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ואז'ראפאני

גלגוליו של צ'ינגיס ח'אן: בין מיתוס למציאות ^[PDF]

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Vajrapani (depicted left) is the Buddha of Skillful **Means**. He represents the ability to enter into any situation, no matter how unpromising, and transform it into a path of spiritual fulfillment and benefit for all. Because he conquers the forces of harm and negativity without mercy, he is depicted as wrathful.

What is Vajrapani? - Vajrapani Institute
www.vajrapani.org/about-vajrapani-institute/what-does-vajrapani-mean

http://www.vajrapani.org/about-vajrapani-institute/what-does-vajrapani-mean

Vajrapani

For Vajrapani in Hinduism, see Indra.

Vajrapāni (Sanskrit, "Vajra in [his] hand") is one of the



Indian painting of Vajrapāṇi Bodhisattva, from the Ajaṇṭā Caves

earliest-appearing bodhisattvas in Mahayana Buddhism. He is the protector and guide of Gautama Buddha and rose to symbolize the Buddha's power.

Vajrapani is extensively represented in Buddhist iconography as one of the three protective deities surrounding the Buddha. Each of them symbolizes one of the Buddha's virtues: Mañjuśrī manifests all the Buddhas' wisdom, Avalokiteśvara manifests all the Buddhas' compassion and Vajrapani manifests all the Buddhas' power as well as the power of all five tathāgatas.

Vajrapani is one of the earliest Dharmapalas and the only Buddhist deity to be mentioned in the Pāli Canon as well as be worshiped in the Shaolin Monastery, in Tibetan Buddhism and in Pure Land Buddhism (where he is known as Mahasthamaprapta and forms a triad with Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara). Manifestations of Vajrapani can also be found in many Buddhist temples in Japan as dharma protectors called Nio. Vajrapani is also associated with Acala, who is venerated as *Fudo-Myō* in Japan,

where he is serenaded as the holder of the vajra.^[1]

The Buddhist Vajrapani is distinct from the entity mentioned in the Vedas as Indra, king of the gods and the most widely-mentioned deity in Hindu scriptures.

1 Names

In Sanskrit, Vajrapani is also known as *Vajrasattva*. The *Golden Light Sutra* titles him "great general of the yakshas". ^[2] Other name-forms are as follows.

• Bengali: Bojropani (বজ্রপাণি)

• Indonesian: Wajrapani

- Japanese: *Kongō shu bosatsu* (22222), *Wairaoneisa* (222222) or *Bajarahaji* (22222)^[3]
- Korean: Geumgang su bosal (??????) or Balsara-pani (??????)
- Malay: Bajrapani
- Mandarin: Jīngāng shǒu púsà (22222), Héyíluóhuányuèchā (222222) or Báshéluóbōnì (222222)
- Mongolian: Ochirvaani (Очирваань) or Bazarvaani (Базарваань)
- Vietnamese: Kim cương thủ bồ tát, Hoà di la hoàn duyệt xoa or Bạt xà la ba nị

2 Iconography

Vajrapani's image contains several key elements:

- Vajrapani's expression is wrathful, often symbolized as a yaksha, to generate "fear in the individual to loosen up his dogmatism"^[4]
- Vajrapani's taut posture is the active warrior pose (*pratayalidha*), based on an archer's stance;
- His loin cloth is made up of the skin of a tiger, whose head can be seen on his left knee:

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- His outstretched right hand brandishes a vajra, "symbolizing analytical knowledge (*ñana-vajira*) that disintegrates the grasping of consciousness (*vinnananam-pariggaha*)";^[5]
- His left hand deftly holds a lasso, with which he binds demons;
- Around his neck is a serpent necklace;
- Although he wears a skull crown in a few depictions, in most depictions he wears a five-pointed Bodhisattva crown to depict the power of the five tathāgathas; [note 1]
- He has a third eye.

3 Mantras

The mantra om vajrapāṇi hūm phaṭ is associated with Vajrapani. [6][7] His Seed Syllable is $h\bar{u}m$.

4 Meaning

On the popular level, Vajrapani, Holder of the Thunderbolt Scepter (symbolizing the power of compassion), is the Bodhisattva who represents the power of all the Buddhas, just as Avalokitesvara represents their great compassion, Manjusri their wisdom, and Tara their miraculous deeds.

For the yogi, Vajrapani is a means of accomplishing fierce determination and symbolizes unrelenting effectiveness in the conquest of negativity.

According to the *Pancavimsatisahasrika* and *Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita* any Bodhisattva on the path to Buddhahood is eligible for Vajrapani's protection, making them invincible to any attacks "by either men or ghosts".^[8]

5 Appearances and identifications

His first representations in India were identified with the thunder deity. Buddhaghosa associated Vajrapani with the Hindu god Indra, [9] As Buddhism expanded in Central Asia, and fused with Hellenistic influences into Greco-Buddhism, the Greek hero Heracles was adopted to represent Vajrapani. He was then typically depicted as a hairy, muscular athlete, wielding a short "diamond" club. [note 2]

In Japan, Vajrapani is known as *Shukongōshin* ([2][2][2]], "Diamond rod-wielding god"), and has been the inspiration for the *Niō*[note 3], the wrath-filled and muscular guardian god of the Buddha, standing today at the entrance of many Buddhist temples under the appearance

of frightening wrestler-like statues. He is also associated with Fudo-Myo, an incarnation of Acala and the prayer mantra for Fudo-Myo references him as the powerful wielder of the vajra.

Some suggest that the war deity Kartikeya, who bears the title Skanda is also a manifestation of Vajrapani, who bears some resemblance to Skanda because they both wield the vajra and are portrayed with flaming halos. He is also connected through Vajrapani through a theory to his connection to Greco-Buddhism, as Wei Tuo's image is reminiscent of the Heracles depiction of Vajrapani.

6 Stories

6.1 Conversion of Ambattha

The Pali Canon's Ambattha Suttanta, which challenges the caste system, tells of one instance of him appearing as a sign of the Buddha's power. At the behest of his teacher, a young Brahmin named Ambatha visited the Buddha. Knowing the Buddha's family to be the Shakya clan who are Kshatriya caste, Ambatha failed to show him the respect he would a fellow Brahmin. When the Buddha questioned his lack of respect, Ambatha replied it was because the Buddha belongs to a "menial" caste. The Buddha then asked the Brahmin if his family was descended from a "Shakya slave girl". Knowing this to be true, Ambatha refused to answer the question. Upon refusing to answer the question for a second time, the Buddha warned him that his head would be smashed to bits if he failed to do so a third time. Ambatha was frightened when he saw Vajrapani manifest above the Buddha's head ready to strike the Brahmin down with his thunderbolt. He quickly confirmed the truth and a lesson on caste ensues.[2]

6.2 Vajrapani and Maheswara

A popular story tells how Vajrapani kills Maheswara, a manifestation of Shiva depicted as an evil being. [11][4] The story occurs in several scriptures, most notably the Sarvatathagatatattvasamgraha and the Vajrapany-abhisekamahatantra.[12] The story begins with the transformation of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra into Vajrapani by Vairocana, the cosmic Buddha, receiving a vajra and the name "Vajrapani". [13] Vairocana then requests Vajrapani to generate his adamantine family, to establish a mandala. Vajrapani refuses, because Maheswara (Shiva) "is deluding beings with his deceitfull religious doctrines and engaging in all kinds of violent criminal conduct".[14] Mahesvara and his entourage are dragged to Mount Sumeru, and all but Mahesvara submit. Vajrapani and Mahesvara engage in a magical combat, which is won by Vajrapani. Maheswara's retinue become part of Vairocana's mandala, except for Maheswara, who is killed, and his life transferred to another realm where he becomes a Buddha named Bhasmesvara-nirghosa, the "Soundless Lord of Ashes".^[15]

According to Kalupahana, the story "echoes" the story of the conversion of Ambattha. [4] It is to be understood in the context of the competition between Buddhist institutions and Shaivism. [16]

7 Patron saint of Shaolin monastery

In his book *The Shaolin Monastery* (2008), Prof. Meir Shahar notes Vajrapani is the patron saint of the Shaolin Monastery. A short story appearing in Zhang Zhuo's (660-741) Tang anthology shows how the deity had been venerated in the Monastery from at least the eighth century. It is an anecdotal story of how the Shaolin monk Sengchou (480-560) gained supernatural strength and fighting ability by praying to the Vajrapani and being force-fed raw meat.^[17] Shaolin abbot Zuduan (1115–1167) erected a stele in his honor during the Song Dynasty.^[18] It reads:

According to the scripture [Lotus Sutra], this deity (Narayana) is a manifestation of Avalokitesvara (Guanyin). [19][20] If a person who compassionately nourishes all living beings employs this [deity's] charm, it will increase his body's strength (zengzhang shen li). It fulfills all vows, being most efficacious. ... Therefore those who study Narayana's hand-symbolism (mudra), those who seek his spell (mantra), and those who search for his image are numerous. Thus we have erected this stele to spread this transmission. [21]

— Stele re-erected (chong shang) by Shaolin's abbot Zuduan

Instead of being considered a stand alone deity, Shaolin believes Vajrapani to be an emanation of the Bodhisattva Guanyin. The Chinese scholar A'De noted this was because the *Lotus Sutra* says Guanyin takes on the visage of whatever being that would best help pervade the dharma. The exact *Lotus Sutra* passage reads: "To those who can be conveyed to deliverance by the body of the spirit who grasps the *vajra* (Vajrapani) he preaches Dharma by displaying the body of the spirit who grasps the *vajra*."^[22]

He was historically worshiped as the progenitor of their famous staff method by the monks themselves. A stele erected by Shaolin abbot Wenzai in 1517 shows the deity's vajra-club had by then been changed to a Chinese staff, [23] which originally "served as the emblem of the monk". [24] Vajrapani's yaksha-like Narayana form was eventually equated with one of the four staff-wielding



Vajrapani Painting at Mogao Caves's Hidden Library, Dunhuang, China Power and anger personified. Late 9th Century, Tang Dynasty. Ink and colors on silk.

"Kinnara Kings" from the *Lotus Sutra* in 1575. His name was thus changed from Narayana to "Kinnara King". [25] One of the many versions of a certain tale regarding his

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creation of the staff method takes place during the Yuan Dynasty's Red Turban Rebellion. Bandits lay siege to the monastery, but it is saved by a lowly kitchen worker wielding a long fire poker as a makeshift staff. He leaps into the oven and emerges as a monstrous giant big enough to stand astride both Mount Song and the imperial fort atop Mount Shaoshi (which are five miles apart). The bandits flee when they behold this staff-wielding titan. The Shaolin monks later realize that the kitchen worker was none other than the Kinnara King in disguise. [26] Shahar notes the part of the kitchen worker might have been based on the actual life of the monk Huineng (638-713).[27] In addition, he suggests the mythical elements of the tale were based on the fictional adventures of Sun Wukong from the Chinese epic Journey to the West. He compares the worker's transformation in the stove with Sun's time in Laozi's crucible, their use of the staff, and the fact that Sun and his weapon can both grow to gigantic proportions.[28]

Statues and paintings of kinnaras were commissioned in various halls throughout Shaolin in honor of his defeat of the Red Turban army. A wicker statue woven by the monks and featured in the center of the "Kinnara Hall" was mentioned in Cheng Zongyou's seventeenth century training manual *Shaolin Staff Method*. However, a century later, it was claimed that the Kinnara King had himself woven the statue. It was destroyed when the monastery was set aflame by the KMT General Shi Yousan in 1928. A "rejuvenated religious cult" arose around kinnaras in the late twentieth century. Shaolin re-erected the shrine to him in 1984 and improved it in 2004.^[29]

8 Gallery

- Vajrapani with Heraklean club
- Hercules and the Nemean lion. Gandhara, 1st century
- Heracles depiction of Vajrapani. Gandhara, 2nd century
- The Buddha with his protector Vajrapani. Gandhara, 2nd century
- Vajrapani with a group of Buddhist monks. Gandhara
- 1517 stele dedicated to Narayana's defeat of the Red Turban rebels
- Tibetan depiction of the wrathful Vajrapani

9 See also

- Dharmapala
- Wei Tuo

• Niō

10 Notes

- [1] The skull crown is an iconographic symbol of another similar Dharmapala called Mahakala
- [2] Katsumi Tanabe: "The origin of the image of Vajrapani should be explained. This deity is the protector and guide of the Buddha Sakyamuni. His image was modelled after that of Hercules. (...) The Gandharan Vajrapani was transformed in Central Asia and China and afterwards transmitted to Japan, where it exerted stylistic influences on the wrestler-like statues of the Guardian Deities (Nio)."
- [3] [2], lit. benevolent kings

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- [2] Vessantara. Meeting the Buddhas: A Guide to Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Tantric Deities. Birmingham [England]: Windhorse Publications, 1998 (ISBN 0904766535), p. 162
- [3] From the Digital Dictionary of Buddhism
- [4] Kalupahana 1994, p. 220.
- [5] sfn & Kalupahana 1994, p. 219.
- [6] Vajrapani mantra Om Vajrapani Hum
- [7] Vajrapani Mantra
- [8] DeCaroli, Robert. Haunting the Buddha: Indian Popular Religions and the Formation of Buddhism. New York: Oxford University, 2004 (ISBN 0195168380), p. 182
- [9] DeCaroli, Haunting the Buddha, p. 182
- [10] Katsumi Tanabe, "Alexander the Great, East-West cultural contacts from Greece to Japan", p23)
- [11] Davidson 2004, p. 148-153.
- [12] Davidson 2004, p. 148.
- [13] Davidson 2004, p. 148-150.
- [14] Davidson 2004, p. 150.
- [15] Davidson 2004, p. 151.
- [16] Davidson 2004, p. 152.
- [17] Meir Shahar, The Shaolin Monastery: History, Religion, and the Chinese Martial Arts. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008 (ISBN 0824831101), pp. 35-36
- [18] Ibid, p. 40
- [19] This usage of Narayana is not to be confused with one of the many names of the Hindu god Vishnu.

- [20] Instead of being a stand alone Bodhisattva, Shaolin considers him to be an emanation of Guanyin.
- [21] Shahar, The Shaolin Monastery, p. 42
- [22] Shahar, The Shaolin Monastery, p. 85
- [23] Ibid, p. 84
- [24] Ibid, p. 102
- [25] Ibid, p. 87
- [26] Ibid, pp. 87-88
- [27] Ibid
- [28] Ibid, p. 109
- [29] Ibid, p. 88

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13 External links

- Images of Shukongōshin in Japan
- The Bodhisattva and Spiritual Emanation of Aksobhya from Buddhanature.com
- Vajrapani Mantra and Origins
- Piya Tan, Ambaṭṭha Sutta. Theme: Religious arrogance versus spiritual openness, appearance of Vajrapani in this sutta

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