

## A BUDDHIST SPELL

by K. P. K. WHITAKER

The bronze plaque reproduced on Plates I-II is in the possession of Mr. J. A. J. Myren of the Victoria and Albert Museum who showed it to Dr. J. G. de Casparis for the purpose of identification. The history of the plaque, as told by Mr. Myren, is that it was brought to this country from somewhere in India about half a century ago. Dr. de Casparis passed it on to me hoping that since the Chinese characters are less worn than the Sanskrit inscription, the former would yield up the identity of the figure and the meaning of the inscription.

### I. The plaque proper

The Chinese characters, to be read from right to left, render a well-attested mantra addressed to Caṇḍā. They surround the central figure of Caṇḍā (a form of Durgā<sup>1</sup>), who is represented with sixteen arms and seated on a lotus throne. Her face shows none of the distinctive features which are usually associated with forms of Durgā as found in India. As the plaque is, no doubt, a ritual object there is likely to be a reason for the blankness of the face. Since the goddess Caṇḍā has two aspects, the kindly one and the ferocious one (善惡相), the blankness of the face would seem to serve better the requirement of a worshipper who when praying to the goddess expects to obtain a favourable or unfavourable answer by gazing at the ritual mirror, where either the kindly or the ferocious aspect of the goddess is alleged to appear<sup>2</sup> in due course.

The goddess wears a crown of some sort. It is not clear whether a sow's head<sup>3</sup> is represented. The design with two circles across her bosom looks like an ornament. About her shoulders there seems to be an entwining snake,<sup>4</sup> which is often present in Durgā representations. Some of the objects in her hands, but not all,<sup>5</sup> are identifiable.

The Sanskrit version of the mantra on the other side of the plaque is in the Nepalese *rañja* (Tibetan *lan-ts'a* or *lan-dza*<sup>6</sup>) script, which was

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 15, etc.

<sup>2</sup> See *T(aishō) T(ripitaka)*, Vol. 20, No. 1075, p. 173(c).

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> See below, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> See below, p. 16, the list of objects.

<sup>6</sup> See J. Filliozat in *L'Inde Classique*, ed. by L. Renou (*et alii*), Vol. II, Paris, 1953, pp. 665, etc., and F. W. Thomas, *The Tibetan Alphabet* in "Festschrift zur Feier des zweihundertjährigen Bestehens der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen", II, Phil.-hist. Kl., Berlin, 1951, pp. 146-65, where also earlier literature is adduced.

न	म	स	य	नां	स	शु	वं	ड	सा	रा	वां	ॐ	ॐ
NA	MO	SA	PTA	NĀM	SA	MYA	CAN	DE	SVĀ	HĀ	VRĀM	OM	RAM
南	無	颯	哆	喃	三	藐	准	提	娑婆	訶	部林	唵	藍
NA	MO	SAP	TA	NĀM	SA(M)	MYAK	CAN	DE	SVĀ	HĀ	VRĀM	OM	RAM
nâm	miu	sâp	[tâ] <sup>1</sup>	[njam] <sup>2</sup>	sâm	{miäu [mâk]}	tsjuën	d'iei	sâ b'ua	χâ	b'au liam	[âm]	[lâm]
ॐ	व	द्या	क	टी	नां	त	ॐ	ॐ	ॐ	म	नि	पा	द्म
KSAM	BU	DDHĀ	KO	TĪ	NĀM	TA	OM	JRĪM	OM	MA	NI	PA	DME
三	菩	馱 <sup>3</sup>	俱	胝	喃	怛	唵	嚩	唵	麼	招 <sup>4</sup>	鉢	訥銘
SAM	BU	DDHĀ	KO	TĪ	NĀM	TA(D)	OM	JRĪM	OM	MA	NI	PA	DME
sâm	b'uo	[d'â]	kiu	fi	[njam]	{tât [tân]}	[âm]	{ts'i [liam]}	[âm]	muâ	ngji	[puât]	nu at mieng
द्यु	द्या	ॐ	व	ल	व	ल	ॐ						
DYA	THĀ	OM	CA	LE	CU	LE	HUM						
你	他	唵	折	隸	主	隸	吽						
DYA	THĀ	OM	CA	LE	CU	LE	HUM						
[ni] ia	tâ	[âm]	tsjät	iei	tsju	iei	[χəu] <sup>5</sup>						

<sup>1</sup> This alternative Chinese reading is not included in *G.S.(R)*.

<sup>2</sup> The ancient values included in square brackets are not included in *G.S.(R)*, as they do not occur in the Chinese Classical texts considered by Karlgren, but have been reconstructed in accordance with Karlgren's reconstructions. Many of these occur in Karlgren's *Analytical Dictionary* of 1923.

<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of transcription the variant 馱 for 馱 has been ignored.

<sup>4</sup> I considered 招 a variant of 提. This seemed doubtful to Professor Pulleyblank. I now think it may be a blurred 提.



<sup>5</sup> I wish to thank Professor Pulleyblank for supplying this transcription, based on the entries in the *Kuang Yün* and the *I-ch'i'ieh-ching yin-i*, the character 吽 being a variant of 吼.







known in China and is still used in Tibet in inscriptions or on the "front page" of books. For the purpose of comparison I reproduce (pp. 2-3) the spell in *lan-ts'a* script (line 1), adding romanization (line 2) and Chinese characters (line 3), the Indian pronunciation indicated by them (line 4) and finally Karlgren's reconstruction<sup>1</sup> of the ancient Chinese (T'ang times) pronunciation of the Chinese characters.

The spell may be transliterated and translated as follows: *Namo*<sup>2</sup> *saptanām*<sup>3</sup> *samyaksambuddhakoṭīnām*<sup>4</sup> *tadyathā Om Cale Cule Caṇḍe*<sup>5</sup> *svāhā, Vrām Om Raṃ Om Jrīm Om maṇi padme huṃ.*

Homage to the seven<sup>6</sup> koṭis (seven times ten millions) of fully enlightened Buddhas: that (is) as (follows):<sup>7</sup> *Om* to the quivering and swaying one,<sup>8</sup> *Caṇḍā* (the angry one?), *Svāhā! Vrām, Om, Raṃ, Om, Jrīm,* (= mystic "seed-syllables" or *bijākṣaras* of the Goddess: *Raṃ* signifies fire, burning; *Jrīm* causes hatred (?)<sup>9</sup>) *Om, You of the Jewelled Lotus,<sup>10</sup> Huṃ.*

As is the rule in the case of *dhāraṇīs* and *sādhana*s, the rules of Classical Sanskrit grammar are not strictly adhered to. The non-conforming features pointed out below, notes 2-4, are common in this genre of literature. *Dhāraṇīs* found in the various editions of the Chinese Tripiṭaka printed in China and Japan abound in further examples.

From the point of view of the *Lan-ts'a* script, attention must be drawn to variant shapes of the syllables *na* and *ko* which appear on the actual inscription as  and . In the transcription above I have drawn the regular forms of the two syllables.

On the Chinese side, the variant  for  must be noted. The character itself is rather worn, so are four other characters, *viz.* , , , and , whose identification is, however, facilitated by the Sanskrit version.

Two features of the Chinese transcription call for comment:

(1) *tadyathā* is rendered as 你也他.

(2) *padme* is rendered as 鉢訥銘.

In the first case we witness 你 rendering Sanskrit *d*, recalling dialectal features to be observed in the North of China and also Sino-Japanese

readings.<sup>1</sup> In the second case we observe, over and above the rendering of *d* by another Chinese character with an *n*-initial (訥), the rendering of Sanskrit *-e* by a word (銘) ending in *-ng*. The latter feature occurs frequently in Tibetan<sup>2</sup> (and Uighur) transcriptions of Chinese texts.

Before dealing with other transliterations of our spell, the question of the presumable age of the plaque must be gone into. The Chinese version of the spell could be as old as the seventh and eighth century when tantrism reached Tibet and China. But the actual date of the plaque must be much later since the Nepalese script was not in use before the eleventh century.<sup>3</sup> I feel inclined, however, to assume the thirteenth century as the earliest date because the combination of the Chinese and Nepalese scripts on one and the same plaque seems to point to the Mongol period. It was only then that Buddhist tantrism was revived, under imperial patronage, in the form of Lamaism, and consequently the making of ritual objects of the type represented by our plaque became a likely enterprise.

## II. Transcriptions of the Spell in Dhāraṇīs

For the sake of comparison, I should like to adduce five *dhāraṇīs* of T'ang vintage, in different transliterations and minus the seed-syllables (*bījā*), which are certainly invocations to the same goddess (*Caṇḍā* in the formula, or *Caṇḍī* according to Chinese tradition). The translators in question are:

(i) Vajrabodhi 金剛智, who arrived at Canton in A.D. 719 and at Loyang in 720.

娜麼颯哆南三藐三勃陀俱抵南恒姪他唵折隸主隸

下去                    去   去   上   二   反   律   三   四   隸   主   隸  
 一音                    音   音   音                    也                    五   六  
 一

准提莎嚩訶七俱抵佛母准提大明陀羅尼經

七                    二   八  
 合

From TT. Vol. 20, No. 1075, p. 173 (a). The title of this *dhāraṇī* gives the number "seven" as linked with "koṭi" whereas that of (v) (see p. 6) separates "seven" from "koṭi".

(ii) Amoghavajra, 不空(金剛) b. 705, who worked in Loyang from 756-774 (or 776).

<sup>1</sup> See e.g., B. Karlgren, *Études de Phonologie chinoise*, 1915-1926, pp. 578, etc.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., W. Simon, *A Note on Chinese texts in Tibetan transcription* (BSOAS, 1958), pp. 335, etc., and in particular pp. 337-40.

<sup>3</sup> See above p. 1, n. 6. Compare also specimens of the script as reproduced for instance in C. Bendall's *Catalogue of Buddhist Sanskrit Manuscripts in the University Library of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1883), Plate II. 1, facing p. 128, and the "Table of Letters" to be found at the end of the Catalogue.

<sup>1</sup> As given in his *Grammata Serica* (*Recensa*), Stockholm, 1940 and 1957.

<sup>2</sup> *Namo* used for *namaḥ* though the visarga is followed by a hard consonant, namely "s".

<sup>3</sup> *Saptanām* for *saptānām*; genitive used for the dative.

<sup>4</sup> *Samyaksambuddhakoṭīnām* for *samyaksambuddhakoṭīnām*; genitive used for the dative.

<sup>5</sup> *Caṇḍe*, vocative case of *Caṇḍā*. Cf another spelling of the name of this goddess on pp. 14, n. 4, 15, 18 and 22.

<sup>6</sup> Seven is a lucky number with the Hindus.

<sup>7</sup> *Tadyathā* introduces the *dhāraṇī* proper.

<sup>8</sup> *Cale Cule* are typical alliterative syllables often found in *dhāraṇīs*. *Cale* especially is found in many of them. *Cale* "moving" aptly describes the medium getting into a trance when the spirit begins to take possession of him or her.

<sup>9</sup> See *The Hevajra Tantra* by D. L. Snellgrove, London, 1959, Pt. I, p. 51:

(15) Causing Hatred: *Om Jrīm Svāhā*.

<sup>10</sup> See D. L. Snellgrove, *Buddhist Himalaya*, Oxford, 1957, pp. 116 and 289, n. 26.

娜莫颯多南三藐三沒馱俱<sup>(1)</sup> 祇南怛爾也他唵者<sup>(2)</sup> 禮  
引 引 引 二 引 合

主<sup>(3)</sup> 禮准泥<sup>(4)</sup> 娑嚩賀  
二 引 合

From TT. Vol. 20, No. 1076, p. 178 (c).

(iii) Divākara, 地婆訶羅 b. 613, who arrived at Ch'ang-an in 676 (or 680), and worked there and in Loyang until his death in 687.

南謨颯多南三藐三勃陀俱祇南怛姪他唵折戾主戾  
二 三 四 五 六 七  
 准締娑婆訶

From TT. Vol. 20, No. 1077, p. 185 (a).

(iv) Hsüan Tsang 玄奘 (596-664), who entitled our spell 七俱祇佛呪 and included it together with four other dhāraṇīs under the title 呪五首 (Five Dhāraṇīs).

納莫颯多南三藐三勃陀俱祇南怛姪他折麗主麗准  
去 去  
 第娑訶

From TT. Vol. 20, No. 1034, p. 17 (a).

(v) Śubhakarasiṃha 善無畏 (淨師子), who arrived at Ch'ang-an in 716 and at Loyang in 724.

This transcription is accompanied by a Siddham version reproduced here below:

法  
 七佛俱祇佛母心大准提陀羅尼  
No. 1078

那	可	獨	
那	可	部	
那	可	別	
那	可	行	
那	可		
那	可	唐	
那	可	善	
那	可	無	
那	可	畏	
那	可	奉	
那	可		
那	可	詔	
那	可	譯	

主  
 准  
 提  
 娑  
 嚩  
 賀

<sup>1</sup> N.B. long vowel sign for "o" in Kōṭinām. It could have been a scribal error, meant for i, the next vowel.  
<sup>2</sup> 者 represents the sound "ja" in Siddham, p. 183 (a) but "ca" according to p. 183 (c).  
<sup>3</sup> 主 represents the sound "co" according to p. 183 (b) and (c).  
<sup>4</sup> 准泥 = Cande on p. 183 (b) and = Cunde on p. 183 (c).

The Siddham script reads as follows:

Namaḥ<sup>1</sup> saptanām samyaksambuddhā  
 koṭinām tadyathā Om Cale Cule  
 Cāddhe<sup>2</sup> Svāhā.

(TT. Vol. 20, No. 1078, p. 186 (b).)

The Chinese title shows that its translator understood the numeral "seven" as qualifying the Buddhas whereas "koṭi" qualified the devis or Buddha-mothers. Even though "seven koṭi" is a more correct translation, the translator here might have followed the interpretation current in his tradition. Or 佛 has been inserted after 七 by mistake.

The listing of the above transcriptions may be followed by a brief summary of the detailed instructions which generally accompany them in the Chinese texts. These are concerned with the making of respective maṇḍalas, the methods of worship, namely how to cleanse and anoint oneself, how to offer flowers and incense, how to use the mirror, what mudrās should be used to accompany the recitation of the formula, what images may be expected to appear.<sup>3</sup> There is also the all-important instruction with regard to the syllables Om, ca, le, cu, le, ca, nde, svā, hā, which should be imagined or placed on one's head, eyes, neck, heart, shoulders, navel, thighs, shins, and feet respectively. Furthermore the syllables must be associated with colours, such as "those of the sun and moon, from dazzling white to golden yellow".<sup>4</sup> The profound meanings of these syllables are also explained.<sup>5</sup>

The efficacy of this formula is said to be great if recited 108 times or 1080 times or thousands and thousands of times. There are lists of what misfortunes can be warded off and what good things can be induced to come one's way, such as the acquisition of wealth and health, granting of progeny, inducing the return of love and regard between husband and wife, and protection against the following ills: possession by demons of houses or bodies, bites from snakes and insects, dragons in water, accidents while crossing rivers, hazards in battle, etc., etc. There are also interesting descriptions of the appearance and attire of the goddess.

III. The Goddess of the plaque, and her identification with other deities

a. India

Caṇḍā, the Goddess of the plaque, is one of the eight nāyikās or śaktis of the Hindu Goddess Durgā and is also a name of Durgā herself.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The normal rule of sandhi is observed here. Cf. the formula of the plaque which has "namo", as do a number of formulas in sādhanas and dhāraṇīs.  
<sup>2</sup> Compare the spelling of the name of the deity here with that of the plaque.  
<sup>3</sup> See TT. Vol. 20, p. 173.  
<sup>4</sup> See TT. Vol. 20, pp. 176 (c) and 183 (a) and (b).  
<sup>5</sup> See e.g. *ibidem*, pp. 177 (b) and 183 (c).  
<sup>6</sup> See e.g. Monier-Williams's *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, s.v.

In his *Elements of Hindu Iconography*,<sup>1</sup> T. A. Gopinatha Rao gives a detailed description of a series of nine goddesses, the Nava-Durgās, one of which is Caṇḍā. I set out his description in an abbreviated form.

"Durgā is often worshipped in the form of nine figures, one of them being set up in the middle and the remaining eight in positions corresponding to the eight points of the compass. They are all seated figures having a lotus as their seat . . . The image in the middle has eighteen hands, big breasts and thighs, and is adorned with various ornaments. This goddess, who is capable of granting all powers, has in eight of her left hands the tuft of hair of the *asura*, the *khetaka*, *ghanṭā*, mirror, *dhanus*, *dhvaja*, *damaru*, *pāśa*, the remaining left hand being held in the *tarjani* pose. The right hands carry the *śakti*, *tanṅka*, *śūla*, *vajra*, *śaṅkha*, *aṅkuśa*, cane, *bāna*, and *chakra*. Each of the eight other figures of Durgā has only sixteen hands. The names of these goddesses are *Rudrachandā*, *Prachandā*, *Chandōgrā*, *Chandā-nāyikā*, *Chandā*, *Chandavatī*, *Chandārūpā*, *Atichandikā*, and *Ugrachandikā*. The colour of the centrally situated Durgā is that of fire. The other Durgās are yellow of the *gōrōchana*, red, black, blue, white, grey, turmeric-yellow and pink. The central Durgā is in the *ālīdhāsana* posture, riding on a lion and holds in one of the hands the tuft of hair, as already stated, of the *asura* emerging from the cut-end of the neck of the buffalo-form of the *asura*. The other Durgās are seated upon *rathas* shaped like lotuses . . ."

Earlier in his book Rao gives a description of *the* Durgā. "The goddess Durgā may have four, eight or more hands, should have three eyes and be of dark complexion. She should have a handsome look with a well developed bust, stout thighs and big hip and be clad in yellow garments. The head should be adorned with a Karaṇḍa-makuta, and the body decked with all ornaments . . . Her breasts should be bound with a snake and a red bodice should cover the upper portion of her body . . ."<sup>2</sup>

As is evident from the first of the two quotations above, one must reckon with the fact that a plaque representing Durgā might be merely one of a set of nine figures. The presence of Chinese characters, however, make this assumption unlikely as it is a clear indication that the present plaque does not represent pure Hindu tradition.

The series of nine goddesses is by no means the only one with which Durgā is associated. Among hymns in praise of Durgā, we read of the hundred and eight names of hers in the *Durgāśatanāmastotra*, translated by Avalon.<sup>3</sup> In the same book of Avalon's we read of Durgā, wife of Śiva, equated with or invoked as Chaṇḍī (p. 56), Tārā (p. 50), Chaṇḍikā (p. 111),

<sup>1</sup> Madras, 1914, Vol. I, pp. 356-7.

<sup>2</sup> T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *ibidem*, p. 341.

<sup>3</sup> *Hymns to the Goddess*, by Arthur and Ellen Avalon, 2nd edition, Madras, 1952, pp. 75-82.

Mahādevī (p. 119), Mahākālī (p. 144), etc. The meaning of the name, Durgā, is given as follows: "Thou art called Durgā by all because Thou savest man from difficulty" (Hymn to Durgā, from the *Mahābhārata Virāta Parvan*, p. 142). Monier-Williams says this of Durgā: The inaccessible or terrific goddess, wife of Śiva, also called Umā, Pārvatī, etc. (Dict., p. 487b).

Durgā is further equated with Bhīmā or Māricī, wife of Mahēśvara, to whom human flesh was offered once a year in Autumn.<sup>1</sup> While Bhīmā is just the name of another form of Durgā, Māricī, who, as we shall see, is identified with Caṇḍā among Chinese worshippers, has distinctive features not included in the general representations of Durgā. According to A. Getty<sup>2</sup> "She is evidently the goddess Aurora of the Āryans, for the *sādhana* refers to her as riding in her chariot surrounded by a glory of flame-shaped rays. Her seven pigs were possibly inspired from the seven horses that draw the chariot of Sūrya, the Sun God . . . She has a yellow form, with three heads and eight or sixteen arms. The face at the right is red and the one at the left, a boar's head, is blue; on each face is the third eye. Her attributes are: the thunderbolt, hook, arrow, needle, branch of aśoka, bow, thread, and a hand in mudrā with the index raised . . . She steps to the right on a chariot drawn by seven pigs, or may be seated on a lotus supported by seven pigs".

#### b. Tibet and Japan

According to Jäschke,<sup>3</sup> Durgā entered Tibet as *dkar-mo* (the white one [*fem.*]) but according to some Tibetans she is *gdugs-dkar(-mo)* (the white umbrella one [*fem.*]) which in modern Tibetan pronunciation is a close approximation to Durgā. She has a third eye and is sometimes represented with a thousand eyes and a thousand arms and is taken as a form of Sphyar-ras-zigs (Avalokiteśvara). Avalokiteśvara is also referred to by A. Getty<sup>4</sup> under the entry Sitātapatrā Aparājītā, translated by her as the "Invincible goddess of the white parasol", with *gdugs-dkar-can-ma* (goddess of the white parasol) added as the Tibetan equivalent of the Sanskrit form. Although Getty insists that this goddess should not be confused with Sitātapatrā, the "Revered One of the White Umbrella" who is Avalokiteśvara in his form with "1,000" arms and five rows of heads, carrying the White Umbrella, it is not surprising if Tibetan worshippers do not always distinguish between the two deities. Apart from giving *dkar-mo* as a name of Durgā, Jäschke also gives *gtum-po*<sup>5</sup> as name of the goddess Durgā (with Umā as a further alternative).

<sup>1</sup> *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, by W. E. Soothill and L. Hodous, London, 1937, p. 311a.

<sup>2</sup> *The Gods of Northern Buddhism* by A. Getty, Oxford, 2nd. ed., 1928, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> A Tibetan-English Dictionary by H. A. Jäschke, London, 1949, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> *loc. cit.*, p. 136.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298 (b).

In the *Hevajra Tantra*<sup>1</sup> the Sanskrit name Caṇḍikā and Caṇḍālī are rendered as *gtum-mo* (the angry one) or *grol-mo* (the Saviouress). Furthermore a goddess named Cundā<sup>2</sup> (Tibetan: Tsun-da) occurs there as one of a series of female deities.

Māricī is rendered as 'od-zer-can-ma ("She of the brilliant rays"<sup>3</sup>) in Tibetan. In her Vajravārāhī ("Adamantine sow") form she is believed to be incarnate in every abbess of the monastery of Semding, one of whom is said to have had behind her ear an excrescence which resembled a sow's head.

Though Caṇḍā and Māricī reached Japan obviously through Chinese sources a brief note on them may be appended here before the identifications of Caṇḍā in China are dealt with in the next section.

In Japan Durgā as such does not figure prominently although Japanese Buddhists, as we shall see, must be aware of her name. The goddess of the white parasol is known as 白傘蓋 Byakusangai<sup>4</sup> but she never achieved the success enjoyed by the form of Durgā known as Juntei (Cundi) Kwanon 準提觀音, adopted by the Shingon sect as the female form of Avalokiteśvara.

Māricī, appearing here as 摩利支天 Marishi-ten, is believed to reside in one of the seven stars of the Great Bear. She is generally represented as seated on a lotus-throne, supported by seven pigs. She has three heads of which the one at the right is a sow's head.<sup>5</sup>

As mentioned above, Cundi became a female form of Avalokiteśvara in Japan. "It is believed by the Japanese that the goddess is taken from Indian mythology and is Durgā devī, wife of Śiva. She is called Koṭī-śrī, or Saptakoṭī-Buddha-mātrī-Cunti-devī, or the goddess Cuntī, mother of 700,000 Buddhas . . . Juntei is sometimes represented as an angry goddess but is usually pacific. She has the third eye and eighteen arms, all the hands holding different symbols . . ."<sup>6</sup>

### c. China

All Chinese transcriptions (準提, 准提, 准胝 and 尊提) suggest that the form of Durgā under which this goddess reached China, was Cundi rather than Caṇḍā.

Cundi (Chun T'i 準提, to use the most common Chinese transcription) and Māricī 摩利支<sup>7</sup> have completely merged into one goddess, as

<sup>1</sup> *The Hevajra Tantra*, by D. L. Snellgrove, London, 1959, Vol. 2, li, 18 (p. 4) and Vol. I, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> A. Getty, *loc. cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>4</sup> A. Getty, *loc. cit.*, p. 136.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133-4.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>7</sup> Māricī is explicitly described as female in only one of the dhāraṇīs under her name in the *Taiśhō Tripitaka*, 摩利支天菩薩陀羅尼經, by Amoghavajra 不空, TT. Vol 21, No. 1255, p. 260 (b).

is evident from her representation in Doré's *Researches into Chinese Superstitions*,<sup>1</sup> with three heads, the right one of which is a sow's head, and eight arms, the top pair of which hold up the sun-disc and moon-disc, thereby typifying her as Māricī, the Brahmanic Goddess of the Dawn. In fact Doré deals with Chun T'i in a chapter entitled "Māricī, Goddess of the Dawn".

Chun T'i was until recently worshipped widely in China and her temple Chun T'i An 準提菴 at Ju-kao 如皋, in northern Kiangsu in the care of Buddhist nuns is well known.<sup>2</sup> In the Taoist Pantheon Chun T'i has been identified with T'ien Hou 天后 "Queen of Heaven", which development has been facilitated by the fact that Durgā is a form of Pārvatī who is Mahādevī, the Hindu "Queen of Heaven" and Buddhist Mother of Buddhas. On the other hand, T'ien Hou is linked up with Māricī in so far as she is also styled Tou Mu, 斗母, "Mother of the Southern Measure" (Sagittarii), a stellar divinity.

However, the most unusual development in relation to Chun T'i is that in the Taoist Pantheon she also appears as a male deity. In the popular novel *Feng-shen yen-i* 封神演義, we witness the "Immortal Chun T'i" 準提道人 taking a leading part in the battle between the royal houses of Shang and Chou. Engaged in single combat with K'ung-sun he soars into the air and appears with eighteen arms and twenty-four heads. Among the objects listed in the novel<sup>3</sup> as being carried by him in his hands, we notice some which are identical with those identifiable on our plaque, reproduced on Plate I, and that of the postscript, reproduced on Plate III.

As T'ien Hou or T'ien Fei 天妃 ("Heavenly Concubine") Chun T'i is a protector of sailors and as such worshipped in particular in the maritime provinces. She is also prayed to by women who wish to have children.

While simply referring to Werner as far as T'ien Hou's reincarnation<sup>4</sup> is concerned, I wish to stress the syncretistic aspect of the iconography of Tou Mu, which is likewise described by him. She wears the Buddhist crown, is seated on a lotus throne, has three eyes, eighteen arms, and holds various objects in her many hands, such as a bow, spear, sword, flag, dragon's head, pagoda, five chariots, a sun-disc, a moon-disc, etc. . . .<sup>5</sup>

As further evidence of such syncretistic tendencies I wish to refer briefly to two books of fairly recent date. In an illustrated biography of T'ien Hou, the *T'ien Hou Chuan-hsiang* 天后傳像, printed in 1816,<sup>6</sup> it is related that T'ien Hou, incarnated as the youngest daughter of a Lin family, was first brought up as a Buddhist, then tutored by a Taoist monk

<sup>1</sup> Translated by M. Kennelly, Vol. VII, Shanghai, 1922, Fig. 55 facing p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> Doré, *loc. cit.*, p. 312.

<sup>3</sup> See the list given by Doré, *loc. cit.*, p. 306.

<sup>4</sup> See E. T. C. Werner, *Dictionary of Chinese Mythology*, Shanghai, 1932, p. 503.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 512.

<sup>6</sup> No author. The reprint was made in Canton from a block kept in the Temple of Imperial Sacrifice in the district of Tungkuan (莞城御祭廟).

who, impressed by her "Buddha nature" (佛性), initiated her into Taoist Tantrism (元微秘法); thereafter she is said to have performed many miracles. As these proved beneficial to the provinces of Fukien and Chekiang she was posthumously honoured by imperial decrees.

The second book entitled *Hung-jen P'u-chi T'ien-hou Sheng-mu Ching-ts'an*<sup>1</sup> 弘仁普濟天后聖母經懺, published in 1839, is an elaborate imitation of a Buddhist dhāraṇī. It gives the story of the incarnation of the goddess T'ien Hou in Mei-chou 湄州.

In relating her many miracles and manifestations (76 in all), the author mingles freely Buddhistic terms with well known lines from the Book of Odes and alternates Buddhist mystic syllables (*bija*) with the opening line of the Book of Changes. A feature of special interest from our point of view is the inclusion of the syllable for fire 嚙 Ram, which we have witnessed in our spell.

The booklet is also of interest on account of the inclusion of a magic formula (解厄符), reproduced below, which is alleged to cure all illnesses.<sup>2</sup>



As a last example of syncretism, I adduce a Chinese charm obtainable nowadays in Hong Kong, printed in red, together with other charms, on a sheet of yellow paper. I owe a copy of this to the kindness of Dr. Liu

<sup>1</sup> Written by Li Ts'un-mo 李存默. The block of this book is said to be kept in the shrine of T'ien Hou (天后宮) in Shanghai.

<sup>2</sup> According to the text underneath the formula the worshipper is supposed to burn incense, write out the charm, and read it seven times; thereafter he must swallow, together with water from a well and myrrh, the charm which is to be ground (in a mortar): 凡疾病焚香書符念咒七遍用井水乳香磨吞。

Ts'un-yan, who reproduced it on the dust cover of his book *Buddhist and Taoist Influences on Chinese Novels*.<sup>1</sup> As will be seen from the reproduction of the charm below it bears a close resemblance to our spell, but represents at the same time an attempt to make use of it in a Taoist context in so far as one of the characters (三) has been drawn as the trigram *ch'ien* 乾 (☰) of the Book of Changes.



The text reads as follows:

南無薩埵南三坊<sup>1</sup> 三苦<sup>2</sup> 咤<sup>3</sup> 唎<sup>4</sup> 枳唎恒<sup>5</sup> 枳咤<sup>6</sup> 唎祈<sup>7</sup> 雜生<sup>8</sup>  
 雜泮<sup>9</sup> 虎<sup>10</sup> 娑娑<sup>11</sup> 阿<sup>12</sup> 唎娑<sup>13</sup>

The mis-spelled characters have been marked by superior figures and they call for the following comments:

1 坊	for 幻	8 生	for 主
2 苦	for 菩	9 泮	for 準
3 咤	for 陀	10 虎	for 曠
4 唎	for 唎	11 娑	for 娑
5 恒	for 恒	12 阿	for 阿
6 咤	for 他	13 娑	for 娑
7 祈	for 折		

The re-arrangement of the circular text also shows an indiscriminate placing in pairs of certain characters. In the original text, it will be remembered, the pairing indicates initial consonantal clusters.

The high percentage of errors in this charm suggests a rather corrupt state of the original and a complete disregard of accuracy on the part of the copyist. The fact that the name of Chun T'i (in the centre) is reproduced correctly was apparently sufficient to ensure the sale of the charm. That this

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I., Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1962.

is still sold in Hong Kong nowadays may be considered as evidence of its being a successful commercial venture.

### Postscript

After completing the article I received photos of a further plaque (see Plates III and IV) which were kindly placed at my disposal by Mr. W. Ward, who acquired the plaque in a Hong Kong curio shop.<sup>1</sup>

The central figure of this plaque keeps nothing of the athletic line of the goddess of the former plaque and its face is also left blank. The objects are clearer than those held by the figure in Plate I and the lotus seat is clearly in evidence. The Chinese characters are well cut, and show an identical version of the spell. The character 颯 is written in its usual form.

The mirror surface is surrounded by clearer Lan-ts'a characters which are more angular in their formation. The "n" in "namo" is normal here. The Lan-ts'a character which I read as Vrām (or Brām) on Plate II is clearly Bhrām here. There is also an extra Om before it. Like the first plaque the present includes seed-syllables (*bīja's*) which have not survived in any of the Chinese versions quoted above from the *Taishō Tripiṭaka*. The seed-syllable which is read as Jrīm on the first plaque seems to be Dhrīm here. The vocative of the goddess's name here is spelt with a "u" (Cunde), which suggests that her name must be Cundā or Cundi rather than Caṇḍā (as on the first plaque).



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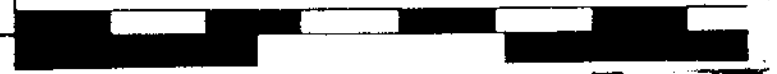


PLATE I

<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Mr. Ward for his kindness. The origin of the plaque is unknown. All the owner of the curio shop was able to say was that it had been in his possession for a long time.





CENTIMETRES  
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PLATE II



PLATE III



PLATE IV