

features of the type exhibited by our Dharmapāla figures in a more or less conventionalized form.⁴⁶ For tracing the gradual development of this type in Central Asia the frescoes of the northern oases from Kuchā to Turfān are likely to offer abundant materials.⁴⁷ Of our own Dharmapāla figures M. Foucher has justly observed that 'they already make us think of the athletic demons of Japan as well as of the frightful lamaistic evocations. Yet it should be noted that they show neither the extravagant multiplication of members nor the monstrous obscenities of the latter.'⁴⁸

Grotesque
Dharmapāla
type in
banners.

The nine silk Dharmapāla banners, all but one in excellent or relatively good preservation, are but slightly distinguished from each other in type, and several are unmistakably replicas.⁴⁹ All of them have the muscular figure in tense attitude, the grotesque head with its furious downward look, and the large richly ornamented Vajra representing the thunderbolt. Abundantly decked with jewellery as they are, they carry but scanty dress, no doubt in order to permit full exhibition of the extravagantly exaggerated muscles. The treatment of the latter, if conventionalized, yet shows considerable skill, and its effect is heightened in some banners by clever brushwork intended for modelling.⁵⁰ The sinuous lines of the drapery, the fillet ends of the head-dress flying upwards, the coiling clouds above, and in some cases the flames of the halo bursting round the raised arm, all help to intensify the expression of violent effort.⁵¹ With this aim, too, strong and clear colours are used throughout, often with a very striking effect. As a minor point of quasi-ethnographic interest the green irises found in some of these grotesque figures may be mentioned in conclusion.⁵² Besides the banners we have the Kakemono-shaped paper painting of a three-headed Vajrapāṇi, Ch. i. 0023, and in Ch. 00156 (Plate XCVIII) spirited pen-and-ink sketches of Vajrapāṇis in different poses.⁵³

SECTION VII.—DIVINE GROUPS AND ASSEMBLAGES

Classifica-
tion of
groups.

We may now proceed to review the paintings of the second main category, which are consecrated to more than one divinity. It will obviously be convenient first to treat of those paintings which present to us two or more chief figures of the Buddhist Pantheon placed side by side in hieratic co-ordination; next to examine those in which we find two or more Bodhisattvas, eventually with their celestial following, grouped round a central Buddha; and finally to approach the elaborate and sumptuous compositions which are meant to bring before our eyes one or another of the Heavens presided over by different Buddhas in all their magnificence of divine hosts and celestial pleasures.

⁴⁶ Cf. Chavannes, *Mission archéologique*, Planches I, Nos. 303, 304, 330, 342, 345, 357-60. The violent pose, exaggerated muscles, and the absence of armour help to distinguish these figures from those of Lokapālas; see for the latter particularly No. 353. M. Chavannes sees a Vajrapāṇi in the composite figure of Yün-kang (Nos. 219, 231) with trident and Vajra, which might otherwise be taken for a Lokapāla of an earlier type; cf. *loc. cit.*, i. p. 312.

⁴⁷ For reference to numerous representations, some illustrated, cf. Grünwedel, *Alt buddh. Kultstätten*, p. 368, Index *s.v.* *Vajrapāṇi*; for a Vajrapāṇi figure at Murtuk closely approaching the type on our banners, see *ibid.* p. 309, Fig. 627.

⁴⁸ For M. Foucher's notes, see above, p. 833. For the Dharmapālas of Tibetan Buddhism in all their extravagant variations and their connexion with Vajrapāṇi, cf. Grünwedel, *Mythologie des Buddhismus*, pp. 158 sqq.

That the muscular demon figures found as guardians at

the entrances of Japanese temples and known as Ni-ō are of the Vajrapāṇi type is quite clear; cf. Grünwedel-Burgess, *Buddhist Art*, p. 95, note 1; for an illustration, see Grünwedel, *Mythologie des B.*, p. xiv.

⁴⁹ Cf. Descriptive List for Ch. 004 (Pl. LXXXVI); i. 006; lxi. 006, and the pair Ch. xxiv. 001, 002. Other silk banners are Ch. 00467 (fr.); i. 004 (*Thousand B.*, Pl. XXIX); xxvi. a. 005; liv. 002 (Pl. LXXXVI).

⁵⁰ For a good specimen, see Ch. 004, Pl. LXXXVI; also i. 004, *Thousand B.*, Pl. XXIX. This modelling, through mechanical treatment, degenerates into a meaningless network of pink brush-strokes in xxvi. a. 005; lxi. 006.

⁵¹ For these flames bursting upwards, see Ch. xxiv. 001, 002 (Pl. LXXXVI); flaming jewels on the shoulder appear also Ch. xxiv. 001; xxvi. a. 005.

⁵² Cf. Ch. xxvi. a. 005; liv. 002.

⁵³ For a rough paper painting, see Ch. 00409.