

characteristic also of the representation of chargers in Sassanian reliefs.<sup>55</sup> Passing reference may be made here also to the appearance of decorative motifs unmistakably borrowed from textiles of 'Sassanian' style on the Lokapāla's dress and that of his horse.

In front of Vaiśravaṇa march two Yakṣas clad in what seems to be meant for mail armour and carrying red pennons. Behind him are seen moving other demon followers, all grotesque in appearance, and two with animal jaws, &c. They carry a large flag decorated with a peculiar check and vandyke pattern and a miniature Stūpa, both emblems associated with Vaiśravaṇa also in the picture of Plate XLV, as well as a battle-axe and bow and arrows. In the foreground are shown in violent movement three goblins of savage look carrying jars and vases and apparently quarrelling with the Yakṣas. As one of them attacks the latter with a branch of coral or 'Nāga tree' in his hand, they may represent the Nāgas from whom according to the legend Vaiśravaṇa won his treasure. The flaming jewels and square-holed coins scattered in the foreground seem to have the same symbolic bearing.

At the rear stand two human figures in Chinese secular costume, the man with a mitre-like head-dress and a roll in his hands, the fair-faced lady with hands joined in adoration and her hair done in the elaborate tenth-century fashion. Whether they are meant for the donors of the picture seems uncertain. The whole host is swept along on a cloud from Vaiśravaṇa's mansion, represented by a Chinese pavilion in the left top corner, and moves across the sea, which is bounded in the background by a mountain range (Mount Meru) and in the foreground by cliffs. Infants, ducks, a shark-jawed monster's head, and a nymph float here in the water between scarlet lotuses, while on the cliffs there appears a stag. Flowers are scattered in the air above.

The workmanship, while well finished throughout, shows an ease and boldness which befits the subject. The simplicity of the colour scheme, which is almost entirely confined to yellow, scarlet, and white on greenish-brown tints of the background, helps the eye to take in the rapidity of the movement represented.

## PLATE XXVII

### VIRŪPĀKṢA AND MAÑJUSRĪ

THE silk banner reproduced on the right, on the scale of three-fifths (Ch. 0040), presents a fine example of the banners showing Virūpākṣa, the Guardian of the West. Next to Vaiśravaṇa he is the most frequently portrayed of Lokapālas in our paintings, always clearly recognizable by his particular emblem, the sword. Like the rest of the 'Four Great Kings' shown in the banners Virūpākṣa stands on the back of a crouching demon serving as his 'cognizance' (*vāhana*) and representing the Yakṣas over whom he rules. A small curling cloud above his haloed head marks the whole as a vision. Both ends of the banner are broken and its accessories lost, but otherwise it is almost intact.

The figure, displaying force and dignity combined, belongs to a class of Lokapāla representations among our paintings which, from certain peculiarities in the style of treatment and in detail, may be distinguished as 'Chinese' from another suggesting closer affinity to a Central-Asian prototype. Representatives of both classes are seen in Plate XLVII. But the general character of the figures and their warrior costume is essentially the same throughout. This suggests, in accord with other indications, that the type, though no doubt originally derived from the West, had undergone thorough adaptation to Chinese art feeling and was fully established long before the probable period when these banners were painted.<sup>56</sup>

Our painting well illustrates certain characteristics of the former group in the three-quarter profile of the Lokapāla's figure and the sweeping curve of pose, with the body thrown

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien*, p. 87. To the examples there quoted in note 141 may be added the painted panel from Dandān-oilik, D. vii. 5, shown in

*Ancient Khotan*, ii. Pl. LIX.

<sup>56</sup> For more detailed observations on the two groups among Lokapāla pictures, cf. *Serindia*, pp. 872 sqq.