* follow this convention but rather, thirty to forty percent. The rest vary in some manner that distinctly separates them from this convention. Such differences vary in degree anywhere from one face being unusual to all three faces being radically different. Some of these major variations have been noted in the main body of this study.

⁸⁰ Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, Calcutta, 1958, p. 165.

I. Example 31 (Figure 48 and top row of Figure 94):

In this example, the central face is shown with bared fangs, the (proper) right face with a protruding tongue and the (proper) left biting the lower lip.⁸¹ It may also be noted that the eyelids of the center face droop slightly in the center while those of the other two faces are arched open.

II. Example 5 (Figure 12 and second row in Figure 94):

Relative to the position of the faces in relation to the head of the *makara*, the facial expressions have rotated one step to the right. They are in the same order but the central face is shown biting the lower lip, the right face with bared fangs and the left face with a protruding tongue (presently missing but clearly, originally present). However, the drooping eyelids are associated still with the central face rather than having moved with the bared fangs convention to the right face.

III. Example 13 (Figure 21 and third row in Figure 94):

In this relatively crude piece of the folk tradition, the central face shows the protruding tongue, the right face has bared fangs and the face on the left exhibits the lower lip biting convention. Here, the movement is not a simple rotation but rather a rearrangement of the sequence. The drooping eyelid is not portrayed, possibly because of the relative crudity of the sculpture.

As the above three examples illustrate, there does not seem to be a particular arrangement to the expressions in their relationship to the other elements of the *phur-pa*. The central face in each of the examples is different and the sequence changes between the first two and the third. Yet, as on any *phur-pa*, these three facial expressions occur so distinctly and so consistently that it indicates that they form a mandatory part of the basic iconomorph. In the following examples, it is possible that some of the facial expressions that will be seen are simply different interpretations of one of the preceding types but in some cases, there can be no doubt that different expression conventions are being represented.

Variant Conventions:

IV. Example 11 (Figure 18 and fourth row of Figure 94):

In the oldest example of a *phur-pa* known to me, the expressions are very similar to the “primary” convention given above, but one of those expressions repeats, with minor variations, rather than having all three present. The central face shows the protruding tongue, the right face is depicted biting the lower lip and the left face exhibits another version of the protruding tongue. The difference between the two versions of the “protruding tongue” convention is that the upper lip on the central face is arched downward in the center very slightly and that of the left face is arched upwards.

⁸¹ In all cases, the references are to the faces of the deity in their “proper” position, i.e. the deity’s left face appears to our right in the illustration.

V. Example 33 (Figure 50 and top row of Figure 95):

In this example, there is more than one interpretation possible for each of the expressions. This is probably due to the degree of wear and the lack of original detailing to the sculpture of the implement. The central face exhibits either bared fangs or a protruding tongue convention, while the right face shows either a bared fang, lower lip biting or bared lower teeth convention and the left face has a bared fang or angry smile convention. Doubtful interpretations aside, it is certain that the original maker of the implement intended that there would be recognizable differentiation between the three faces and the users of the implement were probably well aware of the intent of each of the representations.

VI. Example 23 (Figure 34 and second row in Figure 95):

All three faces are identical in this example (the tongue in the left face has been broken off and one of the teeth seems never to have been present; however, the intent of the maker is quite clear). Why this example should exhibit the same expression on all three of its faces is uncertain. There are a number of implements that do have similar faces on all three sides and such a convention must be considered to be of iconographic importance.

VII. Example 4 (Figure 11 and third row in Figure 95):

A slight variation on an implement having three similar faces is seen in this example in which all three faces exhibit the lower lip biting convention but each with its own variation. The central face does it with the additional element of outward curving fangs, the right face with no fangs or other additional elements and the left face with two straight protruding fangs. Again, these are very distinct variations in the expressions but are completely different and aside from the "primary convention."

VIII. Example 9 (Figure 16 and fourth row in Figure 95):

In this example, we find a generalized convention for the central and right faces that is undifferentiated, but which may be suggested to have possibly had some sort of distinguishing information accompanying the implement. In addition, there are signs of pitch having been used to hold something in place in the two open mouths.

It must be remembered that in Tibetan meditation practices, there was a complete identity transferral on the part of the practitioners and the deity that he was propitiating, and that part of the build-up to the transfer point was the development of the practitioner's ability to visualize the deity in question. Thus, the practitioner had his own perfect mental image of the deity; complete detail in the form of the image in front of him was unnecessary. In fact, representations of *phur-pa* were, most probably, notations of the total, with the practitioner being able to fill in the missing details of the deity from memory. Thus, all that was necessary on any given implement was the barest essential indications of the major characteristics. Even so, the finest implements were completed in considerable detail and it is from these that it is possible to establish some idea of the content of such elements as the expressions on the faces of the deities.

APPENDIX III

A Commentary on an Initiation to the Worship of Padmasambhava:

In a rNying-ma-pa ritual of initiation to the “Fierce Guru with *Phur-pa*,” translated by C.C. Chang,⁸² an idea of the nature of the practices associated with the *phur-pa* may be derived. In this ritual there are several key elements that should be called to the reader’s attention. First, the “Universal Identity” of the Guru, the deities and the practitioner is restated over and over in several different ways. Second, the purpose of the initiation, while for the spiritual benefit of the initiate, is also for the benefit of protecting others from demons and the like. While this does not come through in my commentary, one should also be aware of the rather precise ritual nature of the initiations. These initiations are not something that are altered to suit individual needs, nor are they subject to innovation in the sense of modifications. Teachings such as these are handed down from their originators to subsequent generations of disciples and are repeated by those individuals when they initiate their disciples.⁸³

Initiation of the Fierce Guru with Phur-pa (An Appellation of Padmasambhava; my comments are given in [.....]):

1. Prior to the actual initiation, there is a preparatory sequence that is practiced, invoking the Samaya Buddha [Buddha of the Vow (to attain Buddhahood)], setting the stage for the initiation (p. 31).
2. The “Wisdom” Buddhas are invoked and by means of this invocation, many Fierce Gurus come to the place of initiation (p. 31). [This initial sequence is simply the setting of the proper mood and the summoning of the deity involved in the initiation].
3. The practitioner visualizes the Samaya Buddhas and the images of the Fierce Gurus “coalesce” [indicating that they are the same].

⁸² The initiation text has been translated by C.C. Chang and edited by C.A. Muses as part of *Esoteric Teachings of the Tibetan Tantra*, n.p., 1961. In Muses’ own introduction, he explains some of the difficulties that were encountered between himself and the translator in maintaining communication. It must be assumed that there are some differences of interpretation that may be offered for some of the more esoteric passages, but that the editor and the translator were unable, because of their lack of communication, to resolve these. However, because of the valuable nature of the material and the uniqueness of the manuscript, I agree with Muses’ desire to get the information before the community in spite of the probability of certain unresolved technical questions. One only wishes that it would have been possible for him to also publish a photocopy of the manuscript. As a result, I have thought it advisable to place this information in an appendix rather than in the main body of the text.

⁸³ Chang (and Muses), *Esoteric Teachings of the Tibetan Tantra*, p. x. Hereafter, references will be given in parentheses within the body of this appendix.

4. The initiate is told to think of himself as the Fierce Guru (p. 32) [a key theme throughout the initiation is that the Fierce Guru and the practitioners are one totally undifferentiated unity]. In the visualization of the Fierce Guru, the initiate is told that a flame blazes out of the body of the Fierce Guru, which “consumes” all manifestations of evil and that all manifestations [of all things, good and evil] are actually the “body of the Fierce Guru.” [In this, the idea is that all things are of the same Unity]. Finally, he is told that “no demon or devil” is capable of harming him [because they are manifestations of himself in his visualizations of himself as the Fierce Guru and as such, are as incapable of harming him as he is of himself] (p. 32).
5. There follows an offering, prayers and an offering of the *maṇḍala* (p. 32) [unexplained in the translation, probably also omitted in the text].
6. The guru recites a statement attributed to Padmasambhava himself, in which he [Padmasambhava] states that he subdues demons, restraining them by oaths, and that he is Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya. Further, he states that he is identical with a list of teachers and that all the different ones that he mentions are, in fact, one; that he may be either a peaceful Buddha or a Fierce Buddha and that there are infinite forms to his manifestations since he is manifest in all. He promises help to followers in overcoming disturbing thoughts (for those who desire it) and states that he will use peaceful or powerful means, whichever is needed [presumably using his weapon if necessary]. He continues with a series of the evils that he can overcome: hindrances, sins, illness; also, he grants power, wishes (pp. 32–36, much abbreviated in the foregoing). [In this section, the worshipper is given the reasons for the propitiation of the deified Padmasambhava and the standard promises of reward for successful accomplishment of the rituals laid out.]
7. The guru of the ceremony continues [but no longer as if reciting the words of Padmasambhava]:

“‘Thus one should have faith in his teachings and lineage.
O the Lotus Lord! Through his miraculous Phurba,
All wishes are granted and accomplishments realized.’

Again, you should know that the Father and Mother Guru are embodied in the P’urbu-dagger. Today’s initiation is called the Initiation of the Ao-rgyng Yabyum (sic) embodied in the Buddha Rdo-rje-gyoun-nu (sic), or the Teaching of Elimination of Evil through the Fierce Guru with Phurba (p. 36).”

[This is by far the most informative portion of the initiation in regard to the *phur-pa*. It states that one of the symbolisms of the implement is the *yab-yum/prajñā-upāya* concept, and that it grants “all wishes” and that the initiation is to rDo-rje gzhon-nu, who is conceived of as the Fierce Guru, Padmasambhava. It also states that by means of the implement, all accomplishments will be realized. This refers to Buddhological accomplishments and implies the attainment of Buddhahood by the practitioner. Thus, the purpose of the implement goes far beyond the simple exorcism of demons, at least in some of its uses. A question remains regarding the general level of usage; it is well known that the implement was commonly used in a popular context for the exorcism of mundane evils, but to what degree was it used for the more soterial purposes? If this initiation is any indication, it may be that among the initiated community, the latter function was the more common. Only additional information will clarify this point.]

There follows a prediction and a series of prayers reaffirming the disciple's faith, after which the disciple is to drink "nectar" from a cup made from a human skull, whereupon he is to think that "he has drunk the nectar that can cure all poisonous disease and bring all prosperity and auspiciousness" (p. 39). At this point, the disciple is given the visualization of the "Fierce Guru with Phurpa." After visualizing all [including himself] as the void, the disciple concentrates on becoming the Fierce Guru, who is described as follows:

... four faces all looking in one direction, for this is the manner of conquering and subduing all devils and demons. His first hand holds the thunderbolt with knife; the other hand holds the scorpion. The lower hand holds the symbolic staff, *Khadramga* (sic), and at the lower part of his body stands the powerful *Phurba* with grooves, the weapon that kills the evils, agonizing and tormenting them (p. 40).

[See the figure of *Phur-pa* in Figure 70, which seems to answer the description almost exactly although the *khaṭvāṅga* is missing. Note the distinction of the four faces looking in one direction, a feature that would be difficult to represent graphically, suggesting that the representation of the single face of the deity in Figure 70 might be the normal representation. The initiate of the practice would know that the "real" nature of the deity was that there are actually four faces. Here then, is a clear statement of Padmasambhava as *Phur-pa*, and of the disciple as Padmasambhava. It may be stated that the deity, the personification of the implement, the guru and the disciple are all identical in the meditation that is to take place.]

After a brief prayer, the guru begins to initiate the disciple to the various *chos-dbang* (religious utensils) associated with the Fierce Guru. He does this by placing them on the head of the disciple and recitation of prayers and incantations. These implements include a *rdo-rje* (*vajra*), flaming sword, "nine-headed scorpion" (Figure 96), staff (*khaṭvāṅga*), fruit (held to the throat), conch shell (held to heart), wand and finally, *gtor-ma* in which "all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas dwell" (pp. 40-42). [In the prayer of the initiation of the *rdo-rje*, it is specifically called a *phur-pa*, thus indicating the esoteric equation of the two implements (p. 40).]

The guru grants some initiations, tells the disciple that he is embodied in the Fierce Guru and requests that the disciple will protect the guru's other disciples from illness, demons, etc. (pp. 42-43). At the closing of the initiation, the disciple is told that if a King-Demon (the makers of mental disturbances) harms you, "you should visualize that the sharp tip of the *Purba* is stabbed into the joining part of the white and black part of the demon's heart, torturing him" (p. 44). [A very specific description of the nature of the damage that the *phur-pa* is expected to do to hindrances.]

APPENDIX IV

A Phur-pa Mandala

The C. P. G. contains a series of five *phur-pa* (numbers 400-404, Figures 97-101) known as the Ma-cig-phur,⁸⁴ which is clearly a mandalic grouping. Further, in *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, Nebesky-Wojkowitz gives the five main aspects of rDo-rje phur-pa, called the *Kīla rigs lnga*, in the following table:⁸⁵

Direction	Name	Color	Lower part of body
Center	(sKu mchog) Buddhakīla	azure blue	<i>phur-bu</i> of conch shells
East	(Thugs mchog) Vajrakīla	white	<i>phur-bu</i> of silver
South	(Yon tan) Ratnakīla	yellow	<i>phur-bu</i> of gold
West	(gSung mchog) Padmakīla	red	<i>phur-bu</i> of copper
North	('Phrin las) Karmakīla	green	<i>phur-bu</i> of iron

This is clearly a reiteration of the *mandala* of the five Jina. Further, this group exactly corresponds to the first five of the rNying-ma-pa tutelaries which in turn correspond to the Jina as well. The correspondence of these may be seen in the following chart.

⁸⁴ Unfortunately, the compound Ma-cig can be translated in several ways, "one Mother" [= Ekamātī], "Not One," "Unknowable One," etc. I have found no criteria for determining the proper reading and thus no information may be gained from a translation of the name at our present state of knowledge. I am of the opinion that Ekamātī is the probable reading since it implies the unity of being born together (of one mother), which is the central theme of *sahaja* practices. However, this cannot be proven at this time.

⁸⁵ Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, p. 323.

Phur-pa Deity	Tutelary	Jina
sKu mchog (blue) (Buddhakila)	'Jam dpal sku'i lha** Mañjuśrī***	rNam snang (blue)* Vairocana (Buddhakula)
Thugs mchog (white) (Vajrakila)	Yang dag thugs kyi lha** Khro bo bdud rtsi 'Khyil ba***	Mi bskyod pa (white) Akṣobhya (Vajrakula)
Yon tan (yellow) (Ratnakila)	Che mchog yon tan gyi lha** A form of Sambara*** (Figure 103)	Rin 'byung (yellow) Ratnasambhava (Ratnakula)
gSung mchog (red) (Padmakila)	Padma gsung gi lha** Amitābha***	'Od dpag med (red) Amitābha (Padmakula)
'Phrin las (green) (Karmakila)	Phur-pa 'phrin las lha** rDo-rje Phur-pa***	Don grub (green) Amoghasiddhi (Karmakula)

* Although the more normal color relationship of Vairocana and Akṣobhya is white and blue, respectively, it is quite apparent from the colors named in *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* and the *kulas* given that there has been a reversal of their colors. This assumption is borne out by the presence of the *vajra* as the *kula* symbol next to Thugs mchog, rather than the *cakra*, in the *maṇḍala* about to be discussed. Thus, the rNying-ma-pa seem to have a blue Vairocana as one manifestation of the Ādi-Buddha.

** These deities are, in effect, personifications of the first five of the eight main rNying-ma-pa *Tāntras*, the other wordly class. See George Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, I, 106.

*** *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, pp. 320-323.

The cycle of relationship returns full circle since the five aspects of rDo-rje phur-pa are transformed from simply aspects of a single deity to the principal deities in a *maṇḍala* (Figure 102). In the center of the *maṇḍala* is sKu mchog, the main aspect of the transformation series, who is also rDo-rje phur-pa. His other manifestations are: to the east (at the bottom), Thugs mchog; to the south (left side), Yon tan; to the west (top), gSung mchog; and on the north (right side), 'Phrin las. To the right of each representation is its respective *kula* emblem, e.g. the *padma* between Yon tan and gSung mchog, etc.

The equation is obvious: the *phur-pa* deities are specifically associated with the Jina in the basic Vajradhātu *maṇḍala*. Thus, they become specific, qualitative and active agents of the Jina.

Something of the purpose of the deities may be determined by the attributes each carries. However, in the *maṇḍala*, all of the deities only carry the *phur-pa* (it is not even clearly discernible) and exhibit *tarjanī mudrā* with the remaining hands. The *tarjanī* is a general indication of threatening and is frequently substituted for injury-producing attributes in the hands of small images. The images in the C.P.G. each carry the same set of implements and each embraces its *prajñā*. Each of the deities carries a *phur-pa* between the palms of the principal hands which also enclose his *prajñā*. The top right hand carries the flaming sword of knowledge and the top left hand carries the *vajra*-hammer with which he crushes his adversaries. The lower right and left hands carry a flayed human skin and a flaying knife, respectively, essentially suggesting the destruction of attachments by the stripping away of the ego of one's self.

It is interesting that the group of attributes given in the C.P.G. as belonging to the Ma-cig-phur Inga include an *aṅkuśa* and a *ghaṇṭā*, neither of which are illustrated in the hands of any of the deities. The *aṅkuśa* is a symbol of the "taming of the wild beast of the mind" (a concept almost identical to the Zen series of the boy taming the water buffalo). The *ghaṇṭā* and the *kapāla* are carried by the *prajñā*.

Although it is possible to discern that the *phur-pa* is the equivalent of the *vajra*, thereby equating Phur-pa to the Universal without the evidence of the *maṇḍala*, the placement of the deities in the diagram of the *maṇḍala* reaffirms the previous conclusion. Iconographic inferences have their weaknesses, yet with the presence of the *maṇḍala*, there can be no question that in the process of the practice of the *phur-pa maṇḍala* and associated rituals, the propitiant, through identity transferral to the deity, reintegrates with the Universal. Due to the basic nature of Tibetan exorcistic practices,⁸⁶ it may be assumed that, no matter how trivial the evil that is to be attacked by the exorcist, he does it with the full power of the Universal behind him and as the Universal Itself (also see Appendix III).

⁸⁶ Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, Part II, *passim*.

APPENDIX V

A Note on the Iconography of Che mchog yon tan gyi lha:

This member of the rNying-ma-pa pantheon occurs only rarely in paintings and metal images. Thus, I have felt it useful to append an illustration of the full form of the deity to the present study (Figure 103). The painting from which the illustration is taken is of an unidentified preceptor of the rNying-ma-pa tradition in the sGa-bri manner, dating from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. In the upper left corner of the painting, a small image of Che mchog yon tan gyi lha occurs in the position of a *yi-dam*. He is brown and depicted with seven tiers of three heads each. The first level has all brown heads, but the rest of the tiers have heads of white to the left, blue in the center and brown to the right. He has twenty-four distinctly drawn arms, each holding a small human figure in a hand which also forms *karaṇamudrā*. Behind the circle of arms is another very indistinctly drawn row of arms which are mostly seen as a blur of fingers behind the first row of hands. It is apparently intended that he has ten legs, but the drawing lacks clarity on this point. His *prajñā* has six heads, eighteen arms and only two legs. She also holds a small human figure in the palm of each hand and her hands also form *karaṇamudrā*. Yon tan wears a tiger skin at the waist, a human skin and an elephant skin across his back and garlands of skulls and severed heads. He has Heruka wings and billowing orange hair. Both deities wear the bone ornaments. Together, they stand on a variety of human and animal figures, chariots, clouds, flame, etc., suggesting their dominance over the forms of the world (Viśvarūpa).

The graphic forms of the deities strongly suggest that they are identical with “Viśvarūpa-samvara” and Pāpagāndevī of Nepalese iconography. This is particularly suggested by the presence of the figures in the hands, the Samvara association, the dominance over the *viśvarūpa* and of course, the parallels of the positions of the deities in their respective religious contexts. This has far reaching implications in both the history of the introduction of Buddhism to both Tibet and Nepal, and further suggests a strong possibility of close relationships between the practitioners of Nepalese Buddhism and the rNying-ma-pa form of Tibetan Buddhism. In relation to *phur-pa*, the fact that Nepalese implements are forms of “Viśvarūpasamvara” combined with the probable pre-Buddhist Tibetan origin of the implement, seems to suggest that the implement was in fact directly equated to the Universal in its original Tibetan Buddhist context. I am afraid that it also points out all too clearly how little is really known about this phase of the history of Buddhism.

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PLATES



Fig. 2 Folio 95 from the pantheon of lCang-skye Rol-pa'i -rdo-rje,
Collection Prof. Ensho Ashikaga, Los Angeles



Fig. 1 Paper charm, xylograph of a bound sri,
Collection of Prof. Dr. Lokesh Chandra, New Delhi

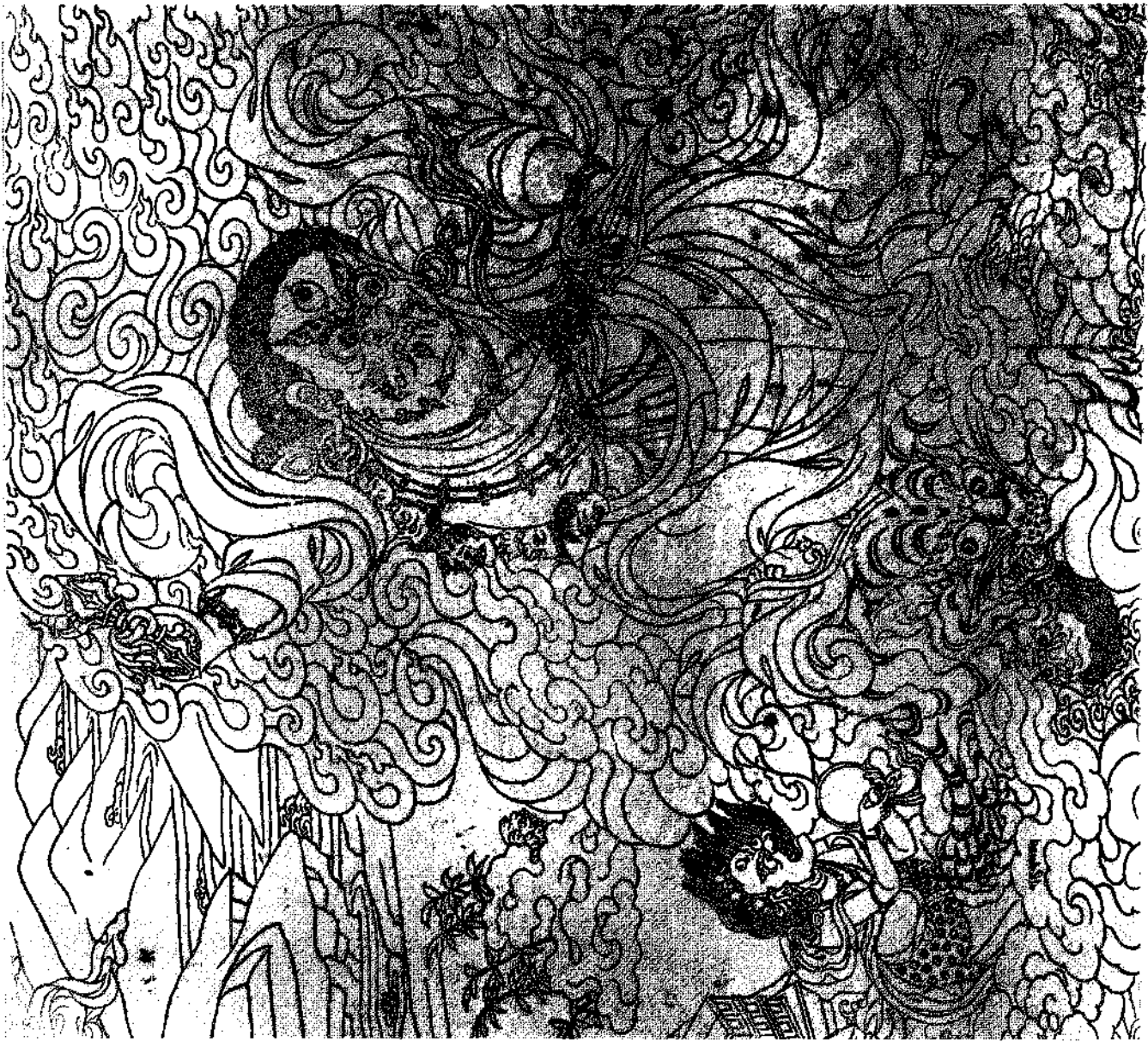


Fig. 3 rDo-rje gro-lod, from a xylographic design for a *thang-ka*



Fig. 4 *Phur-pa*, detail from Figure 3



Fig. 5 Padmasambhava, from a painted series of his former lives, *private collection*

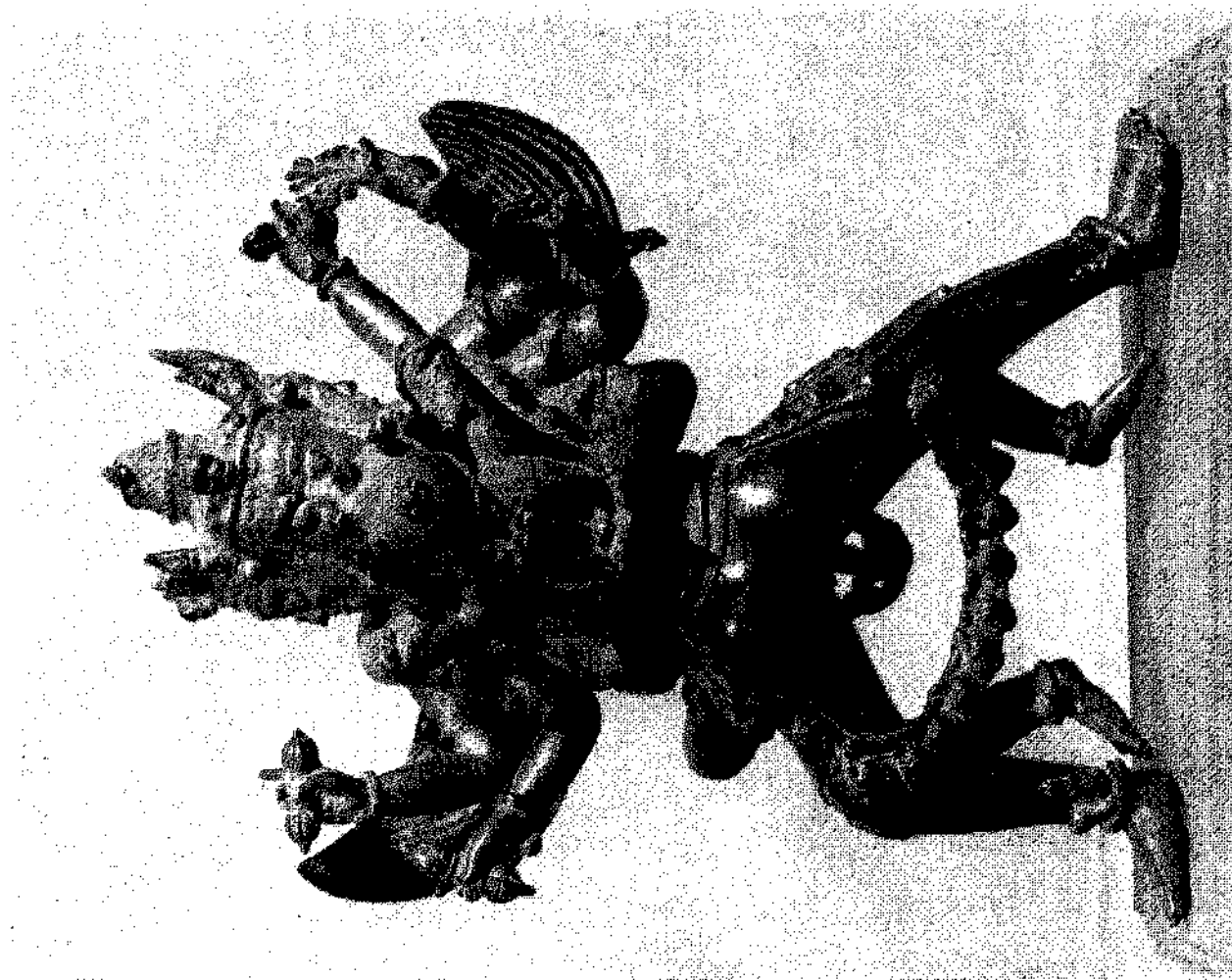


Fig. 6 Phur-pa yab-yum, central Tibet, 17th or 18th century, *Kumar collection, New Delhi*

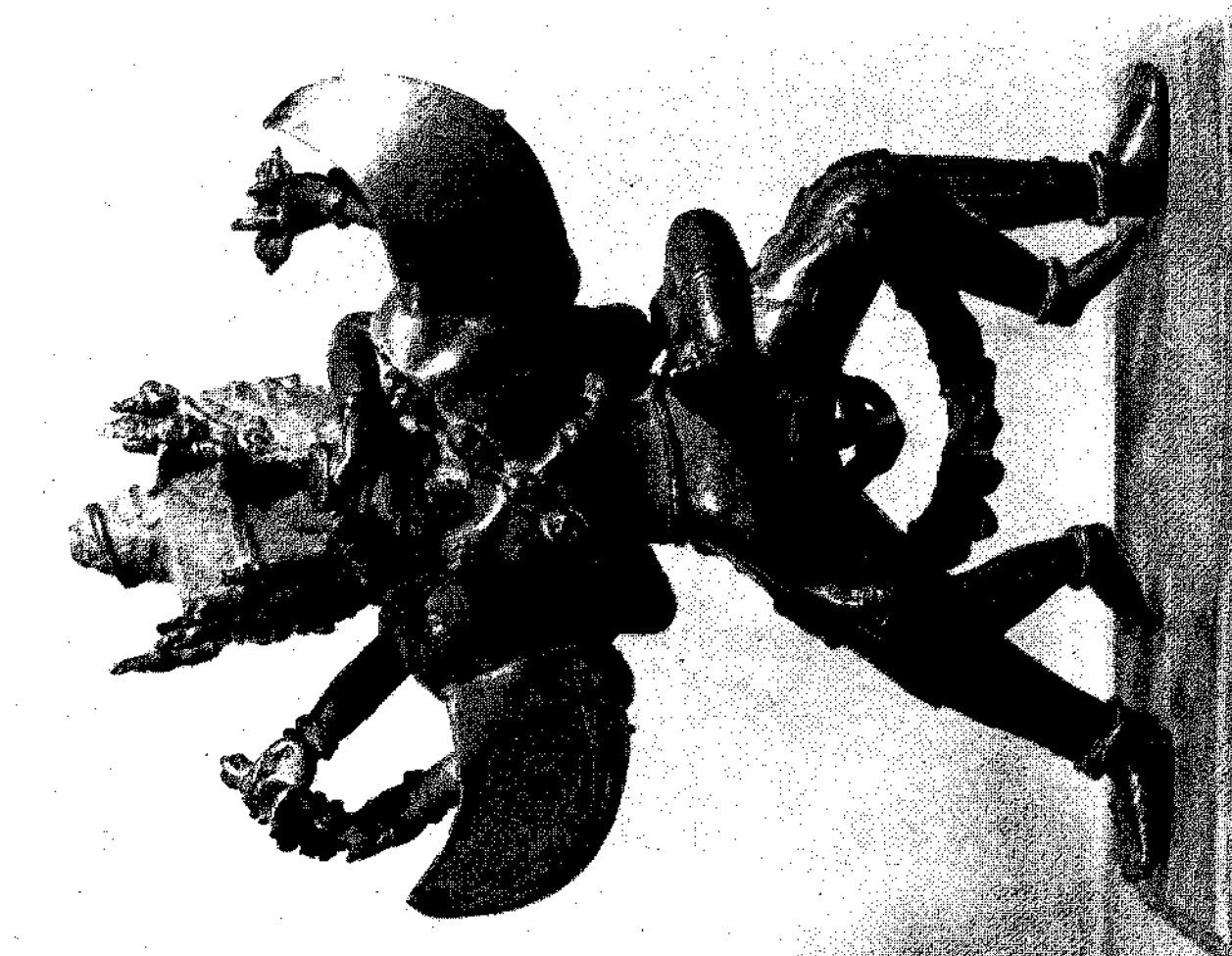


Fig. 7 Rear view of Phur-pa yab-yum



Fig. 8 Example 1, *courtesy, Field Museum, Chicago*



Fig. 9 Example 2, *private collection*



Fig. 10 Example 3,
present whereabouts
unknown



Fig. 11 Example 4, *private collection*



Fig. 12 Example 5, *private collection*



Fig. 13 Example 6, *courtesy, Indian Museum, Calcutta*

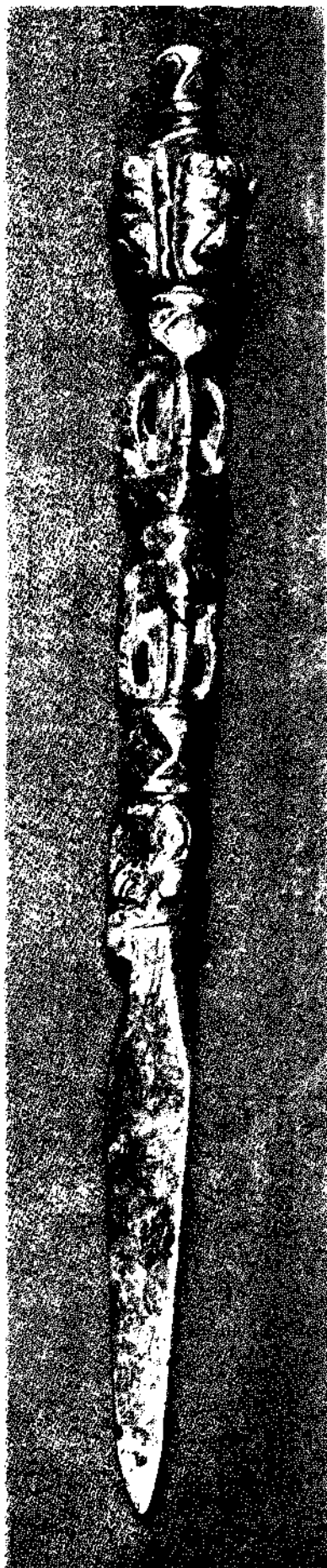


Fig. 14 Example 7, *courtesy,*
Tibet House Museum, New Delhi

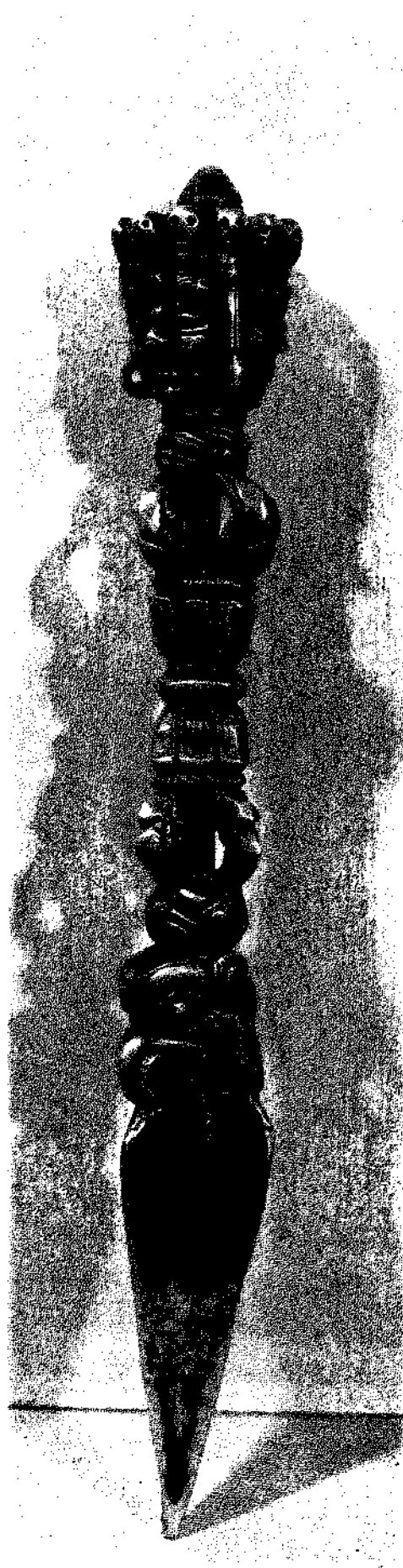


Fig. 15 Example 8,
Kumar collection, New Delhi

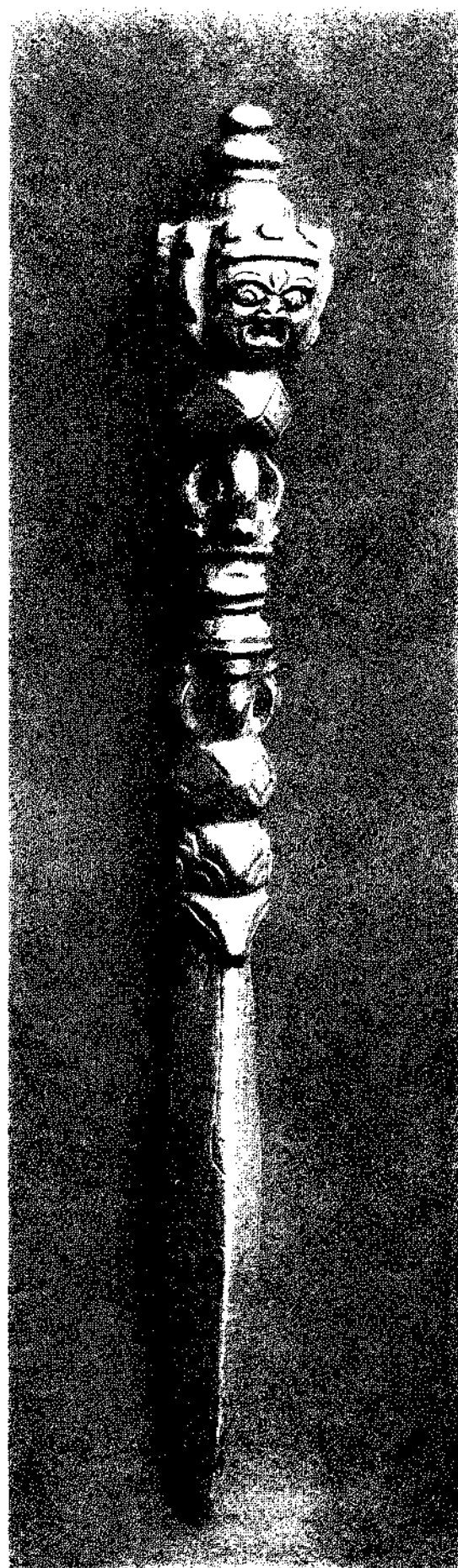


Fig. 16 Example 9,
private collection

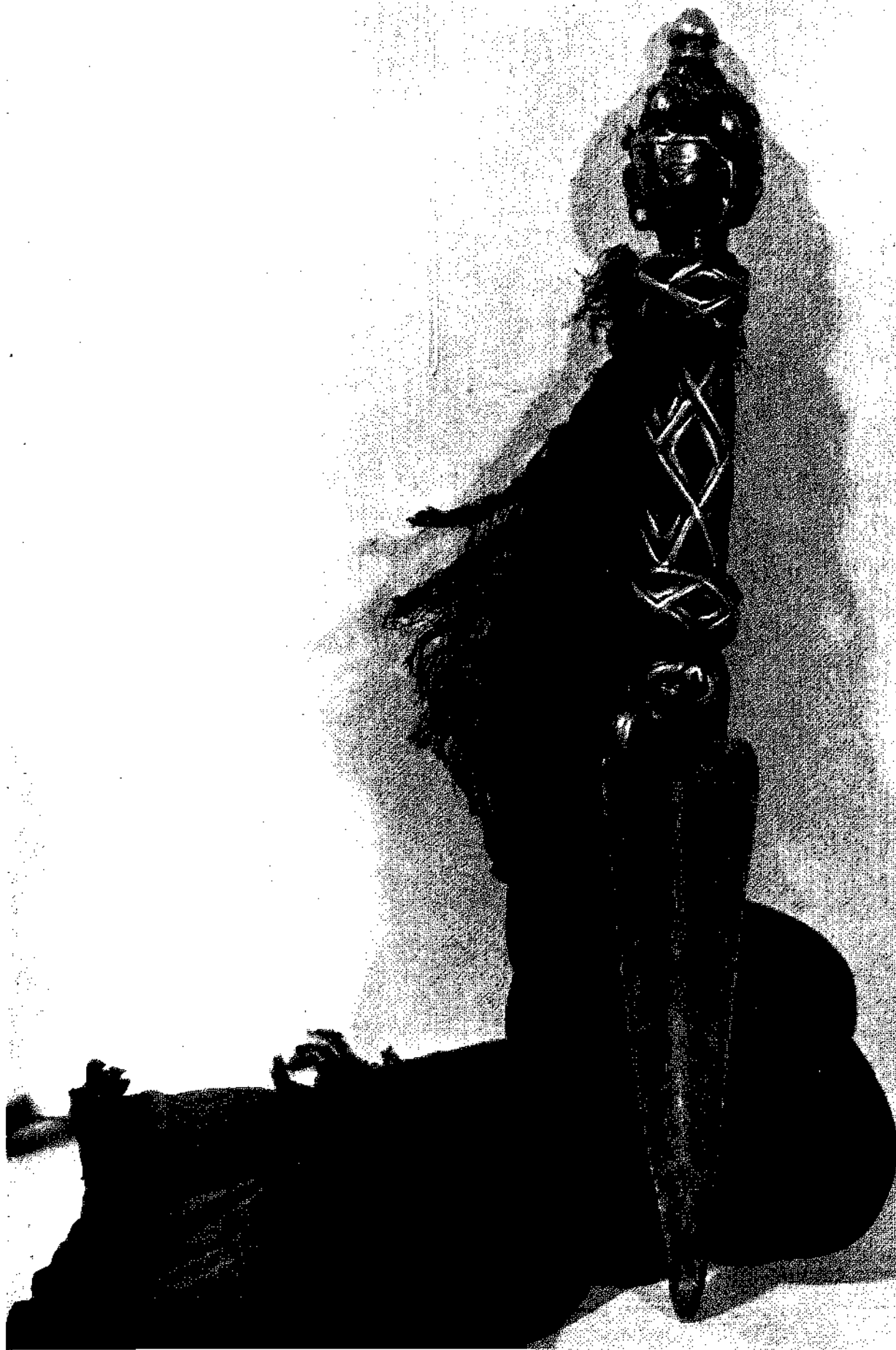


Fig. 17 Example 10, in the possession of an unknown dGe-lugs-pa monk, *New Delhi*



Fig. 18 Example 11, *private collection*



Fig. 19 Example 12, *private collection*



Fig. 20 Example 12, back view



Fig. 21 Example 13,
private collection

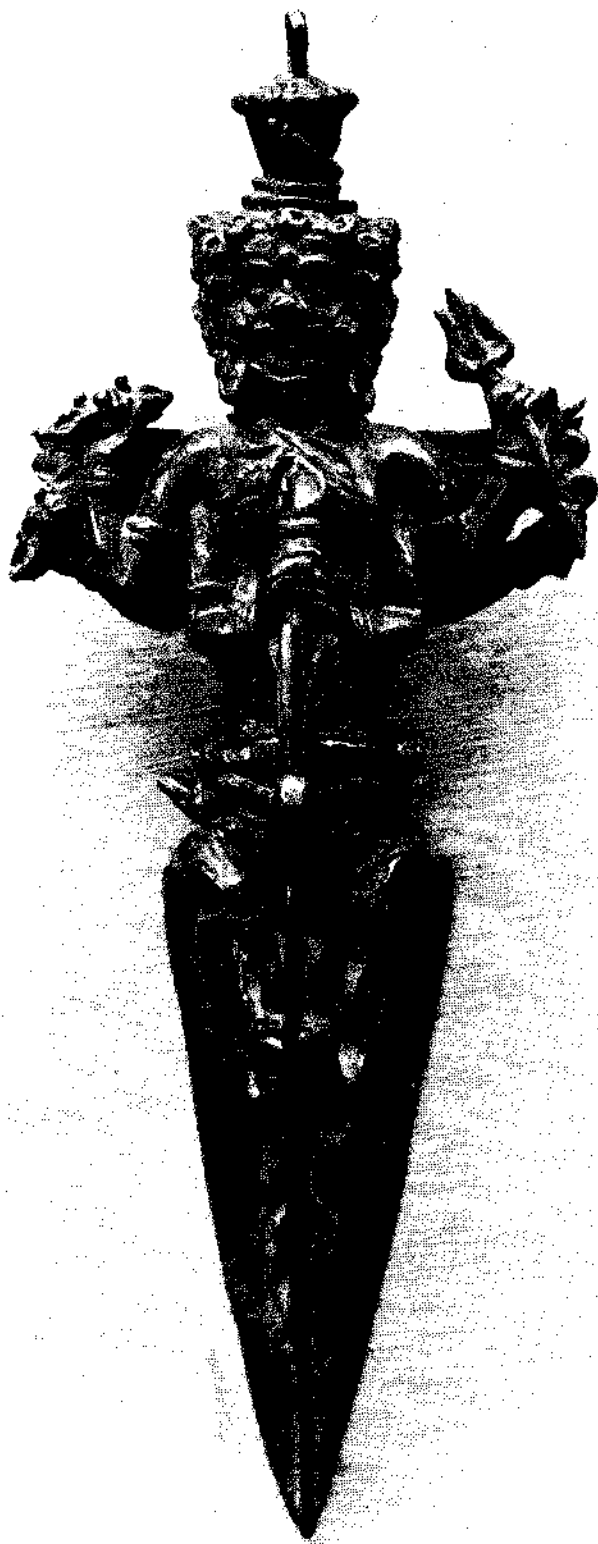


Fig. 22 Example 14, *courtesy,*
Tibet House Museum, New Delhi



Fig. 23 Example 14,
back view



Fig. 24 Example 15,
courtesy, Indian Museum, Calcutta



Fig. 25 Example 15,
detail from figure 24

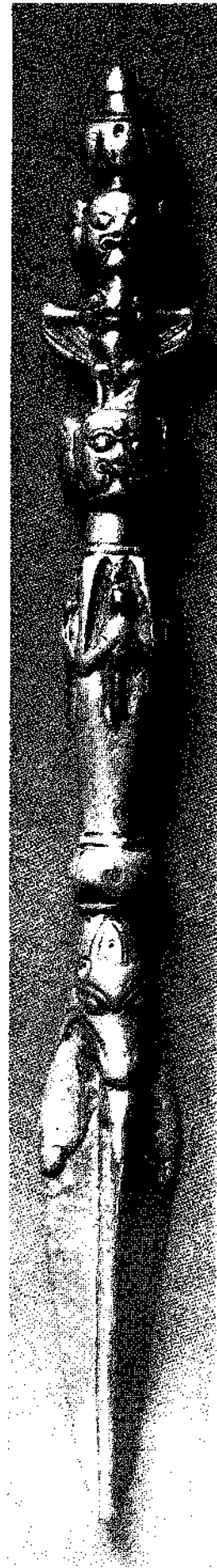


Fig. 26 Example 16,
Collection Dr. and Mrs. J.
LeRoy Davidson, Los Angeles



Fig. 27 Example 17,
courtesy, University
Museum, Philadelphia



Fig. 28 rTa-mgrin, Kumar collection, New Delhi



Fig. 29 Example 18, *courtesy,*
Field Museum, Chicago



Fig. 30 Example 19, *courtesy,*
Indian Museum, Calcutta



Fig. 31 Example 20, courtesy, Field Museum, Chicago

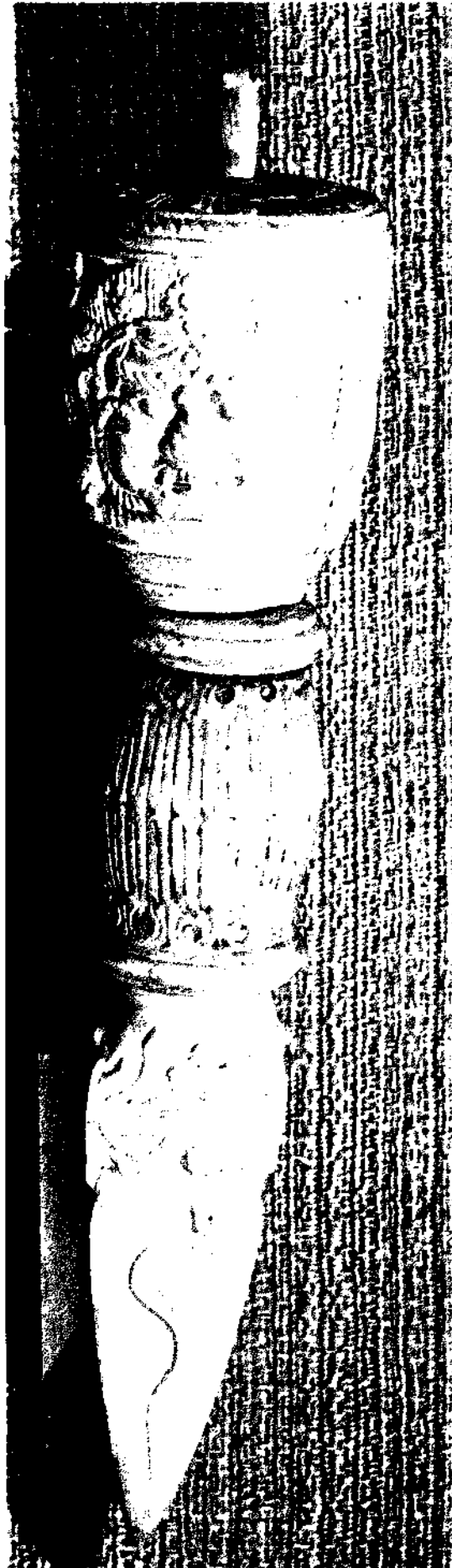


Fig. 32 Example 21, courtesy,
Indian Museum, Calcutta



Fig. 33 Example 22, *courtesy,*
Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay



Fig. 34 Example 23,
private collection



Fig. 35 Example 24, private collection,
on loan to Tibet House Museum, New Delhi



Fig. 36 Example 25, *courtesy, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.*



Fig. 37 Example 26,
in the possession of a dGe-lugs-pa monk



Fig. 38 Illustration 33 from the *gCod dpang brgya-rtsa [bgra]gs-pa'i rab-[pa] gi tshag li-rnams legs-par bzhu gam-pa'o* (C.P.G.)



Fig. 39 Illustration 23 from the C.P.G.



Fig. 40 Illustration 20 from the C.P.G., *bDe gshags mkha' 'gro*



Fig. 41 Example 27,
courtesy, Field Museum, Chicago

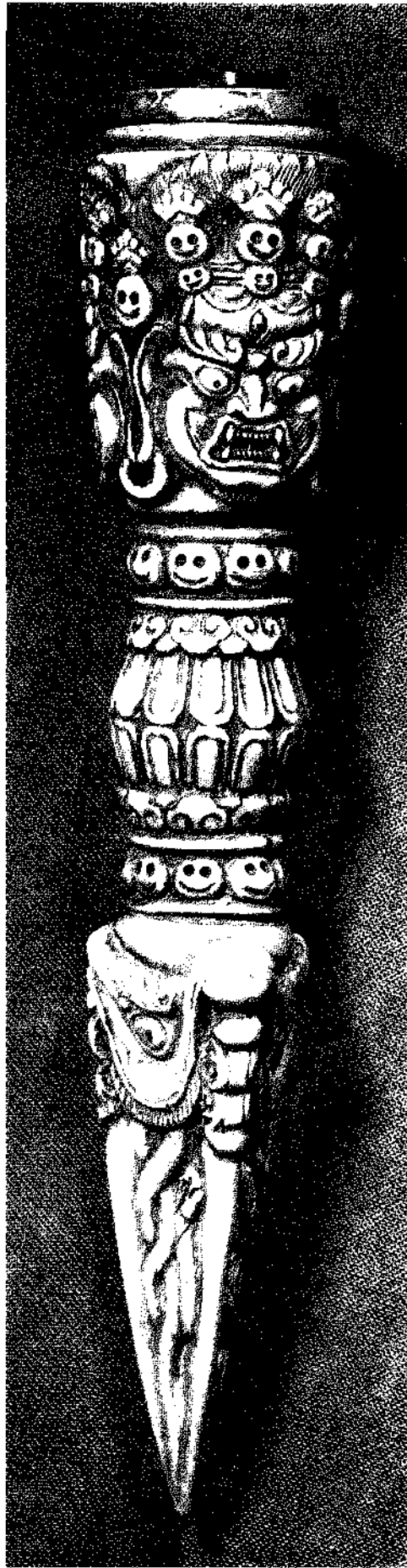


Fig. 42 Example 28, Collection Dr. and
Mrs. J. LeRoy Davidson, Los Angeles

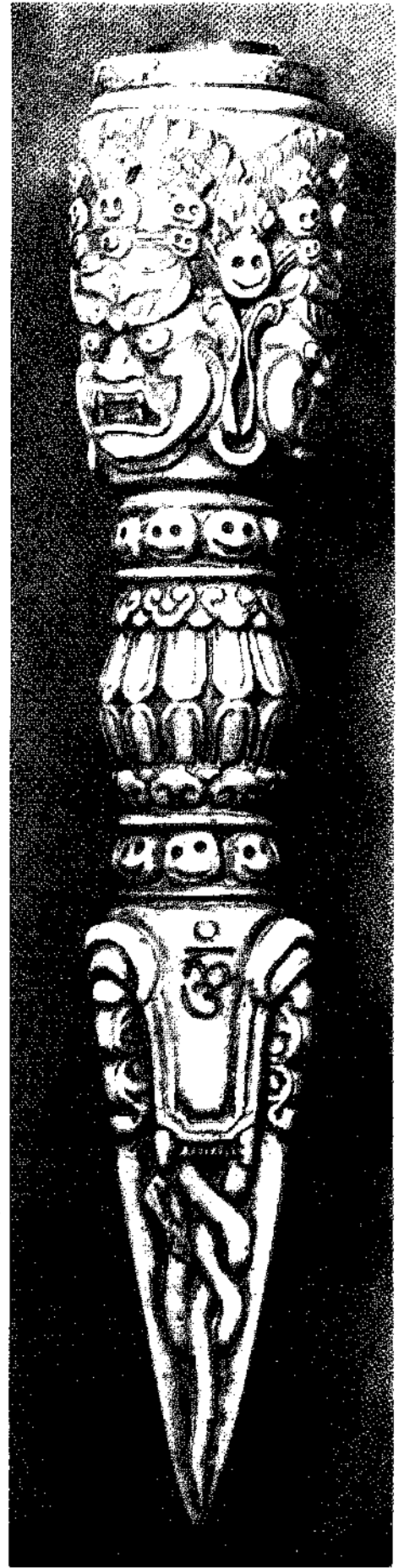


Fig. 43 Example 28,
back view

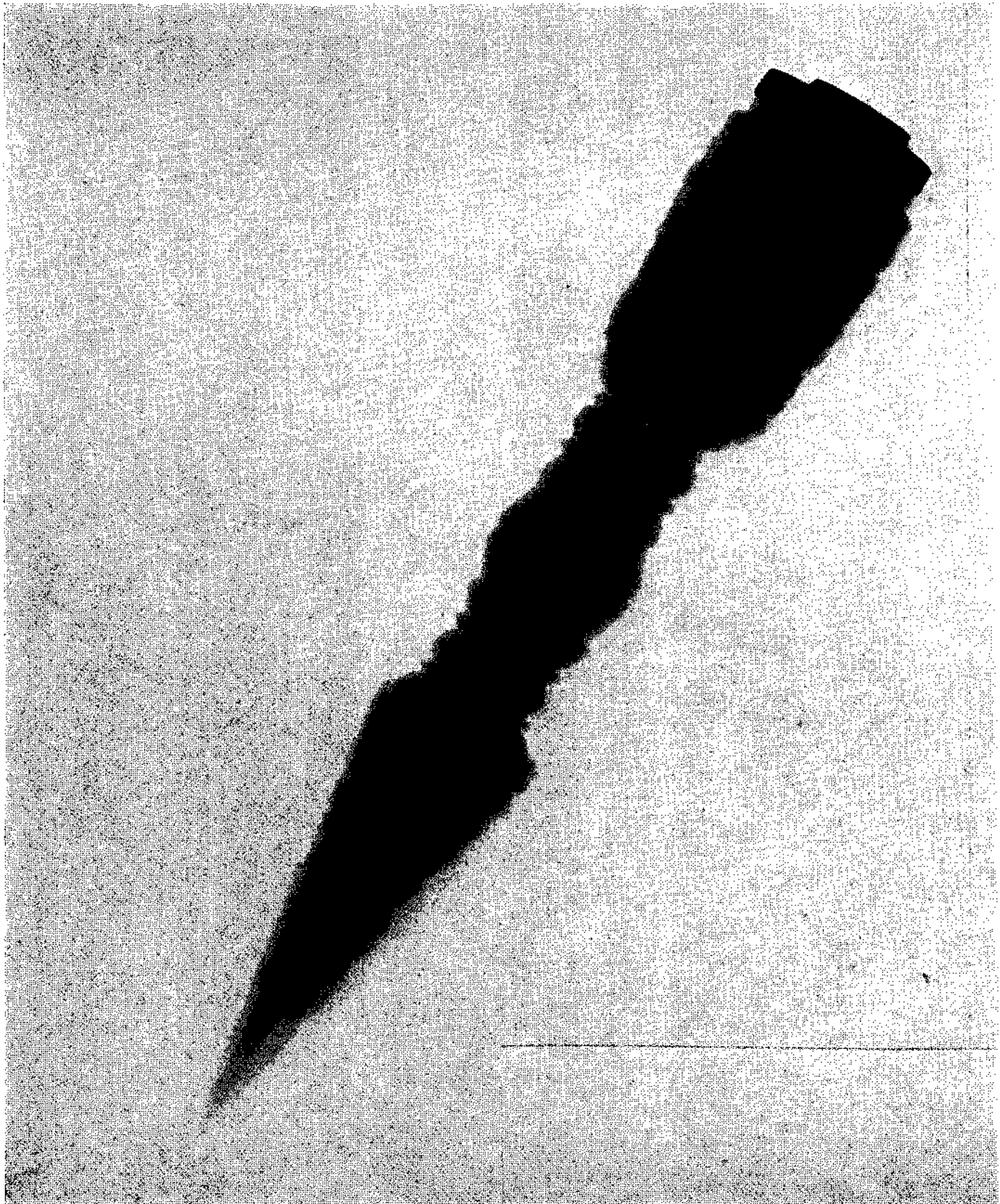


Fig. 44 Example 18, X-ray



Fig. 45 Example 29, *private collection*



Fig. 46 Example 30,
(*phur-pa*), *private collection*



Fig. 47 Example 30, (*rdo-rje*), *private collection*



Fig. 48 Example 31, *private collection*

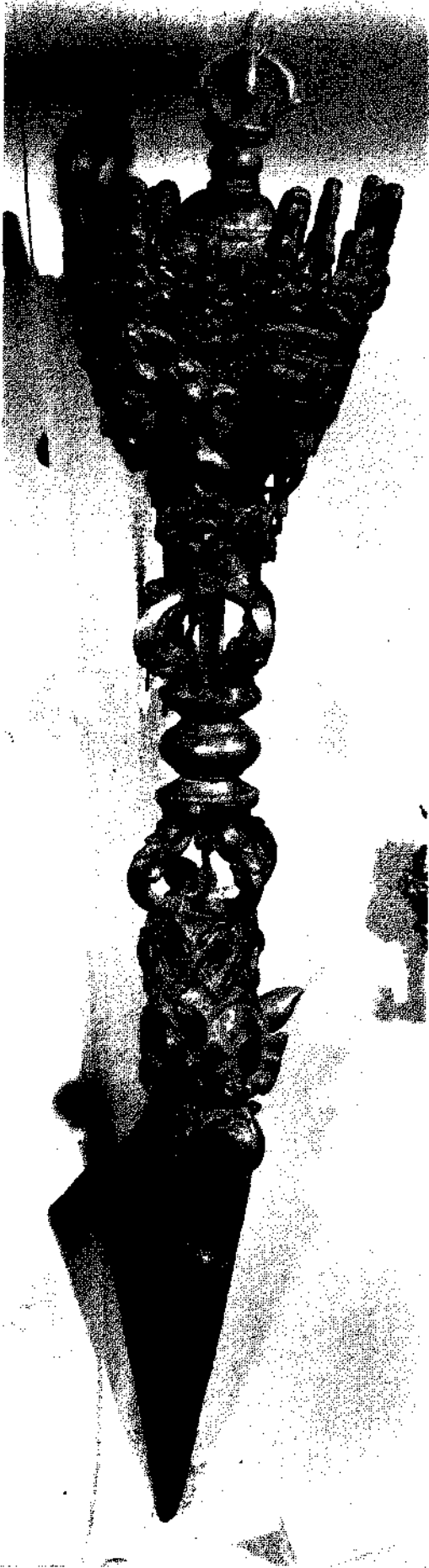


Fig. 49 Example 32, *courtesy,*
Indian Museum, Calcutta



Fig. 50 Example 33,
private collection



Fig. 51 Example 34,
private collection



Fig. 52 gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes, from a xylographic design for a *thang-ka*

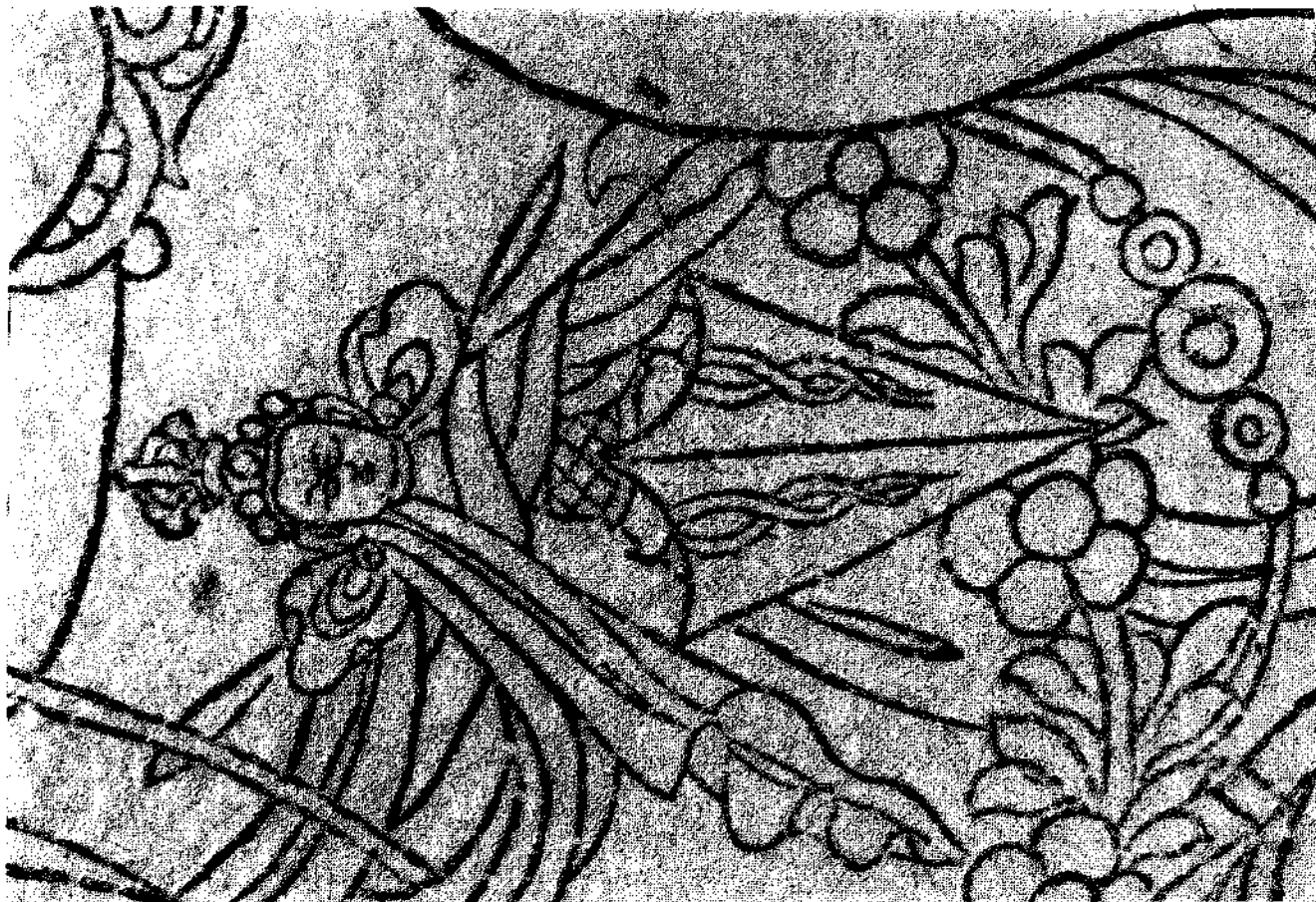


Fig. 54 *Phur-pa*, detail from figure 53

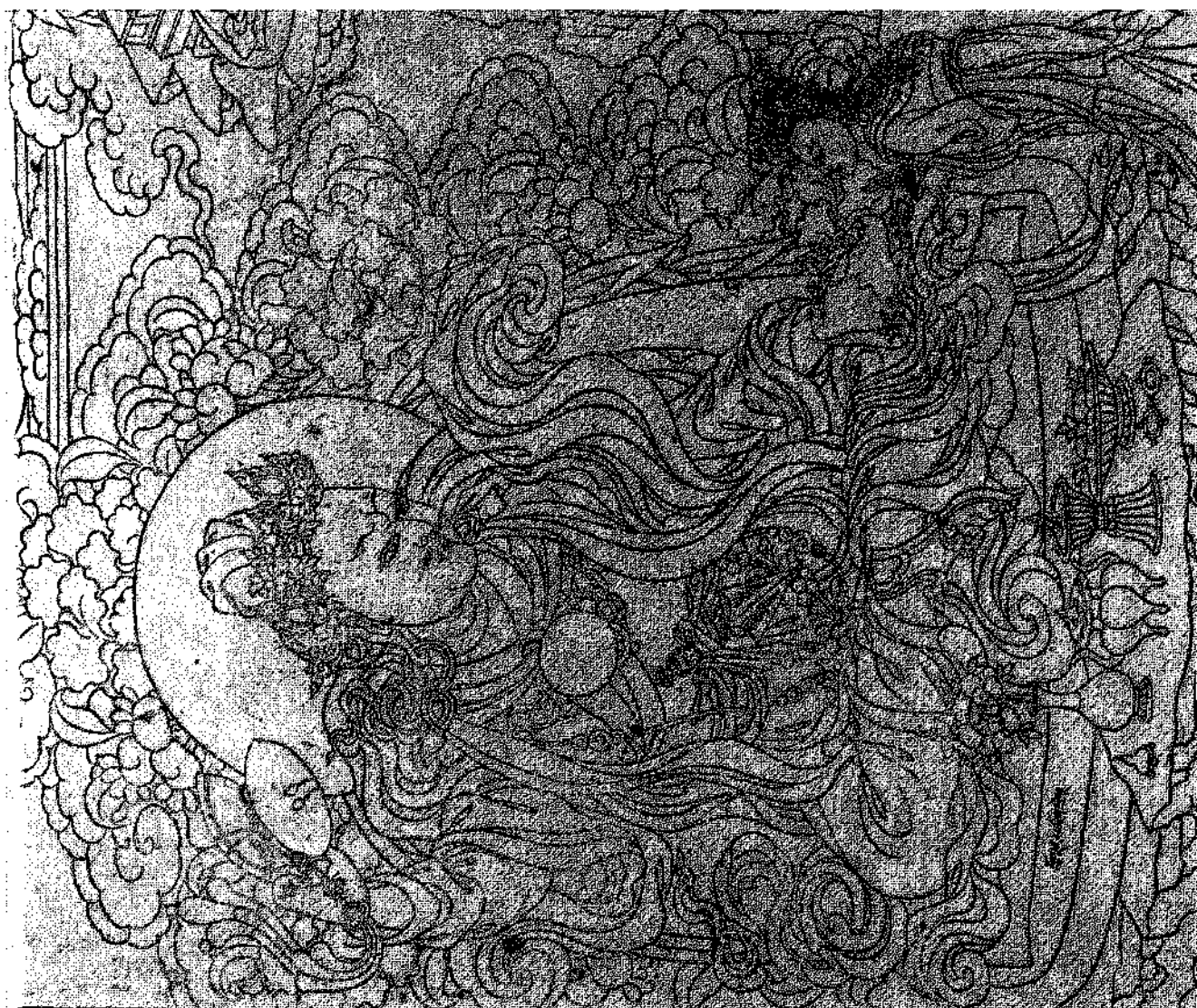


Fig. 53 Blo-Idan mChog Sred, from a xylographic design for a *thang-ka*



Fig. 55 Seng-ge sGra-sgrog, from a xylographic design for a *thang-ka*



Fig. 56 Example 35,
Kumar collection, New Delhi



Fig. 57 Example 36, *private collection*

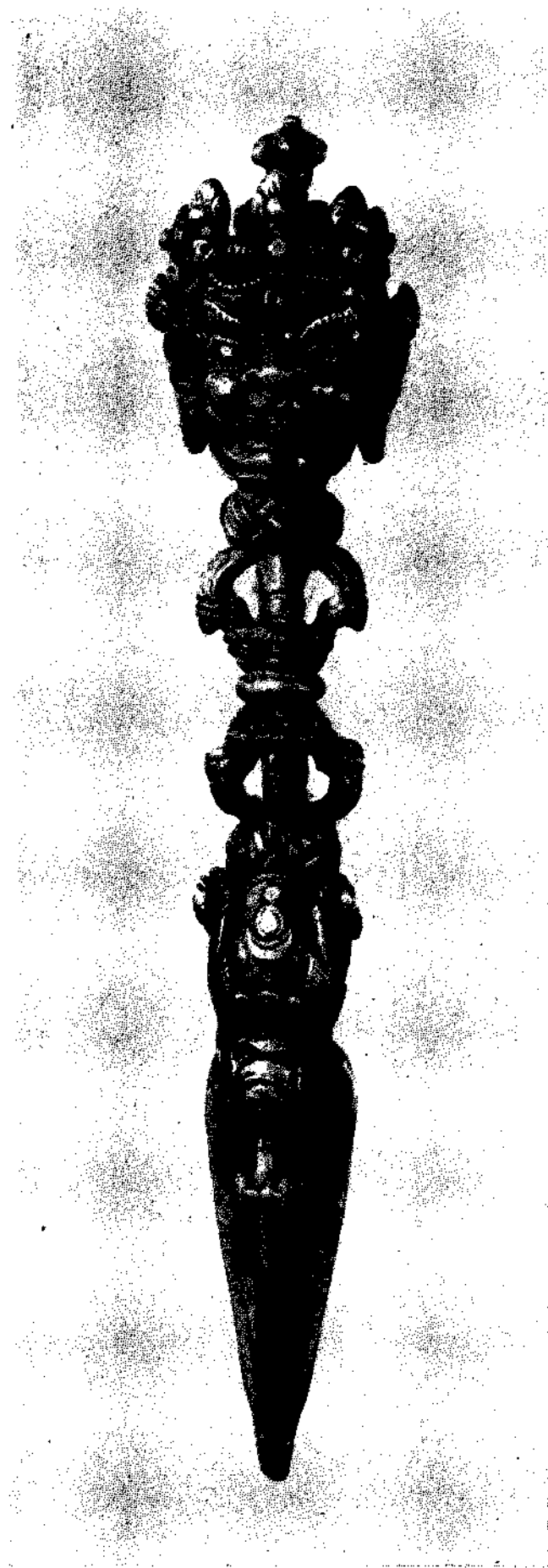


Fig. 58 Example 37, courtesy, *Field Museum, Chicago*



Fig. 59 Nyi-ma 'Od zer, from a xylographic design for a *thang-ka*



Fig. 60 *Khatvāṅga*, courtesy
Indian Museum, Calcutta



Fig. 61 Detail, figure 60

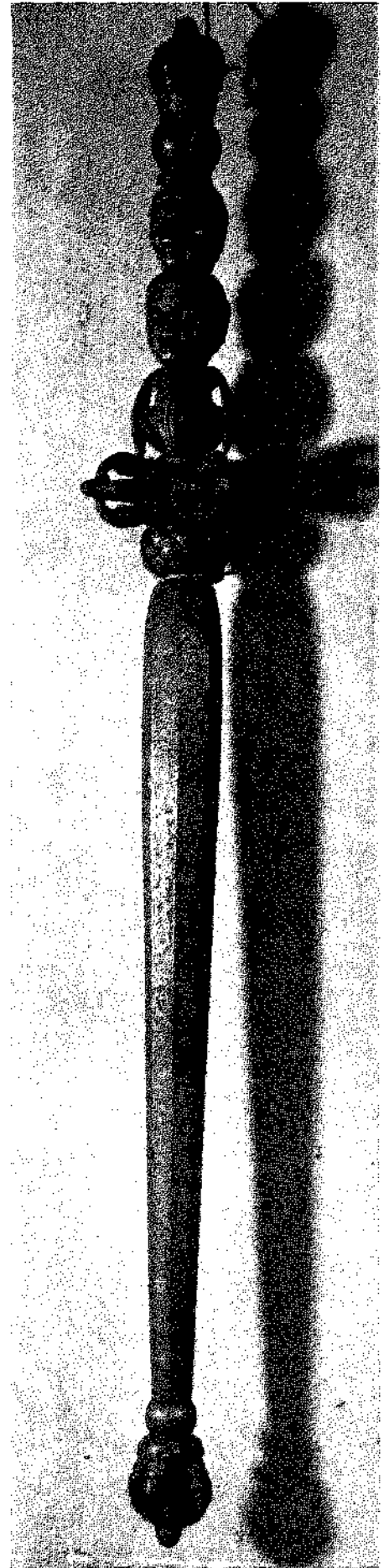


Fig. 62 *Khatvāṅga*, courtesy,
Indian Museum, Calcutta



Fig. 63 Example 38, *courtesy,*
Field Museum, Chicago



Fig. 64 Example 39, *Collection Dr. and Mrs. J. LeRoy*
Davidson, Los Angeles



Fig. 65 Example 40, from a xylographic design for a *thang-ka*



Fig. 66 Example 42, *private collection*



Fig. 67 Example 43, *courtesy,*
Indian Museum, Calcutta



Fig. 68 Example 44, *courtesy,*
Ganesh Datta College, Begusarai



Fig. 69 Example 45, *courtesy, Field Museum, Chicago*



Fig. 70 The tutelary of the rNying-ma-pa, Phur-pa. Also a form of the
"Fierce Guru with *Phur-pa*", Padmasambhava

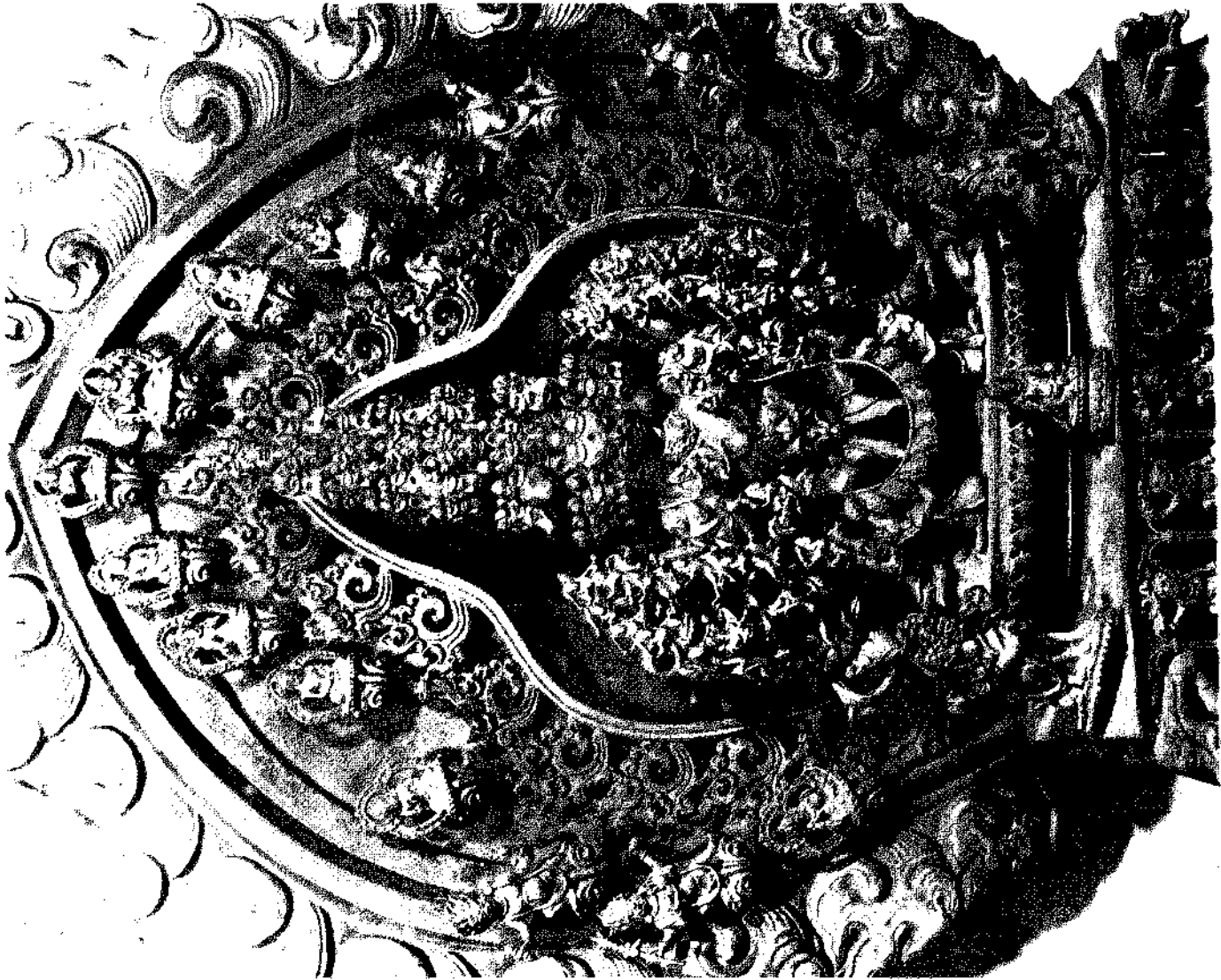


Fig. 72 Detail of figure 71

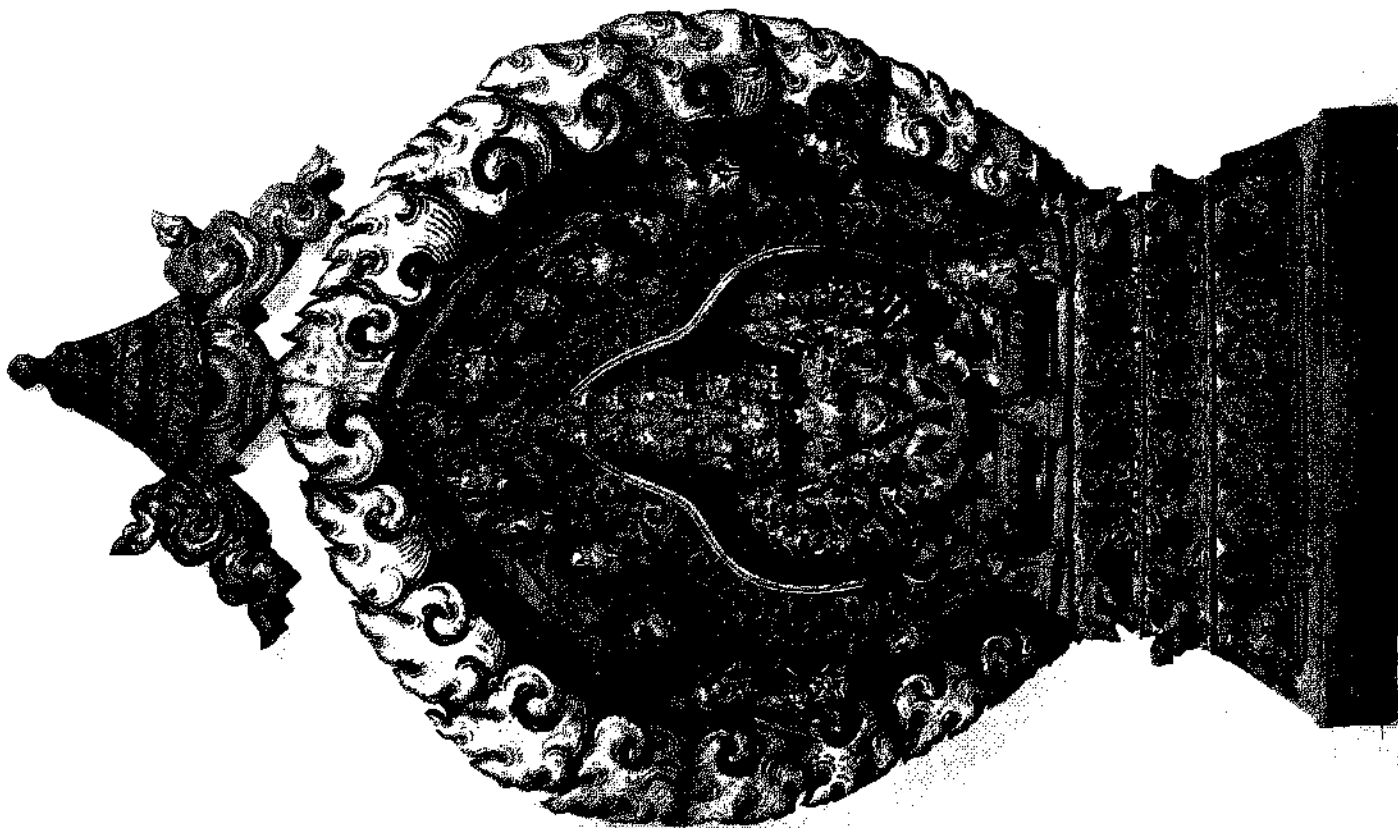


Fig. 71 "Viśvarūpasamvara", courtesy, Indian Museum, Calcutta

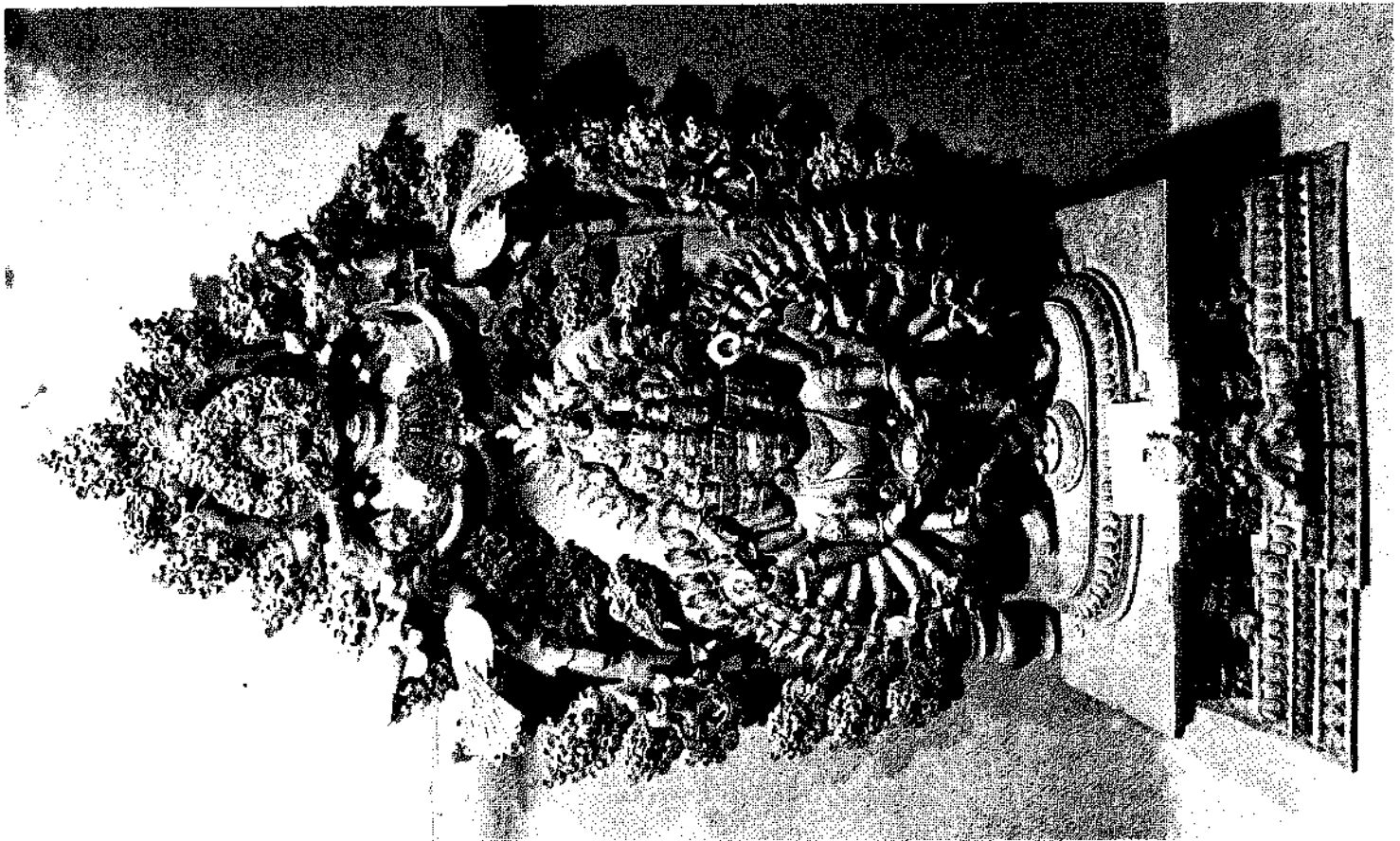


Fig. 73 "Visvarūpasamvara", *courtesy, Lahore Museum*

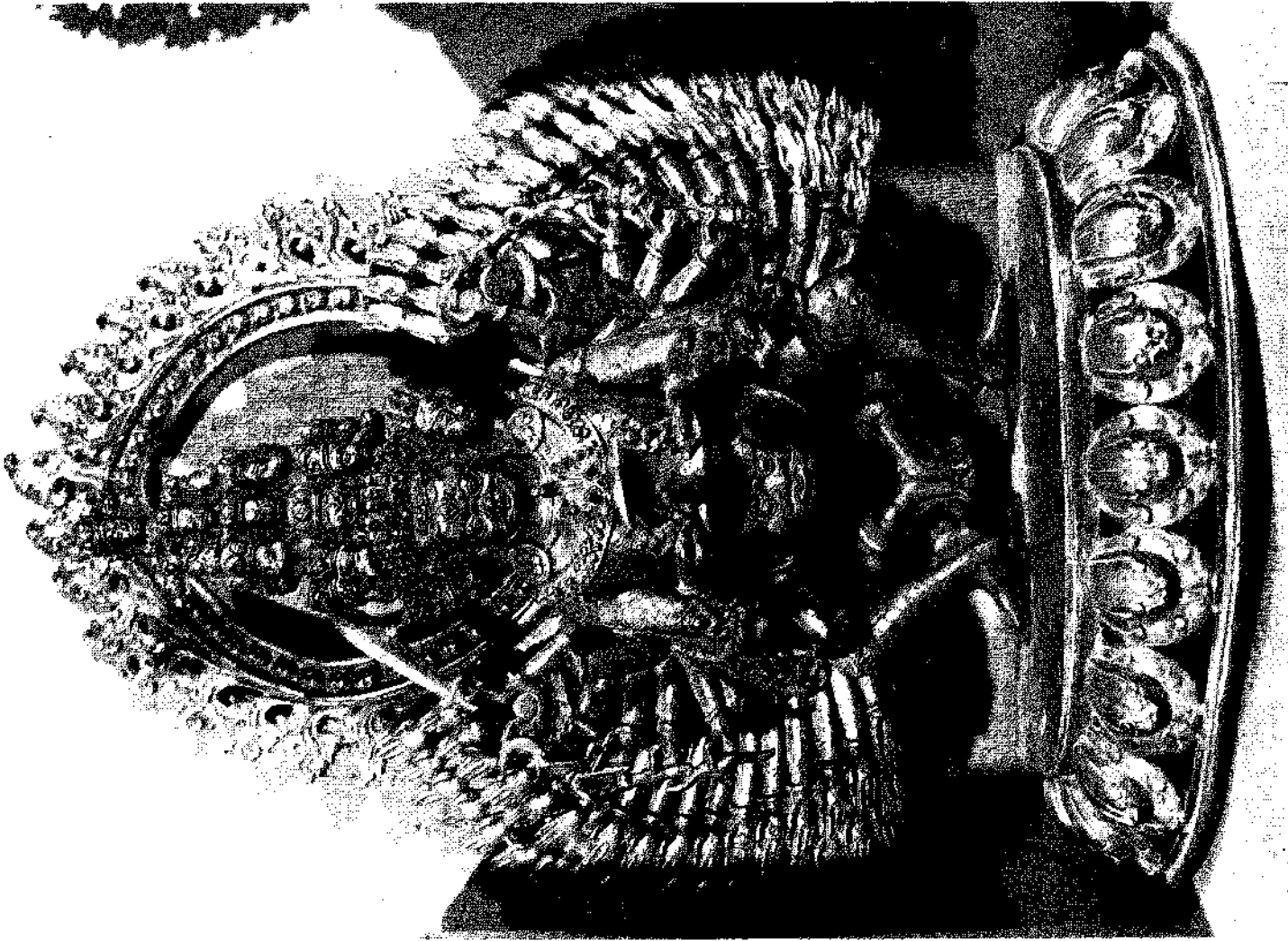


Fig. 74 "Visvarūpasamvara", *courtesy, Lucknow Museum*



Fig. 75 Pāpagāndevī, Samvara M S. (see text)

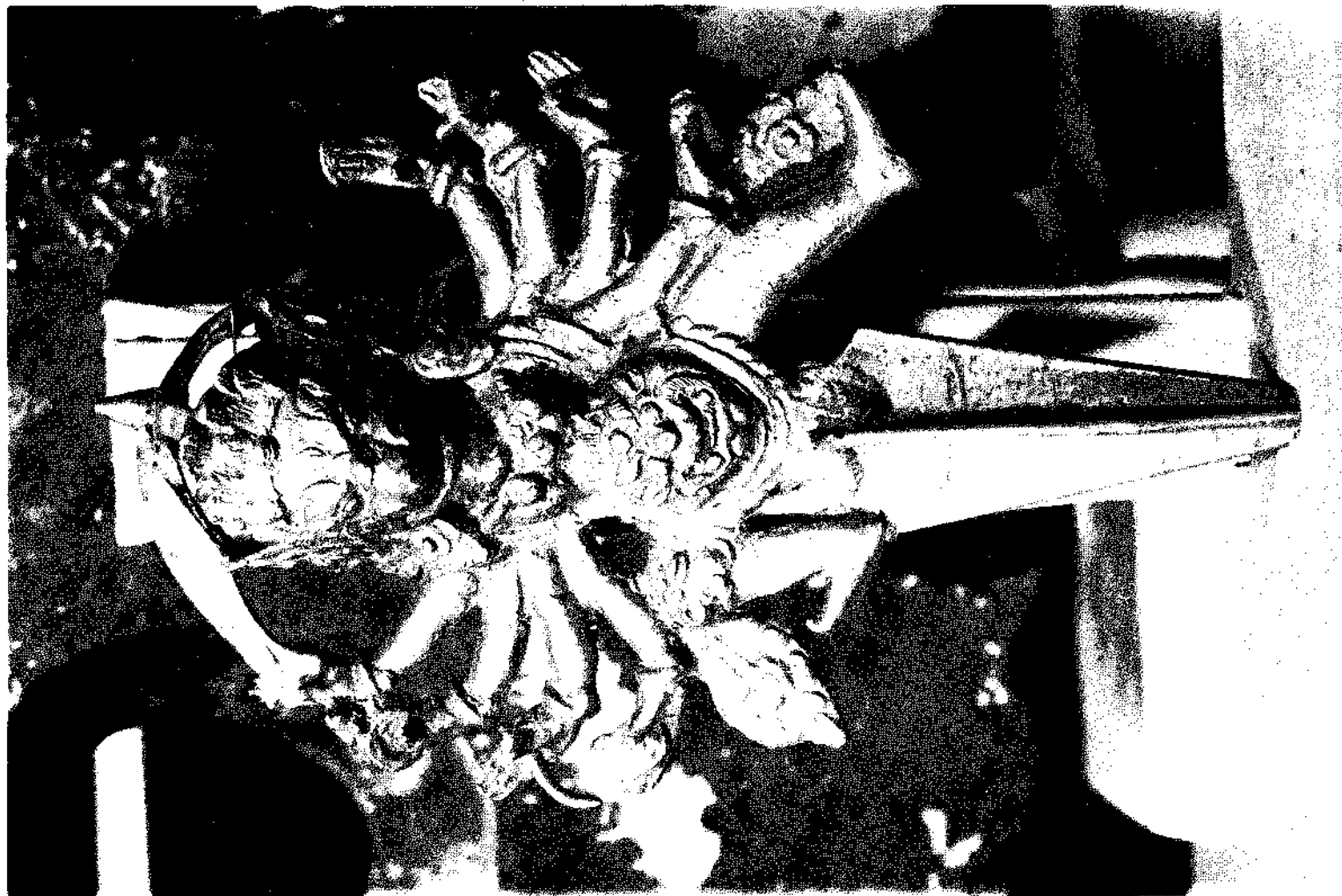


Fig. 77 Nepalese Example 2, courtesy, Indian Museum, Calcutta

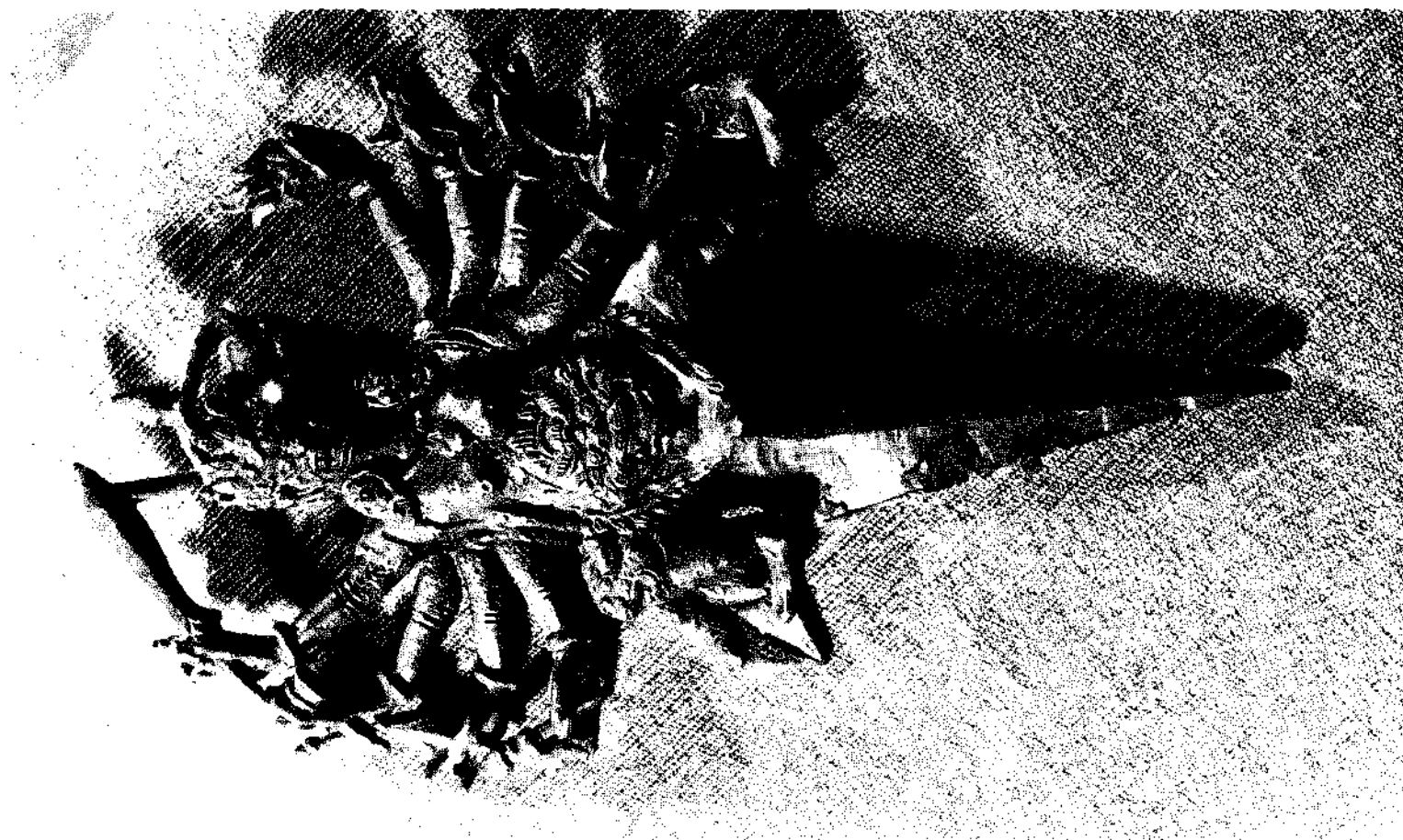


Fig. 76 Nepalese Example 1, courtesy, Lucknow Museum



Fig. 78 Nepalese Example 3, courtesy, *Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay*



Fig. 79 Kapkatasamvara, Samvara Mss.

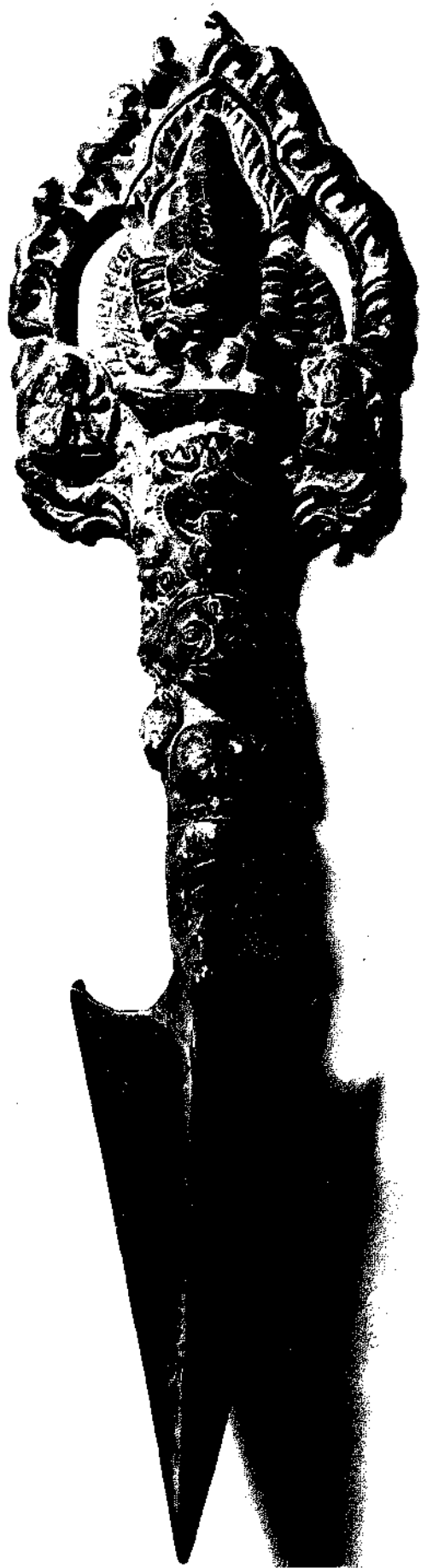


Fig. 80 Nepalese Example 4, *private collection*

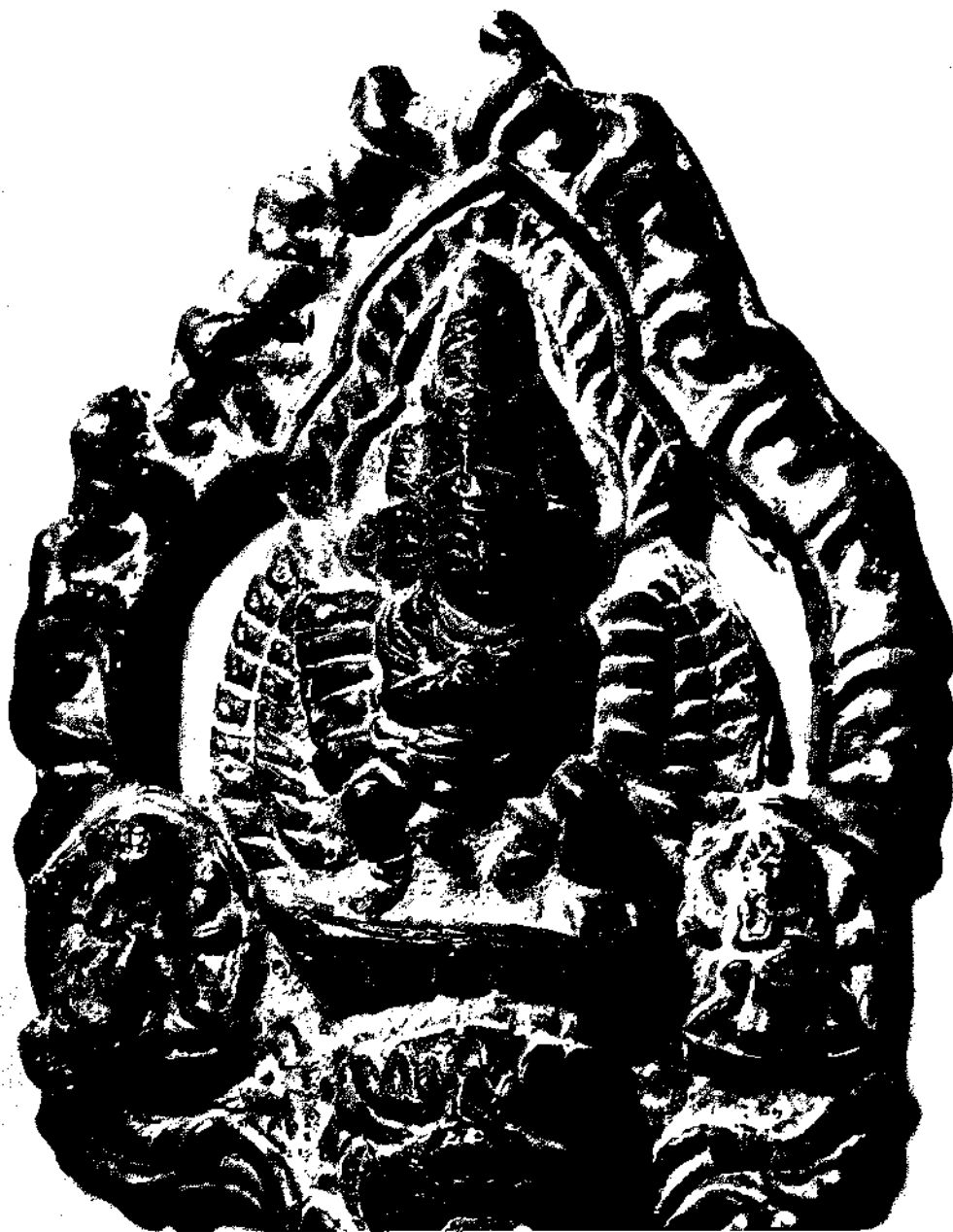


Fig. 81 Nepalese Example 4, detail



Fig. 82 Kukkūgasamvara, Samvara Mss.

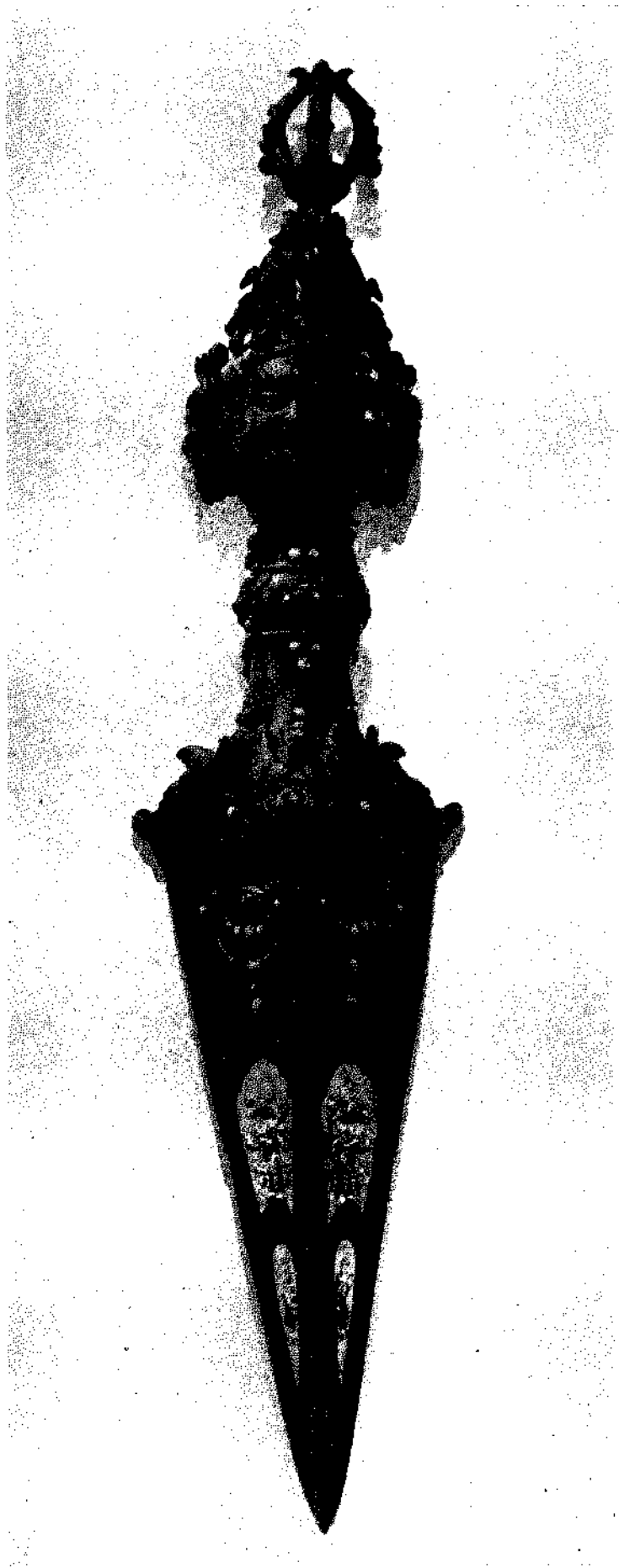


Fig. 83 Nepalese Example 5, *courtesy, Field Museum, Chicago*



Fig. 84 Nepalese Example 6, (Dhunūsamvara), Samvara Mss.



Fig. 85 Nepalese Example 7, (Nyajasamvara), Samvara Mss.

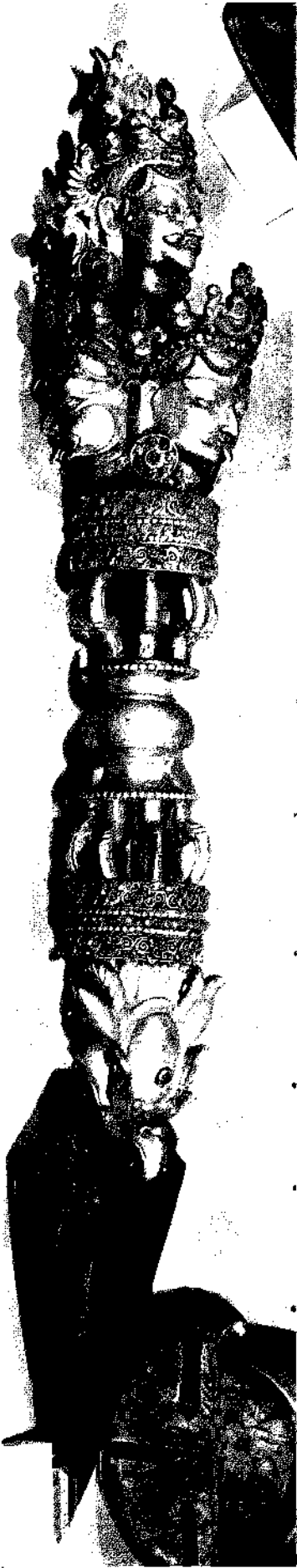


Fig. 86 Nepalese Example 8,
courtesy, Indian Museum, Calcutta



Fig. 87 Nepalese Example 8,
detail



Fig. 88 Chinese Example 1, *Ex Harry A. Franklin collection, Beverly Hills, present whereabouts unknown*



Fig. 89 Bön-po Example 1, *private collection*

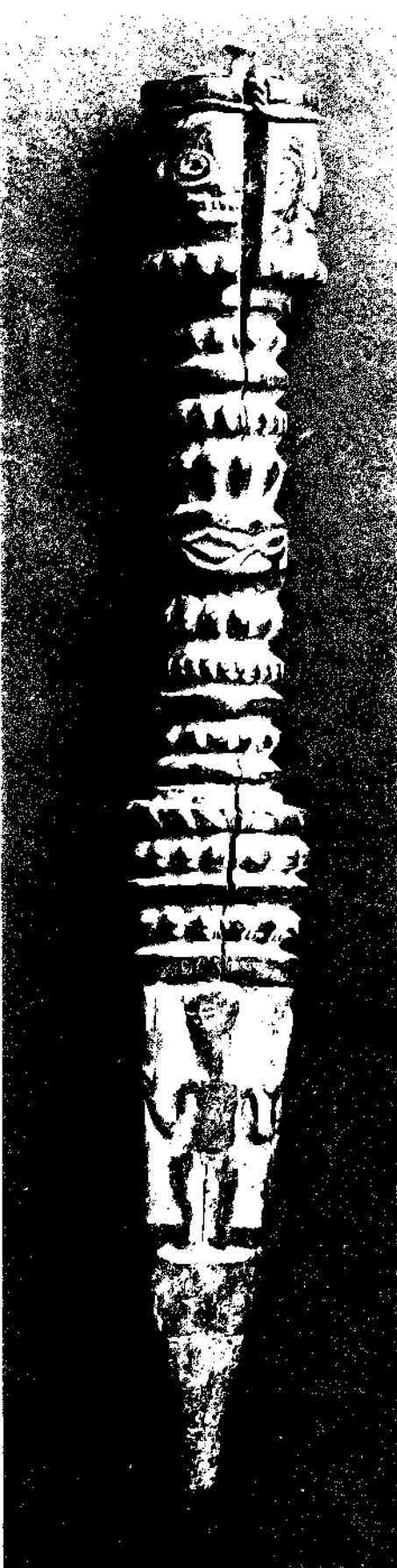


Fig. 90 Bön-po Example 2, *private collection*



Fig. 91 Bön-po Example 2, detail of blade



Fig. 92 Bön-po Example 2, detail of blade



Fig. 93 A *dgra-lha* cycle, private collection

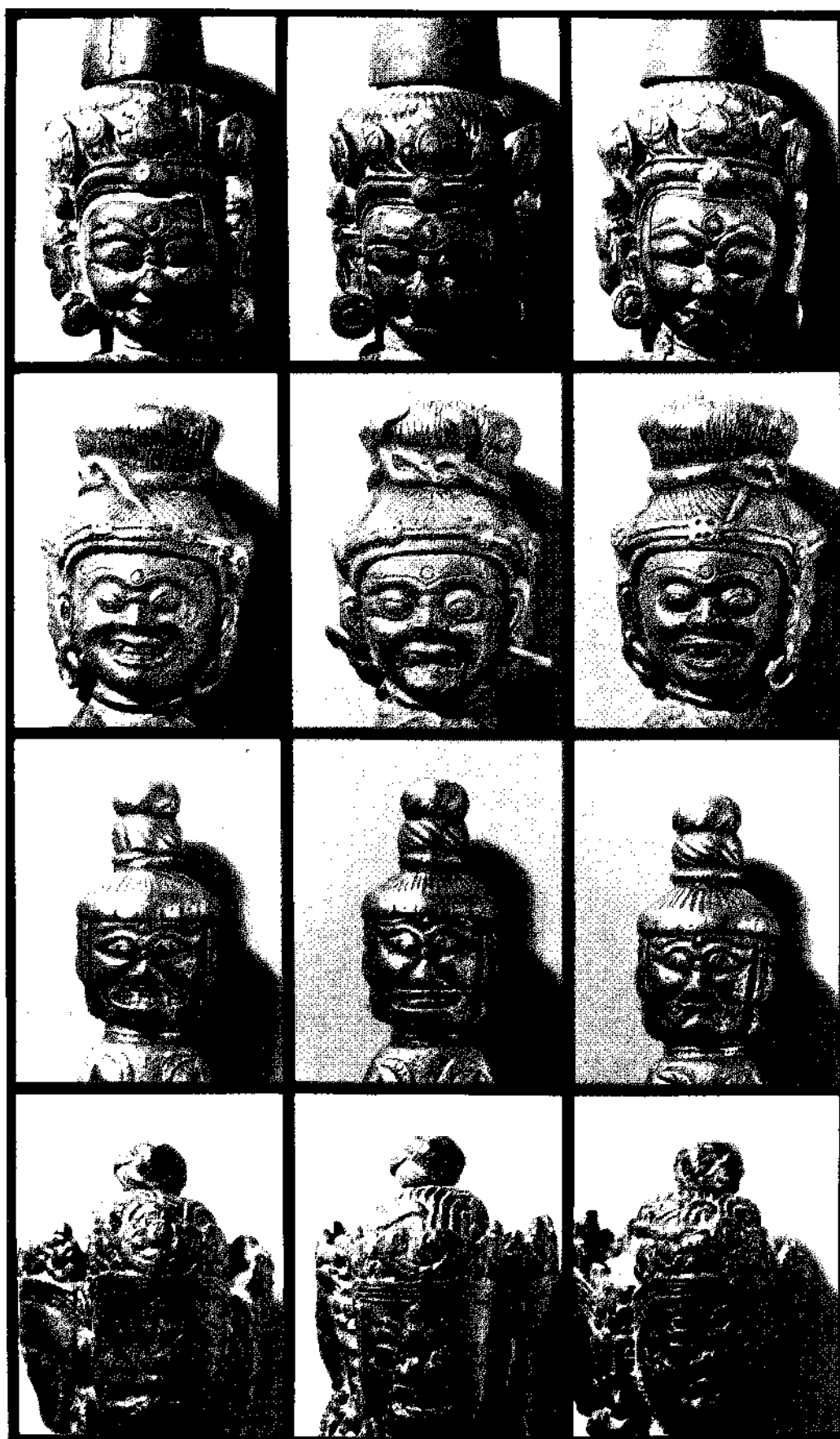


Fig. 94
 1st row, details of the facial features from example 31
 2nd row, details of the facial features from example 5
 3rd row, details of the facial features from example 13
 4th row, details of the facial features from example 11

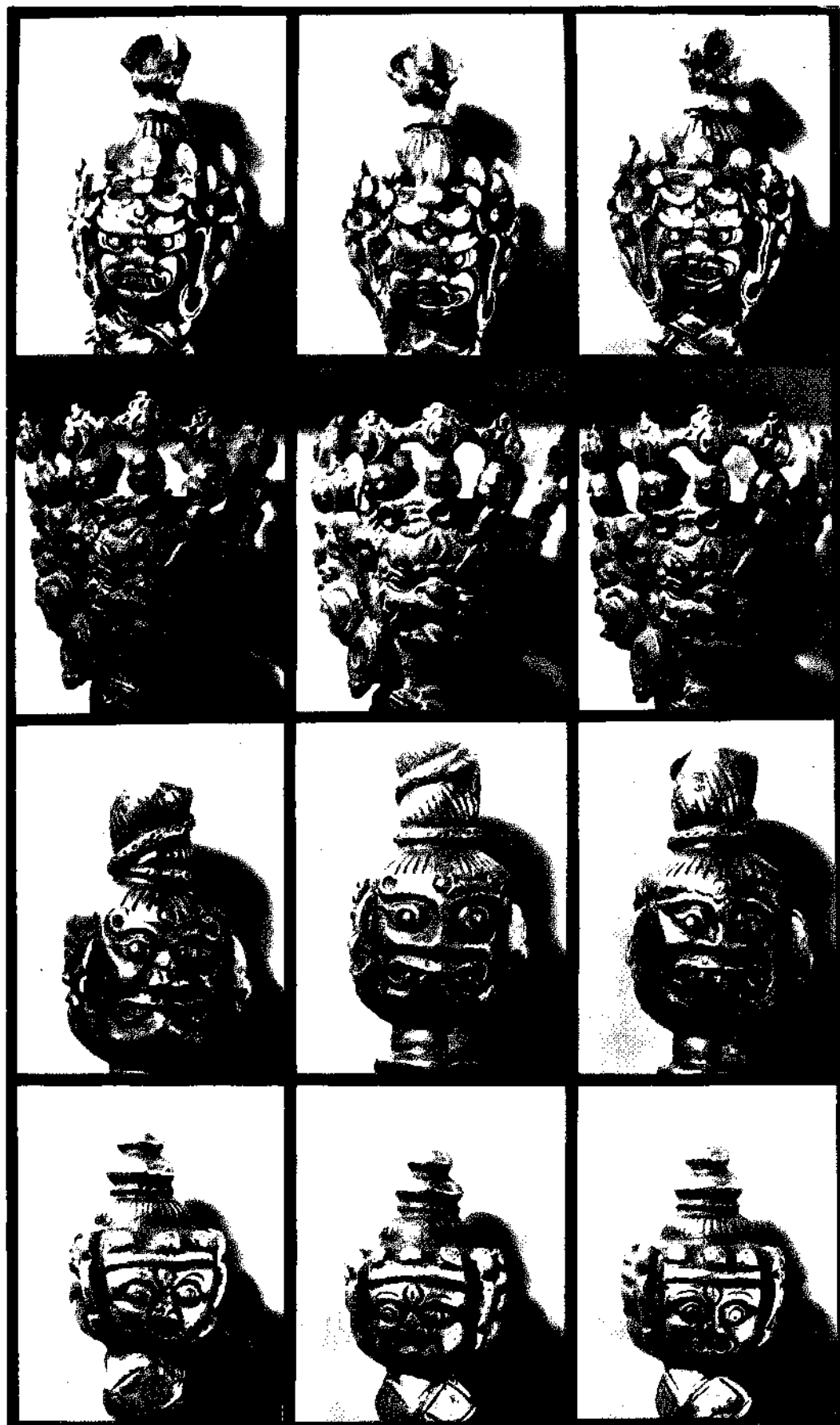


Fig. 95

- 1st row, details of the facial features from example 33
 2nd row, details of the facial features from example 23
 3rd row, details of the facial features from example 4
 4th row, details of the facial features from example 9



Fig. 96 "Nine headed scorpion" (shown having ingested a rGyal-po demon), xylographic charm, *Collection of the Bihar Research Society*, published by permission



Fig. 97 Illustration 400 from the C.P.G., Ma-cig phur gsham gcig



Fig. 98 Illustration 401 from the C.P.G., Ma-phur gnyis



Fig. 99 Illustration 402 from the C.P.G., Ma-phur gsum



Fig. 100 Illustration 403 from the C.P.G., Ma-phur bzhi



Fig. 101 Illustration 404 from the C.P.G., Ma-phur lnga rjogs

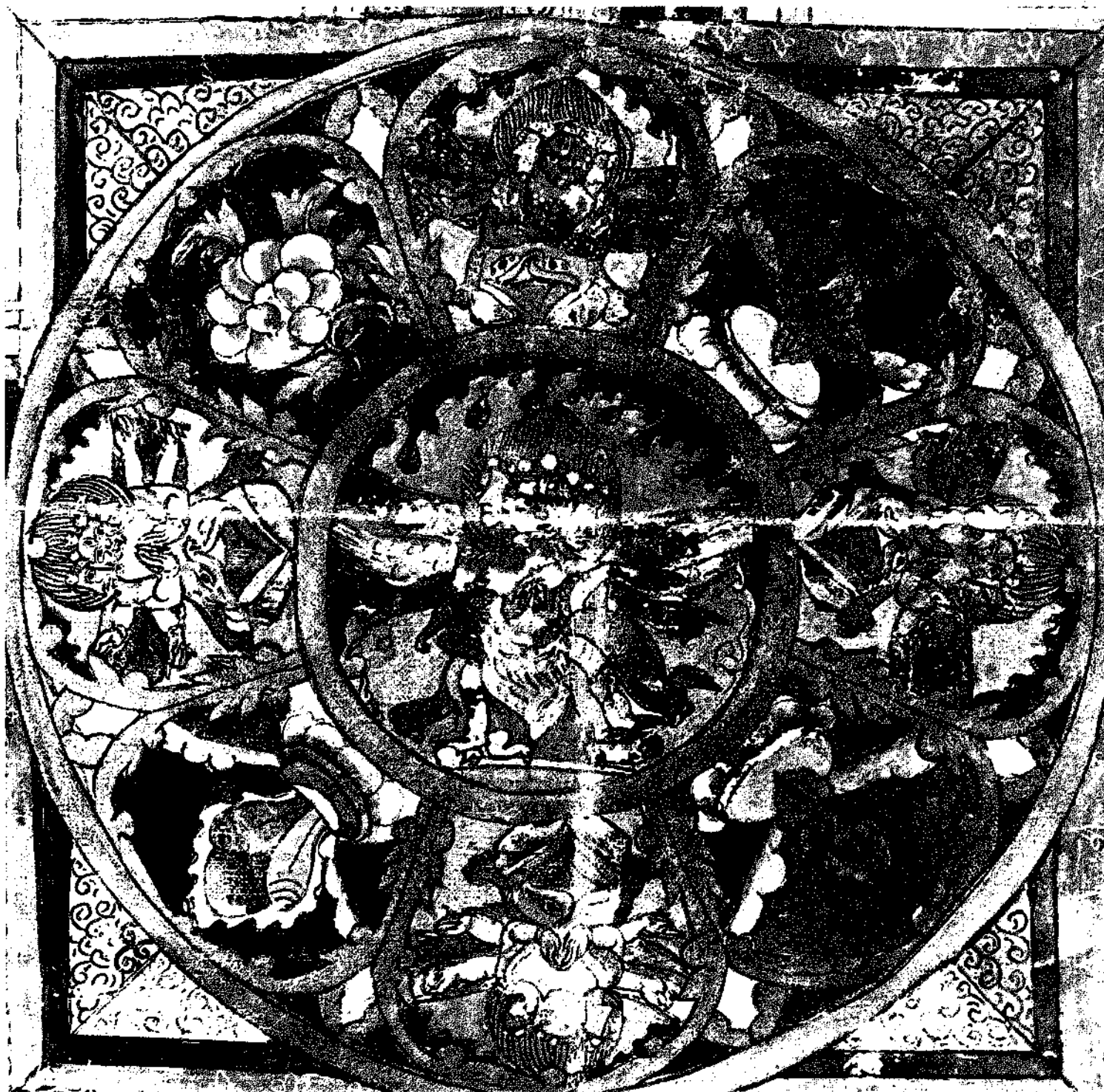


Fig. 102 A *maṇḍala* of SKu-mchog/ rDo-rje phur-pa, *private collection*



Fig. 103 Che mchog yon tan gyi lha, from a sGa bris painting, *private collection*

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John C. Huntington

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[Footnotes]

⁷ **The "Phurbu": The Use and Symbolism of the Tibetan Magic Dagger**

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