

The Buddha presiding over this assemblage, whose seated figure our Plate shows in its upper right corner, is taken by M. Petrucci for Bhaiṣajyaguru, and the similarity in pose and accessories to the central Buddha of the previously discussed picture seems to support this identification. Unfortunately the inscription in Chinese and Tibetan which occupies the large yellow cartouche in the centre and might have afforded safe guidance has faded into illegibility. On either side of this central Buddha is seen a Bodhisattva, seated with one leg pendent and with the hand nearest to the Buddha raised, like the right of the latter himself, in the *vitarka-mudrā*, the gesture of argument. In pose, dress, and treatment of features these two seated Bodhisattvas bear a distinctly Indian air, and this would well agree with the identification proposed for them by M. Petrucci, who on the strength of inscripational indications in a simplified Maṇḍala of Bhaiṣajyaguru is prepared to recognize Samantabhadra in the Bodhisattva to the left and his usual counterpart Mañjuśrī in the corresponding seated Bodhisattva to the right.¹ Between the presiding Buddha and the Bodhisattva on either side are grouped three lesser Bodhisattvas in adoring poses and two haloed monkish disciples. The heads of the latter, one young, the other old and emaciated, are drawn with much expressive skill. The same is the case with the faces of most of the Bodhisattvas, though the great difficulties which the painting offers to photography do not allow the extreme delicacy of the drawing to be fully appreciated in the reproduction.

While the grouping and treatment of the divine personalities so far named follow well-established lines, a striking feature, met with again only once among our 'Maṇḍala' paintings, is introduced by the two processions which descend, carried on purple clouds, from either side towards the centre of the picture. On the left our Plate shows us the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra seated on a lotus which a white elephant, his recognized *vāhana*, carries, as he advances accompanied by Bodhisattvas and preceded by heavenly musicians to meet Mañjuśrī. The latter Bodhisattva appears in the corresponding right-hand portion of the picture seated on his lion and escorted by an exactly similar *cortège*.

Apart from six figures of undetermined lesser Bodhisattvas, some of whom carry sacred vessels, the *cortège* of either comprises four youthful musicians playing on clappers, pipe, flute, and mouth-organ. In front of them marches a dark-coloured boy, undoubtedly meant for an Indian, carrying a bronze vessel, while another strides by the side of the chief Bodhisattva, leading his mount. The exaggerated dark colour of these Indians is, like the misdrawing of the elephant's head and limbs, significant of the painter's want of familiarity with things Indian. In the background two of the Lokapālas, or Guardian-kings of the Four Quarters, attend the train of each divinity. About the fluttering canopy which rises above the head of each float gracefully drawn Gandharvīs (Apsaras). From the side there sweeps down a bevy of tiny Bodhisattva figures clustered within a wreath of purple cloud, while above it a group of picturesque hills, drawn with true Chinese feeling for landscape, fills the top corner.

Throughout the picture the workmanship is that of a master, and the serene dignity of the composition as a whole is very happily blended with tenderness of mood and harmonious subtlety of line and colour.

PLATES IV, V

PROCESSIONS OF MAÑJUŚRĪ AND SAMANTABHADRA

CLOSELY allied in subject and treatment to the last described picture, though not quite equal to it in quality of execution, are the two grand fragments (Ch. xxxvii. 003, 005) partially illustrated by Plates IV and V. These two large pieces of silk with curved tops once belonged respectively to the right and left sides of one arch-shaped picture. The centre portion, which is likely to have contained a seated Buddha, is lost. But some idea of the size of the whole

¹ Cf. *Serindia*, p. 1420. For a distinctively 'Indian' representation of Mañjuśrī, see below, Plate xxvii.