TIBETAN TANTRIC CHARMS AND AMULETS

230 Examples Reproduced from Original Woodblocks

SELECTION AND TEXT BY NIK DOUGLAS

The divinity Samantabhadra with his shakti (female energy) in the “father/mother” attitude: the germinal motif of tantric spells and charms. Tibetan altarpiece of about the eighteenth century.
Foreword

Hardly any area of Tibetan art and culture has been so much neglected as the vast field of illustrated tantric charms and amulets, which are even today so much a part of the everyday life and experience of many peoples of the Himalayan regions. This potent and expressive art form has no doubt been overshadowed up to the present by the more obvious and openly exposed Tibetan paintings and sculptures, which have attracted considerable attention in the West in recent years.

The protective spells, charms and amulets that constitute the subject of this study were hardly, if ever, meant to be seen, with very few exceptions. Most are in the form of diagrams or other representations of secret protective formulae, printed on handmade paper from the original Tibetan woodblocks. They range from simple inscribed sacred phrases to edible charms, prayer flags, good-luck banners, auspicious emblems, cosmograms, psychocosmograms, tantric symbols, demon-binding amulets of all kinds, sickness-curing amulets against stillbirth, smallpox, worms, syphilis, plague, insanity and a host of other maladies, charms against malefic stars and planets, for wealth, prosperity, long life, wisdom and favorable rebirth. There is hardly any real or imagined situation for which one cannot find the requisite visual representative counter-weapon.

The magical traditions connected to the activation and empowerment of these art forms have been indicated in our text, with full transliterations of the liturgical phrases and detailed commentaries on the symbolism, use and connected rites. Thus the book offers more than just the visual side of this art, but also its philosophical and theoretical structure as presented in the Tantras. A large number of the examples involve comparisons between the pre-Buddhist Bon traditions of Tibet and those of all sects of Buddhism. In addition I have often given several different versions of the varied types, either because of artistic merit or because of interesting differences of concept. In the Notes to the Introduction and the Supplementary Texts and Definitions I have endeavored to point out correlations and rich areas for additional study, as well as supplying copious reference material (with many quotations) and lists of sources.

This work could never have been undertaken without the patience and generosity of Lama Kunzang Rinzin of Almora district, India, who initially inspired and encouraged it. The Gyalwa Karmapa, of Rumtek monastery, Sikkim, the Venerable Dudjom Rinpoche of Kalimpong, India, the Lama Dodrup Chen of the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, Sikkim, and Tulk u Tswang of Trayagam monastery, Namgung, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal, have all contributed examples and advice. I am also indebted to Roger Williams, Simon White, Jerry Mitchell and Ian Alsop for generously providing examples of prints from their collections. I am most grateful to Dorje Damdrul of the Tibetan camp, Pokhara, Nepal, who accompanied me on a print-collecting expedition to Dolpo, guiding me from monastery to monastery and acting as assistant. Also I am thankful to the Government of Nepal, the Tribhuvan University and especially the Vice Chancellor Sri T. N. Uprai ty, as also to the Institute of Nepal Studies, Secretary Basu Dev Tripathi, and Father L. Stiller, S. J., who helped greatly with advice and guidance in the early preparatory stages; also to the Government of India and the External Affairs Office in particular, for allowing access to the more difficult-to-reach areas.

I have endeavored to present this work in as uncomplicated though accurate a form as possible, yet with the maximum of fine examples and clear informative commentaries. If any errors have crept in I trust that they will be seen in the context of this book as a pioneer work on a large scale. I have tried wherever possible to use terms that are current in Buddhist and philosophical studies, defining where necessary. The prints reproduced here have been carefully selected from a wide variety of types and styles. I trust that this study in Tibetan art and culture will be both visually exciting and philosophically stimulating, and that it will point out the richness of the field of Tibetan tantricism.

N. D.
Treasury mandala of Samantabhadra: among the most powerful protective charms. Another version of the final plate (see description and explanation there).
INTRODUCTION

SPELLS, CHARMS, AMULETS
AND TALISMANS

Throughout the ancient world magical protection in the form of spells, charms, amulets and talismans was much sought after. These sure prophylactics against the disruptions of destiny were utilized by every race and religion as a means for treating disorders of the human psyche. In fact it is not so long since their use was common in Europe, and even today there are numerous countries of the world where such devices are an integral part of everyday life as "prescriptions" for all kinds of real and imaginary situations.

By definition a spell is a verse or phrase of magical power, often requiring accompanying rites to bring about an effect. A charm is a scheme of spells, created with magical power and having an effect of attraction or repulsion in the specific field of its action. An amulet is an object, often composed in conjunction with written or recited spells, designed to be worn on the body as a protection against specific effects. A talisman is an object, design or figure, often incorporating spells, worn as a protection against specific or general influences of the psychic realms.

According to tradition, the knowledge of spells originated in the East with the dawning of spirituality. Various researches have been published tracing connections between the magical fraternities of ancient Egypt, Babylonia, Iran and India, but very little has been attempted with regard to Tibet on account of the difficulty of contact, language and concept, as well as the secrecy of the esoteric traditions. The science and art of spells, charms, amulets and talismans was perfected in Tibet to such an extent that it would be no exaggeration to say that for anyone with an interest in the theory, practice and method of this particular field of magic there could be no better approach than a study of the Tibetan tradition. Furthermore the art of Tibetan charms and amulets is both spontaneously alive and penetratively deep, characteristics which recently have been associated with the art and philosophy of tantra.

TYPES OF TIBETAN CHARMS
AND AMULETS

The various examples in this book have been taken from original woodblocks in the form of prints on handmade paper. Woodblocks have been used for preserving and printing the designs for all types of Tibetan charms and amulets since the introduction and spread of Buddhism there beginning in the seventh century A.D. It is possible that the pre-Buddhist Bon priests also used woodblocks for printing effigies and charms, though no early examples survive. The tradition has been to copy older designs faithfully by carving through a good or retouched old print or drawing pasted onto the block of wood. As blocks became worn, cracked, rotten or misshapen the design would be copied and thus preserved. Inevitably corruptions of a text or slight variations on a design would occur, and sometimes entirely new concepts were developed, but it is essentially a fact that the majority of Tibetan woodblock protective designs have remained faithful to their most ancient origins.

Tibetan woodblock charms and amulets may be divided into four distinct types, and each type may be further classified according to manner of use. The most common type consists of lines, columns or patterns of letters, verses or phrases, often without any specific translatable meaning, enclosed by varied outer forms. Such magical formulae are: (i) folded and worn as an amulet of protection; (ii) made into scrolls and placed inside all types of prayer wheels; (iii) inserted into religious images during rites of consecration; or (iv) rolled up and eaten as a medicine.

Another popular type incorporates "lucky" or auspicious symbols or designs with magical phrases, enclosed by varied outer forms. Such symbols are: (i) prominently displayed pasted on walls or ceilings or
FIG. 1. Buddhist prayer charm of auspicious symbols, syllables and deities, for printing on paper or on cloth flags, to be openly displayed for attracting good luck, wealth, long life, happiness, wisdom and spirituality. At the center is a stupa (tower shrine) with the Buddha, and, above him, the merciful Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. At top center is Amitayus, the Buddha of Boundless Life, with Manjushri, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, at the left and the Protector Vajrapani to the right. The complex monogram of ten seed syllables below Manjushri represents mystic integration; the book and flaming sword below Vajrapani symbolize wisdom. At the bottom are shown auspicious animals, birds, fruit, emblems, jewels and an old man in obvious comfort. A disciple prays at the stupa. Woodblock from Thangboche monastery, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal, 30.4 × 46.8 cm.
in shrine rooms; (ii) flown as prayer flags, printed on cloth or cast to the wind on paper; or (iii) occasionally worn as a protection, in particular for attracting good luck, wealth and happiness.

The third type is used as amulets, usually for getting rid of malefic influences, banishing sickness-bringing demons, as effigies for various magical rites or as potent protections during any crisis. They commonly consist of a central figurative representation of a person, animal or particular demon surrounded by magical phrases in precise patterns. Such amulets may also be entirely abstract in design, incorporating oblongs, squares or crescents, and also occurring in conjunction with figures. Only the effigy type is displayed; the others are “empowered” by a lama, folded, bound with colored threads and worn as a protection.

The last and probably most important type is in the form of circular structures, “wheels,” often incorporating figures of protective entities with many heads, arms and implements, or simply representing circles within circles with phrases enclosed by the various divisions, or spiral concentric circles and distinctive patterns of letters around a central axis. These are “psychocosmograms,” *mandalas*, visual representations of esoteric teachings, believed to confer their essence as a protective circle, insulating the faithful against psychic confusion, the influence of demons, enemies and the like. They are: (i) used as base structures on altars; (ii) placed visibly on the ceilings of monasteries and shrine rooms; (iii) used personally as meditation aids, particularly with specific rites and purifications; or (iv) most commonly, worn as a protective amulet, folded up, “empowered” by a lama, and bound with colored threads. This fourth type is believed to confer the greatest magical protection.

**METHOD OF PRINTING**

When a charm is to be printed, first a suitable ink is prepared from soot, burnt rice or barley grains, or Chinese block ink is used; sometimes a binding medium is added, such as an animal gum, tree resin or grain pulp. The ingredients of the ink are mixed with a suitable quantity of water in a shallow bowl. It is then spread onto the woodblock with a brush or pad, the paper is laid on top and pressure is applied with the hands through a cloth pad. Great care has to be taken to ensure that the paper surface does not slip over the block during printing. The quality of a print depends as much upon the preparation of the ink as upon the fineness of the paper, which may be slightly dampened to achieve a better result. Handmade paper prepared from tree bark or creepers, usually from Nepal, is the usual material, except for prayer flags, which are printed on rough cotton cloth. Modern Tibetan woodblock prints are now more often printed with litho ink diluted slightly with kerosene.

**ACTIVATION OF THE PRINT**

Traditionally the print is prepared by the local lama or his assistant, with the exception of various types of “luck” and “prayer” flags, which may be made by any layman. Charm or amulet prints are selected according to the requirement and any additional specific features like names or syllables are added by hand. The print is dried and then read softly by the lama as an act of empowerment. Certain types are consecrated by throwing a few grains of barley, colored rice, saffron water or other such items upon the print surface, which is quickly folded, bound with colored threads in various specific patterns, and given to the person who has asked for it. Often there are accompanying ceremonies, burning of butter lamps and incense, or a small payment, in particular for the paper, which has always been costly in Tibet. Finally the charm is sewn into a small pouch and hung around the neck, or kept within an amulet box.
FIG. 3. A completed charm (slightly reduced). This type of charm is empowered by the lama, then folded and tied with colored threads, forming a mandala structure. It is then sewn into a pouch.

ORIGINS OF TIBETAN CHARMS AND AMULETS

In tracing the development of the Tibetan Buddhist amulet, the purely Hindu traditions of India are of great significance. The *Atharva Veda* is basically a collection of ancient Indian charms and amulets that go back to the very beginnings of history. Many of our examples of Tibetan charms upon analysis appear to be derived from or connected with the traditions of the *Atharva Veda*. In turn these are intimately related to the transmission of the *Ayur Veda*, the ancient Indian medical science, which makes use of various types of charms and amulets according to an eightfold classification of treatment. Thus charms were an integral part of the science of demonology/psychiatry (Sanskrit: *bhuta-vidya, graha-vidya*), used to bring about exorcisms and for correcting or placating malefic planetary influences, believed to be the causes of many mental disorders. Other charms were used in pediatrics (Skt: *kaumara-bhartya*), toxicology (Skt: *agada-tantra*), rejuvenation (Skt: *rasayana-tantra*) and sexual diseases (Skt: *vaji-karana*), often in conjunction with other treatment.

The *Atharva Veda* refers to amulets as “things with life,” “born of a god,” and declares that “an amulet is a living force, better than a thousand medicines.” It seems that charms and amulets comprised the basis of the most ancient medical tradition, and that at a later stage, when herbs and medicines were developed, both kinds of treatment were utilized together. The same medicinal and prophylactic objectives are still those chiefly in mind for the majority of Tibetan charms, the structure and linguistic peculiarities of which frequently point to origins in ancient India. Furthermore, many of the Tibetan charms consist of complex syllables in Indian scripts of the early periods. More details on charms in the *Atharva Veda* will be found in the section of Supplementary Texts and Definitions following this Introduction.

In Vedic times pain, sickness, confusion and luck were considered to have three origins: (i) supernatural (Skt: *adi-daivika*), (ii) physical (Skt: *adi-bhautika*) or (iii) spiritual (Skt: *adi-atmika*), and thus any treatment should commence only after first determining the type of influence. Diagnosis was commenced with the study of physical features, observation of the effect of action and in cases of supernatural or spiritual disturbances through the understanding of omens, dreams and divination.

In the *Kama Sutra* of Vatsyayana, the ancient treatise on the art of love, 64 additional arts are advised for study. These are carefully listed and include “framing mystical diagrams, addressing spells and charms, and binding amulets,” “magic and sorcery” and “obtaining property by means of incantations.” The medical texts of Charaka and Sushruta similarly include chapters on the use of charms, amulets and talismans, specifying which diseases may only be curable through them.

According to the pre-Buddhist traditions of Tibet, the Bon religion, “Shenrab (the founder) gave to the Bonpos of Shangshung as Bon (Doctrine) the Inspired Teaching about charms and spells”1 and the text known as the Shen of Prediction2 declares that “curing is of four main kinds: medicine, bleeding and branding, tranquilizing with method, and spells.” A fairly substantial number of our illustrated examples are of Bon charms from northwestern Nepal, and it is particularly interesting that some of them seem to include invocations that are Hindu in conception, whereas others seem to have developed quite independently.

With regard to early Buddhism as it developed in India, generally speaking Gautama Buddha himself did not stress the use of charms, spells, amulets or talismans, and was in fact antagonistic to many of the superstitious Hindu rites, sacrifices and sorcery of his time. Nevertheless it seems certain that he did utilize such means in particular instances, especially for conveying mystic truths inexpressible by any other method. Quite a large number of charm phrases are traditionally attributed to Buddha, and there are accounts in the *Sutras* that tell of instances where he
repeated spells, uttered mystic sounds and exhibited supernatural powers. It has been suggested that eventually Buddha instructed particular gatherings of people in specific charms since he realized their potent power. In a story told in the Sardula Karnavadan, which was translated into Chinese in 265 A.D., Buddha’s disciple Ananda becomes bewitched by a love charm prepared by the mother of a low-caste girl, asks Buddha for help and is saved by a protective formula. Another story tells how Buddha received a spell in verse from four guardian entities and repeated it for some of his monks as it was suitable for protecting against evil spirits.

The earliest Buddhist charm text is to be found in the Saddharma Pundarika of the first century A.D. Other texts are in the Sukhavatibhyuha of the second century, after which period they become quite common. In particular the Manjusrinimalaka and the Guhyasamaja Tantra are the early reference works to which many of the Buddhist charms relate.

During the early spread of tantra in India the use of charms and amulets became very common. Charms were conceived of as the sure and easy way to have the protection of all-powerful deities, for the forces which they represented had become quite common. This period heralds the birth of Buddhist iconography, of which more will be said later. Great tantric colleges were well established at Nalanda and Vikramapura in eastern India, where the study of charms was a science right up to the Moslem invasions of the eleventh century onwards. During the previous centuries Tibetans had been making their way to India in order to gather spiritual teachings. Great Indian teachers such as Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Atisha traveled to Tibet spreading the dynamic tantric doctrines known as the Vajrayana. It was during this era that Buddhist charms were firmly established in Tibet, incorporating many factors of indigenous belief. It is difficult to discern anything of the specific nature of the pre-Buddhist charms and amulets of Tibet, especially since the whole religious structure was so effectively amalgamated into one unit, Lamaism. Some Bon concepts concerning charms are given in the Supplementary Texts.

After the initial impact of the Moslem invaders on Buddhism and on its huge establishments in India, the Hindu traditions grew stronger there and a great religious revival took place. The voluminous texts known as the Puranas were produced, incorporating Buddhist theories with earlier practices. Many types of spells, charms, amulets and talismans were revived or created and specific details of their use were given. Later these developed into the Hindu Tantras, in which the techniques of Yoga were expounded in accordance with the psychic understanding of that time. A sampling of charm texts from Puranas and Tantras will be found in the Supplementary Texts. It seems likely that there was a continuing transmission of “Hinduized” charms to the Himalayan regions and Tibet, especially through the pilgrimage centers common to both Hindus and Buddhists and in particular through the followers of Bon who remained around the outer borders of Tibet and who may in turn have passed them on to the Buddhists. It is an established fact that there was an interchange of ideas and practices between the followers of Bonpo and the Nyingmapa and Karg-yudpa sects of Buddhism, and this is certainly reflected in the designs and contents of many of the charms and amulets. An interesting story is told of a time during Atisha’s visit to Tibet when his guide Gyatson suddenly became ill with fever. When the sick man was asked what wrong he had done, he replied that he had learnt a tantric charm from a “heretic” and had not completed his side of the bargain. Atisha was unable to cure him since it was already too late.

During the ninth century in Tibet there had been a brief period when Buddhism was persecuted and many of the religious texts were buried, some to be recovered only centuries later. Even earlier, during the time of Padmasambhava, teachings were hidden to be revealed later “in the times of need.” Among Tibetan charms the most valued are those supposedly from such sources, “treasury teachings” (Tibetan: terma), which are usually printed in red, prepared from vermilion. We have included several such examples in the illustrations and the content of them has proven to be most interesting, in particular their incorporation of ancient syllabic sound forms from the earliest periods of Indian history. A number of Indian charms of the later medieval period that have recently been published in works on tantric art can be directly related to our Tibetan examples. Further charms in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition appear in the Supplementary Texts.

THEORIES OF SPELLS AND CHARMS

The theoretical basis of the science of spells and charms is rooted in the tantric philosophical realizations. The initial postulation, revealed through degrees of trance, is that the universe can best be understood as comprised of subtle and gross vibrations (Skt: spanda) which from their “matrix potentiality” (Skt: matrika) manifest themselves as seed syllables (Skt: bija), forming their expression as language. Such seed syllables are natural productions and may be differentiated as being “unlettered” (Skt: dhwani) or “lettered” (Skt: varna),
FIG. 4. Protective charm mandala of Vajravarahi. At the center is the seed syllable *bam* with the other syllables *ni*, *sa*, *ha* and *ri* on the lotus petals, resting within a series of lotuses encircled by scepters and a six-pointed star leading to eight cremation grounds, a scepter chain and a wheel of fire moving to the left. At the four corners are mystic chopper knives, symbols of the ego-slaying function of the goddess Vajravarahi, whose seed sound is *bam*. According to tantra, the mantra is the deity. Woodblock from Yangser monastery, Nyisal, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal, 26.6 x 29.4 cm.
A Tibetan painting of the goddess Vajravarahi emanating as a mandala from a six-pointed star. Tutelary deities are shown below, Kargyudpa lamas above, and the eight Auspicious Emblems within circles around the central motif. Such paintings are used by lamas and monks for aiding the development of visualization, itself an important technique in the activation of charms. Thangka from N.W. Nepal of about the sixteenth century.

The reverse of the preceding painting, shown inscribed with the syllables and circular dharani of the Vajravarahi mandala. The central seed syllable here is hri, expressing the "activity" of the goddess, with the other syllables ni, sa, ha and ri at the different directions. The "empowerment" seed sounds om, ah and hum are placed behind the figures of the tutelary deities and lamas. Most Tibetan paintings are inscribed on the reverse with the seed sounds, dharanis and empowerment formulae, indicating that they are consecrated.
FIG. 6. The goddess Vajravarahi as she emerges from the seed syllable *sam*, wrathful and dancing ecstatically, trampling underfoot the ego and all illusions. She has a sow's head attached to one side of her neck, is crowned with skulls, wears the ornaments of Mahamudra, a garland of skulls representing the seed sounds of the universe. She is holding aloft the chopper knife and skull bowl; a trident staff is held under her arm, and her “third eye” of enlightenment is shown wide open. Rays of light emanate from her body, behind which is an aureole of flames. Two human skulls on tripods are at the sides. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal, 22.6 × 29.3 cm.
in the latter case developing as the alphabetic vowels and consonants. Seed syllables may combine according to precise affinities as sound formulae (Skt: mantra), which are of many kinds, and which may or may not convey a meaning. Nevertheless they are filled with cosmic potency, for they are natural precipitations in the realms of vibration and may be utilized to bring about psychophysical transformations.

There has been a great profusion of opinion concerning the definition and properties of mantras. Rather than engaging here in a detailed analysis, I have included relevant material in the Supplementary Texts and Definitions which may be utilized by those who wish to pursue the matter further. The etymology of the word points to the root man, meaning “to think,” and the suffix -tra, indicating “instrument.” Thus a mantra is an instrument of thought, a “magical formula,” which is exercised as the main support of all kinds of charms, spells and protections.

Magical formula (mantra) is related to magical diagram (yantra), both in its structure as letters and with respect to the natural form evoked by the vibration. Furthermore, there is a connection between sound, form and color. Thus tantras indicated the interwoven structure of forces and energies, pointing out methods of approach according to traditions based on Yoga experience.

Every mantra has an energy (Skt: shakti) which expresses itself as divinity (Skt: devata) to the yogi in deep concentration (Skt: dhara). The Advayavajrasamgraha, an early Vajrayana work, clearly states the situation: “From the right perception of Voidness proceeds the seed syllable, from which emerges the conception of an icon and its external representations.” This is the beginning of iconography, the science of divine relationships expressed as icons, which has produced such a vast spectrum of deities and a tremendously rich field of art.

The seed syllable (bij) or magical formula (mantra) actually is the deity. This is the tantric concept, profound in its simplicity, which forms the myriad of diverse aspects, entities, protectors, tutelary deities, gods, goddesses and the like. One further step is needed before we can complete our discussion of the theories of spells and charms. This is the concept of enclosure, the insulation of one level of reality from another by means of protective circles or mandalas. By definition a mandala is circular in structure; it is “the whole,” representing the universe in its completeness, as a “psychocosmogram” in particular instances.

Spells and charms (Skt: dharani) are transmitted revelations of power structures within the psyche, which may be utilized as supports for concentration (Skt: dhara) or as amulets and talismans for protection against demons, influences, diseases or spells and charms. Dharani literally means “she who upholds or encloses.” In Vedic times charms were employed as supports, defenses, protections and talismans. Synonyms of dharani are the Sanskrit terms kavacha (“protection”) raksha (“breastplate”) and vidya (“science”), the Pali paritta or pritir (“power-upholder”) and the Tibetan shok-rita (“charm formula”), sNgags ("charm"), Srung (“amulet”) and gyangrten (“talisman”). Magically formulæ (mantra) and spells or charms (dharani) are always intimately connected; often no differentiation is made between the two. Both are revealed spontaneously in trance states and are to be transmitted directly “by word of the Master,” “by empowerment” or through meditation. Both are essentially convergences of the fundamentals of secret initiatory language, “empowerments” of natural cosmic origin, pregnant with unlimited powers.

The knowledge of the characteristics of mantras and dharanis determines their value for incorporation as protections, amulets and talismans, according to their inherent potencies.

According to the Vasu va nghu, an early Buddhist work, the dharanis of the Bodhisattvas are of four kinds: (i) dharma dharani, which gives memory (Skt: smriti), intellect (Skt: prajna) and strength (Skt: vala); (ii) artha dharani, which gives intuitive power and the ability to understand the significance (Skt: artha) of immutable nature; (iii) mantra dharani, which leads to perfection; and (iv) ksanti dharani, which gives rise to transcendental merits.

Tibetan traditions categorize dharanis as (i) power (Tib: gZung), (ii) wisdom (Tib: Rig) or (iii) secret (Tib: gSam), and activate them accordingly. Traditionally a number of dharanis trace their origins to instances in the life of Buddha, to utterances of important teachers and yogis, or to mystic manifestations of the deities in exceptional circumstances. Dharanis have been “retrieved from the world of the Nagas” (the Prajnaparamita-dharani), miraculously discovered hidden in rocks, images and lakes (“treasury” dharanis), seen as visions and then recorded, precipitated in physical forms from the heavenly realms, or found amongst the funerary ashes of great lamas. As a help to further research I have added an extensive reference selection in the Supplementary Texts devoted entirely to the fascinating concepts of dharani.

MAGICAL RITES CONNECTED WITH CHARMS AND AMULETS

No study of charms and amulets would be complete without some additional information concerning the
magical rites related to them. There are six Buddhist tantric rites (Skt: *sakarman*), all of which are associated with the making of charms. They are known as the “cruel rites,” largely because of their popular misuse: (i) *shantiti*, the rite of removing diseases, placating planetary influences and star clusters, and saving from the effect of evil karmas (activity accumulations); (ii) *vashikarana*, the rite of bewitching, generally of men, women, animals or gods, in order to get work done or to achieve a specific effect; (iii) *stambhana*, the rite of stopping all action through imparting a kind of paralysis (it is even applicable to the elements, such as stopping fire from burning or water from wetting, as also to “paralyzing an army”); (iv) *vidvesana*, the rite of separation, as of friends, lovers or enemies, and also the reverse effect; (v) *uccatana*, the rite of making enemies flee, banishing demons of a high order or expelling powerful sicknesses, by means of wrathfulness; (vi) *marana*, the rite of killing “compassionately,” without any harmful karmic effects (to be used only in extreme instances when there are no other alternatives).

These six tantric rites are to be performed according to the traditions of a transmission through a teacher (*guru*), and precise details are always to be observed, such as the time of the rite, the astrological influences, the seed syllables and visualizations to be concentrated upon, the mystic gestures (Skt: *mudra*), the direction to be faced, the preferred seasons, the psychological state of the practitioner, the manner of gazing, the methods of reciting the magical formulae, as well as the accompanying oblations and ritual materials. According to the important Buddhist tantric text of the *Sadhanamala*:

For removing diseases the mind should be peaceful, for stopping action and separation it should be thriving, for bewitching it should display anxiety and for killing it must be in a greatly troubled state. Removing diseases is best performed on the first day of the lunar fortnight, stopping action and separation on the full-moon day, bewitching on the eighth day and killing on the fourteenth day of the moon. Likewise for removing diseases one should face north on an autumn evening, for stopping action and separation one should look east one early spring morning, for bewitching to the west in the winter, and for killing one should look south one summer at midnight or noontime.

Traditionally there are six different ways of reciting the mantras: (i) *grathana*, generally used for the rite of removing diseases (*shantiti*), consists of reciting the mantras on each of the letters of the name of the person; (ii) *vidartha*, used for the rite of bewitching (*vashikaran*), consists of reciting the letters of the name of the person between the letters of the mantras; (iii) *sampputa*, used in the rite of stopping all action (*stambha*), consists of reciting the mantra at the beginning and end of the name of the person; (iv) *rodhana*, used in the rite of separation (*vidvesana*), consists of reciting the mantra at the beginning, middle and end of the name of the person; (v) *yoga*, used in the rite of making enemies flee (*uccatana*), consists of reciting the name of the person at the end of the mantra; (vi) *pallava*, used in the rite of compassionate killing (*marana*), consists of reciting the mantra at the end of the name of the person.

For the recitation itself there are specific details of the types of rosaries to be used for counting the repetitions. The *Hevajra Tantra*, an early Vajrayana work which includes many spells and charms, declares:

For stopping all action one uses beads of rock crystal;
For subduing, red sandalwood beads produce the best result;
For bewitching, use beads from the wood of the soapberry tree,
And for causing separation one uses beads of human bone.

When driving away one uses the bone from a horse;
For conjuring forth use the bone of a Brahmin;
To cause rain, the bone of an elephant,
And for killing, the bone of a buffalo is best.

For propitiation oblations one should use sesame oil;
For bestowing prosperity, use curds or milk products;
For killing, causing separation or other cruel rites,
Use thorns, and for subduing, a blue lotus flower.

Other fascinating details outlining the methodology of magical practices of the tantric period are to be found throughout the vast literature. Thus, in the same edition of the *Hevajra Tantra* we find the following details:

For overthrowing, the eyes should be level with the gaze directed upward toward the forehead;
For subduing, the gaze is directed toward the left;
For conjuring forth, the two eyes are directed upward toward the right;
For stopping all action, the gaze is central, with the eyes looking toward the end of the tip of the nose.

Overthrowing is accompanied by exhaling,
Subduing by inhaling,
Conjuring forth by holding the breath,
Petrifying by a tranquil pose, just as one is.
The Tibetan commentaries on these portions of the text, available in English translation, add practical details:

In order to perform these four magic rites one should correctly carry out the meditation, recitation and oblations. One may test this out on solid objects so that one’s practice may be said to be sure. Thus, in the rite of killing, direct the gaze toward a green tree and see if it dries up. If so it will apply elsewhere. In a similar manner direct the gaze and breathing at a hard fruit, conjure it forth and see if it becomes ripe. If so it will apply elsewhere. Likewise direct the gaze on soft grass blown by the wind, or on the hair of a horse’s tail, and if it becomes unmoved, with no action, understand that such an action will apply elsewhere.

The commentaries also tell us that the killing rites should be used for frightening beings, to put them on the right path. However, in the life story of Padmasambhava, on several occasions the hero takes life butchers, justifying this as an act of compassion, breaking otherwise everlasting karmic bonds.

Charms, spells, talismans and amulets, if effective, must surely interfere with karma, the force of destiny, and therefore this factor must also be given due consideration. Traditional accounts tell us that the karma of the charm holder is taken into the care of the lama, who is able to purify it through the power of the dharani or mantra and to balance everything by his compassionate nature and accumulated merits. Thus, a potent charm requires a good lama to make it effective. It would be no exaggeration to say that the lama’s empowerment is more sought after than any particular type of charm, though the two factors working together with their respective potencies are believed to be able to bring about almost any situation. Finally, for a charm to work there must be a “ground” of faith and expectancy, a natural requisite for the practice of sympathetic magic. There is a Tibetan popular saying which expresses the situation clearly: “When properly used a charm can work wonders, but used in the wrong manner it is a deadly poison.”

The rites associated with individual Tibetan woodblock charms and amulets vary considerably according to their respective types and also to the traditions of the lama performing them. Simple annual charms for health, happiness and prosperity are generally accompanied by food offerings and token payments to the various entities invoked and placated. Almost any procedure is suitable provided it be spontaneous and “attractive to the beings invoked.” Rites for various types of protections and sickness charms are determined by consulting the manuals on the subject and may involve complex offering cakes (Tib: torma), ritual ingredients and careful instructions to be followed. Empowerment rites for spiritual awakening also tend to be complex, though in some cases the lama may just blow on the charm print, tie it up and bestow it, all in a few moments. All kinds of rites require some degree of liturgy, ranging from a hardly audible murmur to the loud chanting of a roomful of people. For the power of any charm rests in the sound formulae (mantra) of the empowerments. These may be either subtle (hardly, if at all, audible) or gross. The former type is considered to be the more potent. Types of magical powers and their acquisition are listed in the Supplementary Texts.

THE ART AND SYMBOLISM OF THE PRINTS

Tibetan woodblock charms and talismans are always vital in their expressiveness, even those which would normally never be seen, except by the lama at the time of empowerment. They are certainly powerful in their visual impact, incorporating an entirely new realm of psychologically rich and important symbolism, intact in its true context. Many of the designs are intricate and elaborate, while others are rough and forceful, yet all show a tremendous feeling and artistic expression of a very high order. Some are tiny, others huge, with every possible shape and variety. The skill and patience required to carve many of the original blocks can hardly be imagined, even in the simplest instances of lines of script within a frame. Tibetans have excelled in this art form since the earliest times, with the result that it became quite common for ordinary villagers with little or no education to be able to produce really fine woodblocks as their contribution to the religious community. It has taken a number of years for Tibetan charm prints to come to the surface and be shown in relation to their content and as the potent art which they undoubtedly are. Perhaps the main reason for this is the secrecy of the tradition and a natural reluctance to expose those charms, protections and talismans in which so much power rests.

Many of the symbols are to be found in tantric paintings, ritual texts and pilgrimage places, and are also carved on temples, shrines and monasteries in India, Nepal and Tibet. Some are complete abstractions, familiar even to the West. There are representations of men, women, animals, birds, fishes, demons, spirits, mythical creatures, houses, temples, implements, weapons, auspicious emblems (such as the conch, wheel, banner and umbrella), simple syllables,
complex monograms, psychic structures and a vast range of mystic circles, mandalas and cosmograms of all types. In the captions to the illustrations I have endeavored to include as much information as possible, without taxing the patience of the reader. I have included, wherever possible, the full Sanskrit transliterations of the Tibetan texts of invocations and dharanis, for these are essentially the “power” of each representation. Since they were never meant to be “understood” as language with “a meaning,” their value as liturgy remains. Rather than entering into a detailed analysis of the symbols, I have preferred to let them “speak for themselves” as art.

SOURCES OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS
The majority of the woodblock prints illustrated were personally collected or printed at monasteries in the Dolpo region of northwestern Nepal, where Tibetan culture may still be found insulated from all modern influences. Many of the blocks found there had been brought from various parts of Tibet since the Chinese takeover. Other prints were made or collected in the Katmandu valley, the Solo Kumbu area of northeastern Nepal, Sikkim, Darjeeling and other border areas of the Himalayas. It has not been possible to date the original blocks and designs since the blocks are often without such indications and the designs are traditional. Further references to Tibetan woodblock charms are given in the Supplementary Texts and Definitions.

NOTES

1 The Nine Ways of Bon, translated by D. L. Snellgrove (Oxford, 1967), p. 14 of the introduction. To avoid confusion among the various transliterations and stylings of Asiatic names and terms, all the quotations in the present volume have been made to conform to a consistent treatment. Sanskrit words are given without diacritical marks.

2 Ibid., p. 39 of The Shen of Prediction.

3 B. Bhattacharya suggests this in his introduction to the Sadhanamala (Baroda, 1968), vol. II, p. xvii, and repeats it in his Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism (Benares, 1964) and Indian Buddhist Iconography (Calcutta, 1968).


7 Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow, by S. C. Das (Calcutta, 1965), pp. 75-76.


14 Ibid., pp. 213-214.


16 An example is the Vajravina Saraswati-dharani, referred to in the Sadhanamala, edited by B. Bhattacharya (Baroda,

18 For instance, Atisha used to utter Ati Bhala, Ati Mangal and other dharanis which were noted by the Tibetans. This is referred to in Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow, by S. C. Das (Calcutta, 1965), pp. 80–81.

19 In an account of Atisha's journey to Tibet (Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow, by S. C. Das, Calcutta, 1965, p. 74) there is an interesting reference to the use of the stambhana rite with charms: "Attempts were made to assassinate Atisha, by sending after him eighteen robbers. As soon as they saw his venerable face, the robbers were struck dumb, and stood motionless as so many statues. Having advanced a short distance, Atisha said: 'I pity the robbers.' So saying he uttered some charms, drawing figures on sand, which had the efficacy of restoring the stupefied to their senses." In the life stories of the Karmapas (Karmapa: The Black Hat Lama of Tibet, by Nik Douglas and Meryl White, London, 1974) there is a reference to Karma Pakshi, the second Karmapa, "paralyzing" the soldiers of Emperor Kublai Khan with a mystic gesture.


22 Such a manual is the bLa-ma-i-Gong-dus-pe'i, pages of which appear as Illustrations 225 and 226 of this volume. Charm manuals exist in all magical traditions, both Eastern and Western. An interesting Hindu manual is the Kamaratna Tantra (available in English, Shillong, 1928), edited by Hemchandra G. Tattabhusan. It is concerned with the "Six Rites" and their application as spells, charms and amulets, and gives the complete details of approximately 116 different kinds, their diagrams (yantra) and invocations. Many of them, related to the much earlier Vedic prototypes yet far more detailed, are so close to those in the Tibetan tradition and especially those contained in the bLa-ma-i-Gong-dus-pe'i text that there can be no doubt about the connections. Various Hindu Tantras and Puranas are found to include charms, spells and talismans of similar types. See the Supplementary Texts for a few comparisons.
SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS AND DEFINITIONS

CHARMS IN THE ATHARVA VEDA

A multitude of protective hymns, invocations, spells, amulets and charms are to be found in the *Atharva Veda*, available in several different translations. I have consulted the translation and useful commentary of R. T. Griffith (*Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, two vols., Benares, 1968) and here refer to volumes and pages of that translation in giving some of the different types for comparison with our Tibetan examples: success in gambling (I, 42, 183, 380), against an opponent in debate (I, 66), protection and general prosperity (I, 45, 196, 234, 360, II, 11), for lengthening life (I, 57, II, 202, 320), long life for a boy (I, 67), to restore life and health (I, 238), to remove sterility and secure a son (I, 116, 250), to win the love of a girl (I, 70, 119, 248, 249), to secure a husband for a marriageable girl (I, 78), countercharms against bewitching (I, 49, 156, 210, 241, II, 1), to defeat enemies in battle (I, 81, 220, 222, 281), to make a poisoned arrow harmless (I, 136), against tigers, wolves and thieves (I, 133), for controlling fire (I, 113), to hasten the coming of rains (I, 150, 344), against bad omens (I, 123, 260, 261, 338), for inducing sleep (I, 135), against nightmares (I, 378, II, 203, 314), for superhuman vision (I, 159), to acquire wealth (I, 141, 212, II, 208), against snakes (I, 120, 208, 230, 270), against insects and pests (I, 273), against evil creatures, fiends and ghosts (I, 61, 62, 236, II, 294), against insanity (I, 306), to be rid of jealousy (I, 108, 254), against abortion (I, 64), for use during childbirth (I, 14).

There are many charms against all kinds of sickness and disease, including dysentery, constipation, fevers, headache, cough, jaundice, leprosy, worms, broken bones, parasites, poisons, bites and plagues.

According to Dr. V. W. Karambelkar, in his interesting book *The Atharva Veda and the Ayur Veda*, Nagpur, 1961: “The charms of the Atharvan have, for the first time, established relations between demons and diseases. A particular demon causes a particular disease” (p. 40). He proceeds to distinguish four main groups of such demons: (i) Pishachas (“flesh-devouring,” they affect through food), (ii) Rakshasas (the most common disease-bringing types), (iii) Atrins (associated with fevers) and (iv) Kanvas (they bring about abortions), as well as including various types of Gandharvas and Apsaras. He has a number of informative things to say about the connections between the *Atharva Veda* and the medical texts of the *Ayur Veda*, including some details on the preparation of charms and amulets.

With regard to the identities of the various types of spirits and demons mentioned in the *Atharva Veda* and other related texts the work of A. Daniélov (*Hindu Polytheism*, New York, 1964) is of great help.

The main reference works on the *Ayur Veda*, both of which include mentions of charms and amulets, are *The Charaka Samhita* (Calcutta, 1890), translated by K. Kaviratna and *The Sushruta Samhita* (Calcutta, 1916), translated by K. Bhishagratna.

CHARMS IN THE HINDU PURANAS AND TANTRAS

Many protective charms, spells, amulets and talismans are to be found in the Hindu *Puranas* and *Tantras* of the medieval period. Many are surely connected with their Buddhist counterparts. I here give a few examples from published English translations.

From the *Garuda Purana* (translated by M. N. Dutt Shastri, Benares, 1968):

The intelligent one should meditate upon the Mandalas respectively colored as aforesaid at the time of practicing the incantation. The feet, pinions and bills of Garuda should be contemplated as ornamented
The ornamented 'lith black serpents, by an act of figures of man and the distaff, set to work ten vampires elucidations on the Six Rites with attacks by the ritual stakes, a male figure, afflicted further Tattabhusan, Shillong, 1928): manuscript by J. Mitra): XXIV TIBETAN TANTRIC CHARMS AND AMULETS. writing the name of the person on the yantra it should the In the swaha, and side of the moon, having charged it by repeating fortunes of that person away all malefic planetary influences. The mayurashikha plant should be written on a palm leaf with a clayey soil, having written the name of the person. The yantra should be written with ox gall mixed with the extract of palasha flowers (Butea frondosa). After writing the name of the person on the yantra it should be placed in an earthen pot of milk. Thus all the misfortunes of that person will be prevented (No. 39, P. 35).

In the Kakachandishwarakalpa Tantra (translated in manuscript by J. Mitra):

The mayurashikha plant (Celosia cristata) should be uprooted in the night of the fourteenth of the dark side of the moon, having charged it by repeating the mantra om-nama-kharamukhaya-shaktihastaya-yamuraparavahayo-karmadakshaya-osadhirajaya-tha-tha-swaha, and if its root is tied as an amulet it will drive away all malefic planetary influences. If put on the hand there need be no fear of scorpions.

The Kamaratna Tantra is particularly interesting for its further elucidations on the Six Rites (satkarma), particularly since these are more commonly related to the Buddhist tradition.

CHARMS IN THE BONPO TRADITION

Very little has been done in the field of Bonpo studies. The main work of reference, by D. L. Snellgrove (The Nine Ways of Bon, Oxford, 1967), does include some interesting concepts, from which I quote:

For devils, fiends, she-demons, spirits of death, devils which attack men's length of days, sprites which cause impediments, and devils which attack the life force, against these establish life ransoms, life pledges and amulets. Pay debts of evil with life ransoms as payment for life. Worship the Eight Gods who preserve life and happiness. Reverse the troubles that befall men and save them from their impediments. Thus one is ransomed from death and fixed up with an amulet, and so you should produce benefits, joy and happiness for living beings (p. 35).

In order to produce long life, happiness and good fortune for those creatures called wretched men, perform the “striking” rite, combining use of ritual devices. On some clean place as a working base draw a swastika design in grain. Prepare all the devices for the rite, the implements and talismans. Bring all phenomenal elements into an interrelation. Pronounce the blessing of interrelationship, and beings will be cured with benefits and happiness (p. 35).

For all living beings afflicted with attacks by the eight kinds of sprite, by hating and consuming gods and demons, you must perform the “exchange” rite of transposing two equal things. Prepare the ritual devices and items, the right-sized figurine as ransom for the patient's body, the sky symbol, the tree symbol, the arrow, distaff, ritual stakes, a male figure, female figure, the rock plant and mustard seed, a model of the house, its wealth, and the things one desires. If they are exchanged as equal things, the ransom will be good (p. 37).

For removing the nine demons one must do the “exposition” ritual. For suppressing the ten vampires one must do the “vampire” ritual. For rebutting impediments one must do the ritual against troubles. For happenings in dependent relationship, do the “calculation” ritual (p. 75).

In a wild and fearsome place prepare the magic receptacle of the ferocious triangle, and set to work when the stars and other prognostications are auspicious. Meditate on the Fierce One as the presiding divinity, and suppress as demons all antagonistic false
views. Pierce the Circle of Life to the heart. Take the infallible Life letter as the symbol. Encircle the heart and reduce it to subjection (p. III).

The Circle of Life practice contradicts normal practice, but to raise the position of the ignorant is coherent in result (p. 107).

The man who is clever in methods reverses by magical force all evil portents and injuries (p. 71).

Meditate on the Gods of Illusion and mutter powerful spells. Fix the boundary of the profane (outside) and the sacred (inside), and undistractedly practice invocation and conjuration (p. 99).

The potency of the White Waters emerges in the spells (p. 51).

CHARMS IN THE TIBETAN BUDDHIST TRADITION

A very great number of Tibetan charms are mentioned in passing in a work by Rechung Rinpoche (Tibetan Medicine, London, 1973), which includes a translation of the fabulous life story of the Tibetan doctor Yuthok and accounts of the transmission of medical knowledge of all types to Tibet. I quote from parts relating to our study, dealing with “wheel” charms (of a mandala structure), of which many are included in illustration. In the story, the Dakini (supernatural woman) Yid Phrogma visits an ancient Rishi (sage) in order to acquire knowledge:

He gave her the invisible-making charm, protecting her from the wild men of the jungle,
And the wheel in which to spellbind the power of kings,
And a wheel to work spells on courtiers,
And a wheel to numb generals and make them immobile,
And spells to make kings crawl before you—
The courtiers will obey every nodded sign—
A wheel to keep the people in order,
A wheel to infatuate men,
And a wheel to bind and to beat,
Wheels to ward off evil visitations,
To subdue your enemies,
The wheel of various magical articles and mantras,
The wheel to make obedient,
A wheel to make men follow you,
And a wheel to make women follow you,
Turning their minds in your favor (p. 157).

Later the Brahmin Yenlag adds the following charms to her repertoire:

He gave her the wheel of victory,
And the wheel to keep the wars away,
And the wheel to protect from the enemy,
To drive them out and make them turn against each other.
And the wheel of fire for burning,
And the wheel of air for causing explosions to the enemy,
And the wheel of water to cause floods,
The wheel of iron for cutting,
And the wheel of wood to bring to you,
And the one for breathing fire.
Then he said, “Listen, keep this wheel on your body,
Against the poison of the Nagas, and go to visit them” (p. 159).

Two later extracts:

From the Black Garuda, King of Achara:
The wheel to dispel maledictions and the wheel to undo magic wrought by heretics.
The wheel of success in growing medicinal plants,
And the wheel for ripening medicinal fruits (p. 161).

Then the heretics got angry and used black magic against her. Yid Phrogma turned the wheel to drive away the heretics’ magic. Once, when she was staying with the King on top of the palace, she felt the impact of axes, spears and other weapons hitting her, which were sent by the black magic of the heretics. She turned the wheel and they could not harm her (p. 169).

There is an interesting reference (p. 277) to the treatment of disease by the use of imagination. A charm called Dug-gsum Hchhing-ba Rang-grol is said to “drive away a great diversity of diseases through the use of imagination.” The treatment of rabies by charm is also mentioned (p. 276).

DEFINITIONS OF MANTRA

A great deal has been written about mantra, which seems to have so many definitions and connotations. I here give some of the varied renderings, with other related aspects of interest.

In the works of Sir John Woodroffe (Arthur Avalon):

Mantra is the sound-aspect of all that is. Each devata [deity] has his or her own mantra. The mantra does not merely stand for or symbolize the devata. It is the devata (Śakti and Śakta, Madras, 1965, p. 451).

It is true that mantra is meaningless—to those who do not know its meaning (ibid., p. 483).

The root man means “to think” and the suffix -tra indicates the “saving” character of mantra. I have
elsewhere spoken of mantra as “a power in the form of idea clothed with sound.” ... Mantra means those letters or combination of letters which are used in Upasana and Mantra Yoga, and are the mantras of the devatas of Shastrik worship (Garland of Letters, Madras, 1963, p. 197).

Mantras are given various names according to the number of their syllables. A bija or “seed” mantra is, strictly speaking, a mantra of a single letter, together with its termination. The mantra may or may not convey on its face its meaning (ibid., pp. 233–234).

In the Sanskrit dictionary of Monier Williams:

An instrument of thought, speech, sacred text or phrase, mystical verse, magical formula (sometimes personified), charm, spell.

In the work of B. Bhattacharya:

The mantras, or mystic syllables, constitute the backbone of tantric esoterism and of Vajrayana. They are of innumerable varieties, such as Bija Hrdaya, Upahṛdaya, Puja, Arghya, Purpa, Dhupa, Dhupa, Naivedya, Netra, Shikha, Astra, Raksha and so forth. These mantras are mostly a string of unmeaning words, but they sometimes disclose distinctly the influence of a language now unknown. It is, however, impossible to say how these mantras were introduced into ancient India. The mantras of Vajrayana seem to be a development of dharanis (Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism, Benares, 1964, p. 55).

In the works of H. Zimmer:

Man (related etymologically to “mental”) means “think or have in mind”; mantra therefore is “an instrument for evoking or producing something in our minds,” specifically “a holy formula or magic spell for evoking or bringing to mind the vision and inner presence of a god” (Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization, New York, 1946, p. 140).

A compulsion to form a pictorial image compelling beings to be as they are in their innermost essence. It is a compelling force, magical instrument, by which immediate reality-appearance of gods, the play of mystical powers, is wrought. Mantra is power, not arguing or proposition. Whatever is pronounced “in mantra” is an event. If anywhere, words are deeds in this realm (Ewiges Indien, p. 81).

In the writings of K. G. Diehl:

Mantras are instruments. Partly they are without meaning and often they are not understood by him who reads them. They have fixed places in the ritual and varied effects, and cannot be interchanged. They are all indirect means of achieving something. . . . Formulas (mantras), syllables (bijas) hold the gods and can be directed; in that way the performer of the rites draws into himself the divine (Instrument and Purpose: Studies on Rites in Southern India, Lund, 1956, pp. 94 and 100).

In the works of M. Eliade:

The practical value and philosophic importance of mantras rests upon two orders of facts: first, the yogic function of the phonemes used as “supports” for concentration; second—and this is the peculiarly tantric contribution—the elaboration of a gnostic system and an interiorized liturgy through revalorization of the archaic traditions concerning “mystical sound” (Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, New York, 1958, p. 212).

Vasubandhu, in his Bodhisattvabhumi, wrote that the true meaning of the mantras lay in their absence of meaning, and that by meditating on their non-meaning one came to understand the ontological unreality of the universe (ibid., p. 216).

According to A. Govinda:

The symbol word, the holy sound (Tib: gzungs-nag) which, transmitted to the initiate by the preceptor, makes his personality vibrate in consonance and opens it up for higher experience (Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism, London, 1956, pp. 94 and 100).

According to A. Danidou:

The term Veda, taken to mean the pure “beginning-less knowledge,” should be understood as referring not necessarily to the Vedic hymns but to these ancient formulae or mantras, which do not pertain to any particular known language and which have remained the key to the secret knowledge transmitted by Hindu esoteric groups (Hindu Polytheism, New York, 1964, p. 200).

To the original or true language belong the sacred utterances used in worship and called mantras. The word “mantra” means “thought form.” Through the understanding of the inner significance of the mantra we can realize the nature of that which it represents. The mantras are in a way identical with deities. The power of the deity is inherent in its name, its formula, its mantra, which becomes the subtle vehicle through which contacts can be established between the deity and the worshipper. Through adequate mantras any sort of being can be evoked. Mantras are therefore the key to all rituals in all religions and are also used in all forms of magic (ibid., p. 334).

The first perception of a mantra is always attributed to a direct contact between a human being and a divinity. The mantra has to be first directly received from a divine incarnation or to be witnessed by a seer as a supernatural vision. Hence “he who first utters the mantra is its seer.” The mantra represents a
definite deity whom it praises and pleases; "that of which it speaks is the deity." It may further have a particular action or purpose for which it is used (ibid., p. 333).

According to A. Bharati:

A mantra is a quasi-morpheme or a series of quasi-morphemes, or a series of mixed genuine and quasi-morphemes arranged in conventional patterns, based on codified esoteric traditions, and passed on from one preceptor to one disciple in the course of a prescribed initiation ritual (The Tantric Tradition, London, 1965, p. 111).

According to A. Mookerjee:

A mantra is primarily a mental sound and regarded as fundamental in both the creation and dissolution of all form. A mantra exerts its power, not so much through expressing the meaning as we understand it, but more deeply through its sound vibrations. The power of a mantra consists in the effect of its pattern of sound waves (Tantra Art, Basle, 1966, p. 18).

DHARANIS AND THEIR EVOLUTION

Dharanis have remained obscure since their earliest emergence, seemingly from nowhere. It has been suggested that possibly such concepts were introduced to India from outside, either through the influence of people coming from the northwestern lands, or direct from an ancient culture such as Egypt. Whatever may be the case, the concept of dharani reflects a priestly origin. The following extracts, indications and references may be of use to clarify the situation.

According to M. Eliade in his Yoga: Immortality and Freedom (New York, 1958), p. 213:

The dhārani, literally "she who upholds or encloses," was already used in Vedic times. They were probably employed and refined during meditations directed by pranayama; phonetic invention, necessarily limited to a certain number of syllables, was compensated for by the profound inner echo that such "mystical sounds" awakened. In any case, whatever the historical origin of dharanis may have been, they certainly had the value of a secret, initiatory language. For these sounds revealed their message only during meditation. For the uninitiated, dharanis remained unintelligible; their meaning did not belong to rational language, to the language that serves to communicate ordinary experiences. A dhārani, a mantra, yielded their meanings only when they had been spoken in accordance with the rules and assimilated—that is, discovered, "awakened."

Phonemes discovered during meditation probably expressed states of consciousness "cosmic" in structure and hence difficult to formulate in secular terminology. Dharanis, like mantras, are learned from "the Master's mouth" (guruvakratah); they are, then, something quite different from the phonemes that make up secular language or that can be learned from books—they have to be "received."

According to Kern (Manual of Buddhism), p. 6:

Dharanis existed in Buddhism from the very ancient times, and seemed to have been introduced for the benefit of the less advanced followers, who did not care so much for nirvāṇa as they did for their material prosperity in this world. Recruits to Buddhism were enjoined to read some of the Sutras, which, however, proved to be beyond their intelligence. For their benefit these had to be shortened into dharanis, and the lay disciples were expected to commit them to memory.

B. Bhattacharya adds:

The 8000 stanzas of the Astasahasrika-prajna-paramita were reduced to a hundred, and, ultimately, to a very few stanzas, which became known as the Prajna-paramita-hrdaya-sutra (the "heart" of the Prajna-paramita), which was further reduced to make room for the Prajna-paramita-dharani, which in turn was concentrated into a Prajna-paramita-maṇtra. Finally, the mantra was reduced to its "seed," the bija-syllable pranava (Introduction to Buddhist Esotericism, Benares, 1964, p. 59).

The predominance of mantras is of remarkable importance in the course of evolution of tantra, as the mantras not only very soon supplanted the dharanis, but their influence changed the color and tone of the later Mahayana to such an extent that the Mantrayana subsequently grew out of it (Sadhana-mala, Baroda, 1968, II, introduction).

The seeds of tantric Buddhism were already there in the original Buddhism in the form of mudras, mantras, mandalas, dharanis, yoga and samadhi, as a means to attain happiness and prosperity in the world (Two Vajrayana Works, introduction).


E. T. Atkinson adds some interesting information and concepts in his writings on the religious developments in northwestern India (The Himalayan Districts of the N.W. Provinces, Allahabad, 1884), p. 755:

The great object of the yoga was to attain to a mental state by which gradually nirvana or something equivalent to it might be acquired. This might be accomplished by the five stages of dhyana or intense
A fairly recent work by Lessing and A. Wayman (Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras, The Hague, 1968) includes references to many dharanis which reached Tibet, including a fourfold classification (p. 117): (i) *vidya-dharani*, appearance of a female deity and the utterance associated with that method; (ii) *mantra-dharani*, appearance of a male deity and the utterance associated with that form; (iii) *hrdaya-dharani*, “heart” appearance; and (iv) *upahrdaya* (no commentary). Some interesting references: p. 105, the Anantamu-khasadhabha-nama-dharani, as pronounced by Buddha; pp. 105-107, mention of a dharani in a stupa and connected rites for longevity; p. 113, the *marici dharani* and an account of the method of accomplishing fertility in an otherwise barren woman; p. 115, the dharani to overcome karmic hindrances; p. 135, *raksa* and *bhuta* dharanis; pp. 175-179, dharanis and their rites; p. 189, instructions on mantras “muttering while dwelling on the sound of the syllables”; and p. 191, rites of appeasing and increasing prosperity, and terrible rites.

**MANDALA**

By far the most comprehensive work to date on Buddhist mandalas and their psychological/philosophical aspects is The Theory and Practice of the Mandala by G. Tucci (London, 1971), in which there are particularly deep commentaries on the empowerment and “coronation” rites. Two quotations (p. 23) may be of use for the reader:

First and foremost a mandala delineates a consecrated superfluous and protects it from invasion by disintegrating forces symbolized in demoniacal cycles. But a mandala is much more than just a consecrated area that must be kept pure for ritual and liturgical means. It is, above all, a map of the cosmos. It is the whole universe in its essential plan, in its process of emanation and of reabsorption.

When the magician or mystic is in the center he identifies himself with the forces that govern the universe and connects their thaumaturgical power within himself.

**TYPES OF MAGICAL POWERS**

According to Eastern traditions there are five ways by which mystic or magical powers can be realized. The types of powers according to mode of acquisition are:

(i) *janma*ja, coexistent with birth, acquired through past karmas and the influence of the heavens, stars and planets; (ii) *ausadhi*ja, due to the influence of a drug; (iii) *mantra*ja, acquired through the recitation of magic syllables and mantras; (iv) *tapo*ja, through extreme austerities; (v) *samadhi*ja, through living in a state of intense meditation and accumulating *samadhi*.

There are eight powers (Skt: *siddhi*) in the Buddhist tradition: (i) *khadga*, the magic all-conquering mantrasword; (ii) *anjana*, the magic eye-ointment, for seeing visions and finding buried treasure; (iii) *padalepa*, the magic leg-ointment, which enables a person to go anywhere quickly and without being seen (“seven-league boots”); (iv) *antar*dhana, the power of invisibility; (v) *rasa-rasyana*, for transmuting metals into gold and the ordinary psyche into a godly one, and for immunity from death (“alchemy”); (vi) *keh*ara, the power to move through space; (vii) *bhucara*, the power to visit all worlds of the material realms; and (viii) *patala*, the power to go to “nether” regions of great subtlety.
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232 Great Treasury Mandala of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra
1. BUDDHIST PROTECTION

Inscribed with the invocations of the Compassionate Savior Avalokiteshwara, the Lotus-Guru Padmasambhava, the Enlightened Buddha and the tantric form of Vajrasattva. The mantras: (1) om-manipadme-hum, (2) om-ah-hum-vajra-guru padma-siddhi-hum, (3) sarva-tathagata-hrdaya, (4) anu-gate-om-ka-rum-trum gi-ni-swaha, (5) om-vajra-sattva-ah, (6) om-vajra-sattva-hum. Woodblock from Yangser monastery, Nyisal, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 10.5 × 24.0 cm.

2. BONPO PROTECTION

Inscribed with the invocations of the Bonpo savior Shenrab, repeated thrice. The mantra: om-matri-muye-sale-du. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 9.0 × 14.5 cm.
3. BUDDHIST PROTECTION

Inscribed with five repetitions of the invocatory spell (dharani) of the Enlightened One, Gautama the Buddha. The mantra: om-mune-mune-maha-mune-sakya-mune-ye-swaha. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 5.0 x 9.5 cm.

4. BUDDHIST PROTECTION

Inscribed with 12 repetitions of the invocatory spell (dharani) of the Compassionate Savior Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. The mantra: om-mane-padme-hum with hri added at the end of the last repetition. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 3.4 x 17.0 cm.

5. BUDDHIST PROTECTION

Inscribed with 14 repetitions of the invocatory spell (dharani) of the All-Powerful Savior Bodhisattva Vajrapani. The mantra: om-vajra-pani-hum. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 3.8 x 16.5 cm.

6. BONPO SPELL

Inscribed with transformatory invocations in the form of a spell (dharani), probably an extract from a text. The mantra: om-par-chig-chig-go-go-na-na-na-thub-thub-ye-swaha. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 2.3 x 21.0 cm.

7. BUDDHIST SPELL


8 & 9. TWO BONPO SPELLS

Inscribed with invocations from Bonpo sutras. Initially there is the formula ah-om-hum, which is equated with the three Transformation Bodies (trikaya) of Shenrab, the founder of the Bonpo sect. The meaning of the text is obscure and archaic. Probably used for inserting into prayer wheels and putting into images as rites of consecration. Two sides of a woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 1.2 x 22.0 cm. / 1.2 x 19.0 cm.

10. BUDDHIST SPELL

Inscribed with invocations from Buddhist Mahayana sutras, in particular three mantras of tantric deities. Along the center five pairs of eyes emerge from the wrathful invocation. Probably used for inserting into prayer wheels and putting into images during the rites of consecration and empowerment. Woodblock from E. Nepal. 1.2 x 18.5 cm.
11 to 26. EDIBLE CHARMS

Edible charms (Tib: za-yig) were quite common in both Tibet and ancient India. The *Atharva Veda* lists many formulae for preparing edible charms for the efficacious curing of various diseases. In the Tibetan tradition, probably derived wholly from Indian sources, each disease has an edible charm specific for it, generally consisting of mystically revealed or "discovered" (Tib: *terma*) compendiums of potent seed syllables (*bija-mantra*) arranged in particular orders, printed or written with specially prepared inks (of saffron, blood, lampblack, minerals, etc.) and activated by the appropriate rites and observances. Edible charms usually are in the form of columns of seed syllables, often quite unpronounceable and untranslatable as language, yet quite obviously not without sense or structure. In fact it is among charms of this sort that one occasionally finds truly revealing correlations with the sound forms of archaic Sanskrit and the early Indian scripts such as those of the Brahmi and Lichchhavi periods. It is this fact, in particular, which points to the Indian origin of such charms. On some occasions charms were printed directly onto the outside of the body, over the affected organ. Examples of such charms are those numbered 17 and 21, which were to be utilized in sicknesses of the stomach and heart, respectively. References have been made by L. A. Waddell (in his *Buddhism of Tibet*, p. 401) to similar charms used by reflecting the letters in a mirror that is washed over with beer or water; the liquid being drunk is said to contain the reflected letters.

11 & 12. Buddhist charms. From Hrap monastery, Namdo, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 2.4 × 7.5 cm./2.2 × 3.9 cm.

13, 14 & 15. Bonpo charms. From Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 4.5 × 8.5 cm./0.6 × 4.5 cm./4.0 × 7.2 cm.

16. Magic square. Edible charm, sometimes used for divination. Darjeeling, N.E. India. 3.0 × 3.0 cm.

17. Charm for printing on the stomach of a sick person. From Kham, E. Tibet. 2.9 × 3.8 cm.

18. Buddhist charm. From Hrap monastery, Namdo, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 2.8 × 5.3 cm.


20. Buddhist charm. From Hrap monastery, Namdo, Dolpo. N.W. Nepal. 3.8 × 6.0 cm.

21. Buddhist charm for printing over the heart of a sick person. A *terma*. From Kham, E. Tibet. 2.4 × 2.6 cm.

22. Buddhist charm. From Hrap monastery, Namdo, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 1.0 × 4.6 cm.

23. Bonpo charms for "conferring victory and the curing of any disease." From Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 2.1 × 15.4 cm.

24. Buddhist charms, archaic seed syllables and a lotus design. The seed syllables are used for inserting in the center of protective amulets (of a mandala form) and also as specifics for the curing of particular diseases. From Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 3.1 × 15.7 cm.

25. Buddhist charms. From Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 3.1 × 22.0 cm.

26. Bonpo charms and archaic seed syllables, possibly in the now lost Shang-shung Bonpo script of the time prior to the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet. Many of the other syllables on this block show extremely complex phonetic values, quite unpronounceable yet filled with potentiality. From Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 4.5 × 20.0 cm.
27. BUDDHIST PROTECTION FLAG

This charm of extremely unusual form is constructed as a flag of protection. It is inscribed all around with powerful invocations (dharanis) extracted from Mahayana texts, enclosing a central rectangular space filled with nineteen seed syllables of the archaic Indian form. These syllables are to be found in the text known as the Lama-Gong-va Dus, which was derived from an ancient Indian "treasure" treatise (terma). It is rare to find such symbols portrayed on a flag or banner, as they are generally considered too potent for ordinary eyes. Woodblock from E. Nepal, possibly Sherpa. 14.2 × 23.0 cm.

28. BUDDHIST SEED SYLLABLES

Seed syllables of this archaic form are much treasured as dharanis by Tibetans. They are considered to be all-powerful as protection against ill fortune and sicknesses of all kinds. Generally they are used to empower protective amulets and for the consecration of images. Woodblock from E. Nepal. 1.6 × 8.0 cm.
29. THE MANI FORMULA

The protective formula (dharani) of the Compassionate Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. It is known as the Mani (lit: jewel) mantra, here inscribed in the ancient Indian Ranja or Lantsa characters of about the sixth century. This mystic phrase has been translated as “Om! The Jewel in the Lotus! Hum!” It expresses the essence of the tantric path of Vajrayana. The mantra: om-manipadme-hum. Woodblock from Khams, E. Tibet. 5.6 x 18.1 cm.

30. MYSTIC MONOGRAM

Seed syllables (bijamana) of ancient Indian origin are here combined together to form an All-powerful Auspicious Monogram of exquisite calligraphy, used as a household protection, to be printed once a year. Woodblock from Selong monastery, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 5.9 x 12.2 cm.

31. MYSTIC MONOGRAM

From out of a seven-petaled lotus there emerges a complex Auspicious Monogram composed of ancient Indian seed syllables. Above are the crescent moon and a flaming sun. An aureole sanctuary behind encloses the central structure. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 5.5 x 8.0 cm.

32. MYSTIC MONOGRAM

From out of a seven-petaled lotus there emerges a form composed of ancient Indian seed syllables which produce a monogram. Above are the crescent moon and sun, symbols of the subtle sound of the mantra. Flames surround and enclose the central structure, which here appears as a yantra. Woodblock from Yangser monastery, Nyisal, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 9.4 x 13.5 cm.

33. MYSTIC MONOGRAMS

From out of a roughly executed ten-petaled lotus there emerges a central Auspicious Monogram composed of ancient Indian seed syllables. Above there is a double crescent moon and a flaming sun. At either side are to be seen other monograms of a similar origin. An aureole encloses the whole, a sun and moon to the left and right indicate the cosmic scale of this composition. Sherpa woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 10.0 x 17.5 cm.
34. MONOGRAM OF THE ALL-POWERFUL TEN

From a five-petaled lotus there emerges a fine Auspicious Monogram composed of ten syllables of the ancient Indian Lantsa script. The Tibetan name of this structure is nam-chu wang-den, meaning the All-powerful Ten, which refers to the ten seed syllables which comprise the monogram. These syllables consist of eight consonants, Y, R, V, L, M, S, K and H, together with two vowels, O and U. The eight consonants, sometimes reduced to seven by combining K and S (in which case the whole is called the Seven Letters), are shown in contemporary Tibetan Uchen script in a column to the right of the main monogram. The consonants combined with the vowel A and ending M are the seed sounds of the Great Elements (mahabhuta): yam for the element Air, ram for the element Fire, vam for the element Water, lam for the element Earth, ham for the element Space. These sounds are connected to the subtle centers (chakra) of the yoga body, and are meditated upon for bringing about an inner transmutation. To the left of the monogram is a column with the tantric dharani om-ah-hum, symbolising the Body, Speech and Mind of the Enlightened One. Above, at the center, are the crescent moon (the sound O) and a flaming sun (the sound M). To the right of these is a medicinal fruit of the myrobalan family (Tib: anna), to the left a Wheel of Law (dhara-chakra), the symbol of the Buddhist teachings. The whole is enclosed by a double aureole sanctuary within a rectangular form. At the four corners are the names of the four Protective Animals: snow lion, tiger, mythical bird (garuda) and dragon. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 14.1 x 21.0 cm.

NOTE: The symbolism of the All-Powerful Ten has been extensively dealt with by P. H. Pott in his excellent book Yoga and Yantra (Leiden, 1966), pp. 57–61. Among the facts that he has unearthed are the connections between this monogram and the great teachings of the Kalachakra Tantra. Dr. Pott tells us: “The sign of the All-Powerful Ten consists of seven letters and three symbols: sun, moon and flame. If we concentrate on this composition and on the colors of the different letters, we can see that the correspondence with the bijas of the chakras in the satchakra system is surprisingly close.” The Sanskrit name for the monogram is dasaksaro vasi. It is said that without a knowledge of this composition the understanding of the first book of the Kalachakra (Cycle of Time) is quite impossible.
35. MONOGRAM PRAYER FLAG

Within an oblong enclosure is an Auspicious Monogram of seven syllables of Indian origin. Outside are six rows of invocatory phrases (dharanis) of (1) the Enlightened Buddha, (2) the Wisdom Bodhisattva Manjushri, (3) the Original Buddha Realms and (4) an Auspicious Wish. At the four corners are the names of the Protective Animals. The whole is enclosed within an oblong form. The mantras: (1) om-mune-mune-maha-mune-ye-swaha, (2) om-ara-pa-tsa-na-dhi, (3) om-ah-hum-he-ho, (4) shu-bham. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 16.2 × 18.2 cm.
36. EMPOWERMENT CHARM

The three potent seed syllables om-ah-hum, the empowerment of the Body, Speech and Mind of the Buddhas. Also symbolic of the three Transformation Bodies (trikaya) of the experience of meditation.

Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 3.8 x 5.0 cm.

37. BUDDHIST PROTECTIVE PRAYERS

Within an aureole enclosure, shaped rather like a tombstone, the “source mantra” om at the apex and underneath 11 lines of potent but corrupt invocations (dharanis), each ending with the “oblation mantra” swaha. The last line of mantras reads adhi-sha-ta te-hum-hum-hum-hum-phat. In the Indian tradition hum is the “undefined, void, wrathful.” Phat is the weapon, the astra-bija, which can destroy anything.

Sherpa woodblock, E. Nepal. 10.5 x 18.2 cm.

38. HOUSEHOLD PROTECTION

Under an Auspicious Banner, with scroll motifs and offering scarves at either end, a potent Vajrayana mantra invokes the Spell Goddesses (pancha-raksha) for protecting a household. Along the bottom are two lines of benediction, extracted from a Buddhist text. The mantra: om-padmo-ushnisha-vimale-hum-phat.

Woodblock from Rumtek Kargyupa monastery, Sikkim. 8.2 x 27.0 cm.
39. HOUSEHOLD PROTECTION

Within a simple double-aureole enclosure, a potent Vajrayana mantra invokes the goddess Varahi for protecting a household. Along the bottom are two lines of benediction. The mantra: om-ha-mu-pha-shabha-ra-he-ye-swaha. Woodblock from Sandul monastery, outer Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 5.7 x 14.7 cm.

40. HOUSEHOLD PROTECTION

Within a simple oblong enclosure, a potent Vajrayana mantra invokes the Spell Goddesses for protecting a household. Along the bottom are two lines of benediction. The invocation is that of Ushnishavijaya, an emanation of the dhyani-Buddha Vairocana, who protects against all calamities. The mantra: om-padmo-ushnisha-vimal-hum-phat. Woodblock from Sandul monastery, outer Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 7.6 x 24.0 cm.

41. HOUSEHOLD PROTECTION

Within a simple double-oblong enclosure, a Vajrayana mantra of the Ushnishavijaya-dharani, a tantric Spell Goddess invoked for the protection of a household. The mantra is corrupt since here it lacks the initial letter of the name of the goddess. Underneath are the powerful seed syllables om-hum-kram-hri-ah. Woodblock from Thangboche monastery, N.E. Nepal. 4.6 x 24.4 cm.
Within a double-aureole sanctuary, resting on a seven-petaled lotus, is a series of seed syllables and invocations in 12 lines of Tibetan script. Along the top is the powerful bija-mantra, *hum*, repeated four times. Then there are the names of the four great Guardian Kings (Skt: *chatur-maharaja*) of the quarters, who guard the heavens from the attacks of the outer demon beings. These Guardian Kings—(1) Dhritarashtra, the white Guardian of the East, (2) Virudhaka, the green Guardian of the South, (3) Virupaksha, the red Guardian of the West, and (4) Vaishravana, the yellow Guardian of the North—are respectively the kings of the Gandharvas, Kumbhandas, Nagas and Yakshas, all various classes of minor gods and genii, who are particularly to be blamed for human calamities. Each name is invoked with the prefix *om* and suffix *ya-swaha*, in accordance with Indian tradition. Following the names of the Guardian Kings is an invocation of the Hierarchs of the Karmapa Black Hat sect, starting with Dusum Khyenpa. In between each two names, in order, are the potent seed syllables *om, ah, hum, hri* and *kye* (the meditation mantra for the Karma-Kargyupa sect). Finally there is the dharani *om-sutra-tishta-vajraye-swaha*. Woodblock from Thangboche monastery, N.E. Nepal. 21.0 × 36.3 cm.
Within a double oblong frame, surrounded by Buddhist prayers, mantras and dharanis, is the central figure of the Lotus-Guru Padmasambhava, the founder of the Nyingmapa sect in Tibet. He is shown having emerged from, and seated upon, a five-petaled lotus, wearing traditional robes and hat, holding a scepter (vajra), skull bowl (kapala) and trident staff (trisul-khatvanga), with an aureole behind. The mantras on this prayer flag are typical of those employed for such a usage. They are: (1) om-wagishwari-mum (the spell of yellow Bodhisattva Manjushri), (2) om-mani-padme-hum (the Mani mantra of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara), (3) om-vajra-pani-hum (the dharani of the Bodhisattva Vajrapani), and then (4) om-ah-hum-vajra-guru-padma-siddhi-hum (the mantra of the Lotus-Guru Padmasambhava), repeated over and over again for the rest of the prayer flag. At the four corners are the names of the Protective Animals: lion, tiger, bird and dragon. Woodblock from Lang monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 19.7 x 27.3 cm.
Within an oblong frame we see the central figure of the Buddhist Savioress Tara (Tib: Dolma), the great Goddess of Mercy. Here she is in the most popular of her 21 forms, the one known as Green Tara (Tib: Doljang), seated in an easy posture on a five-petaled lotus throne, wearing elaborate robes and ornaments, holding a lotus flower in one hand and giving the “boon-bestowing” gesture with the other. Her face is beautiful, with the “wisdom eye” clearly visible. Behind her are a double aureole and a halo. The sun and moon are seen in the sky above, and two piles of “wish-granting” gems at either side. Underneath the icon is the invocatory mantra (dharani) of Green Tara, written in Tibetan script. The mantras: (1) om-tare-tuttare-ture-swaha and (2) tare-tare-tare. Woodblock from Sikkim. 12.4 × 16.2 cm.
An extremely fine prayer-flag design showing the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshwara in the popular form with 11 heads and eight arms, holding a lotus flower, bow and arrow, elixir jar, Wheel of Law and rosary, wearing elaborate ornaments and robe, standing on a seven-petaled lotus, an aureole behind. To the right is the wrathful form of the Bodhisattva Vajrapani, and to the left a peaceful Bodhisattva Manjushri. Below, front, are offerings of a conch shell, mirror, cymbals and flowers, which are symbolic of the Excellent Senses (body, sound, smell, sight). Above, to the right and left, celestial beings offer oblations alongside the sun and moon (the latter shown with a hare seated on it). Along the top are three repetitions of the dharani of Avalokiteshwara, om-manipadme-hum, written in the ancient Lantsa script of India.

Avalokiteshwara, the Lord of Mercy (Mahakaruna), is considered to be the spiritual son of the dhyani-Buddha Amitabha, the red meditative Buddha of Infinite Light, who dwells in the West; Amitabha is shown in this icon as the topmost head of the 11. Avalokiteshwara is considered to be the embodiment of mercy and compassion, and is always willing to help suffering humanity. Thus this Bodhisattva became very popular among Tibetans, who constantly mutter his seed mantra and take refuge in his name. The lineage of Dalai Lamas are considered to be incarnations of this Bodhisattva, whose palace in the heavens was called Potala. Woodblock from Nepal, after a Tibetan version. This may be printed as a prayer flag, house protection or personal protective charm. 21.7 x 24.3 cm.
47. BONPO WIND HORSE FLAG

A Bonpo prayer flag of the Wind Horse variety, called lung-ta in Tibetan, generally printed on paper or cloth and scattered to the winds from a mountain pass or hill. It is believed that such an action will increase luck and prosperity for the months ahead. The horse is shown with a flaming jewel (Tib: norbu) on the saddle. At the four corners are the names of the Protective Animals: snow lion, tiger, garuda (mythical bird) and dragon. The mantras: (1) ah-om-hum-ram-dsa, (2) ah-aah-kar-sale-od-ah-yang-om-du, (3) om-ma-ma-mer-mer-ye-swaha, (4) om-ma-ma-sal-sal-ye-swaha, (5) om-ma-ma-pel-pel-ye-swaha, (6) om-ma-ma-yer-yer-ye-swaha, (7) om-ma-ma-lam-lam-ye-swaha. Then: “Let the deities and the giver of this flag prosper!” Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 9.8 x 14.0 cm.

48. BUDDHIST WIND HORSE FLAG

A Buddhist prayer flag of the Wind Horse variety. At the corners are the names of the Protective Animals. The mantras: (1) om-wagishvari-mum (dharani of Manjushri), (2) om-mani-padme-hum (dharani of Avalokiteshvara), (3) om-vajrapani-hum (dharani of Vajrapani), (4) om-ah-hum (the Three Bodies), and (5) om-amarani-tsiwante-ye-swaha (dharani of Amitayus). This print is unusual in that it has the seed syllable ba on the saddle, together with an unclear invocation. Woodblock from Yangser monastery, Nyisal, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 10.9 x 15.9 cm.
49. BUDDHIST WIND HORSE FLAG

Here the ornately saddled and harnessed horse bears six flaming jewels. At the corners are the names of the Protective Animals. As well as mantras the flag contains a passage asking the invoked deities for prosperity, with a space left for the birth year of the flag offerer to be filled in. The mantras: (1) om-wagishwari-mum (Manjushri), (2) om-mani-padme-hum (Avalokiteshvara), (3) om-vajrapani-hum (Vajrapani), (4) om-marani-tsiwante-ye-swaha (Amitayus), (5) om-tare-tuttare-ture-swaha (Green Tara) and (6) om-bhrum-swaha (seed syllable of power). Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 11.0 x 15.8 cm.

50. BUDDHIST WIND HORSE FLAG

At the corners are the names of the Protective Animals. The script is unclear on this old woodblock, but the mantras seem to be basically the same as in examples 48 and 49. From N.E. Nepal. 11.1 x 16.0 cm.
51. FOUR PROTECTIVE ANIMALS FLAG

These are the animals invoked at the corners of the Wind Horse flag: the snow lion, tiger, mythical bird (garuda) and dragon. They are symbolic of four kinds of fearlessness, and are considered potent guardians and protectors. Woodblock from Khams, E. Tibet. 12.0 × 13.3 cm.
Prayer flags of this kind are either cast to the wind from high places, to bring good luck and prosperity, or are sewn as small flags or long banners. These are then ceremonially mounted on the roofs of houses, monasteries or mountain passes. During the rites food offerings are thrown in the four directions and to the earth deity. There is usually great merriment to the shouts of So! So! ("Take! Take!"), and quantities of beer are drunk. On this example the mantras are those of the Bodhisattvas Manjushri, Avalokiteshwara and Vajrapani, the Long-Life Buddha Amitayus and the Lotus-Born Guru Padmasambhava (whose mantra is om-ah-hum-vajra-guru-padma-siddhi-hum). Woodblock from Yangser monastery, Nyisal, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 21.4 × 30.8 cm.
A fine Buddhist prayer flag of the type known as Banner of Victory (Tib: gyaltse-tenmo), an extended form of Wind Horse. It shows, within a large oblong outer form, a central framed representation of a Wind Horse galloping across the countryside bearing flaming “wish-granting” jewels on the saddle. At the corners are the Protective Animals. To the left and right are two columns showing the eight Auspicious Emblems (Skt: astha-mangala) and the eight Glorious Offerings (Skt: astha-nidhi), respectively.

The Auspicious Emblems are important symbols, which traditionally appeared on the feet of Gautama Buddha. They were often to be seen on early representations of the footprints of the Buddha. In particular they have an astrological significance, indicating a particularly potent form of auspiciousness. They are the Wheel of Law (dharma-chakra), symbol of the Buddhist teachings; Victorious Banner (dhvaja), symbol of power and conquest; Lucky Diagram (shrivatsa), sometimes called Endless Knot or Intestines of Lord Buddha, symbol of unity; Conch-Shell Trumpet (sankha), symbol of victory; Lotus (padma), symbol of spirituality; Elixir Vase (kalasha), symbol of potent immortality; Twin Fishes (matsya), often considered to be symbolic of psychic energy; and Honorific Umbrella (chatra), symbol of attainment.

The Glorious Offerings refer to presents given to Gautama Buddha by disciples and gods shortly after his Enlightenment. They are the Conch (given by Indra, ruler of heaven), the Mirror (given by the goddess of light), the Intestinal Stones (given by the king of elephants), the Casket of Curds (given by a farmer’s daughter after a long period of fasting), Vermilion (given by Aditya, the king of stars), Bilwa Fruit (given by Brahma), Darwa Grass (given by a grass seller called Mangala) and White Turnips (given by Bodhisattva Vajrapani).

The main body of the flag is covered by 31 rows of invocatory dharani formulae, interspersed with extracts from Buddhist texts. Such Luck Flags of Victory are believed to increase prosperity, preserve health, bestow wisdom and aid the liberation of the individuals who offer them, as well as blessing the community as a whole. They are generally placed on the roof of a monastery, chieftain’s house, places of pilgrimage, important bridges, high trees or at the entrance of villages. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 24.1 x 32.6 cm.
Resting upon a seven-petaled lotus is this great Banner of Victory prayer flag. At the center is the Wind Horse. The text is contained within an oblong frame, outside of which is an aureole-shaped enclosure with scroll motifs at the top. At either side are representations of the Auspicious Emblems and Glorious Offerings with the addition of flaming jewels and miniature Protective Animals. At the apex is an Honorific Umbrella (chatra), under which is a design incorporating the Auspicious Emblems, with the Twin Fishes shown emerging from the Lotus. At either side are two other Umbrellas, the symbols of honorific dignity. The inscription, in 19 lines, begins with the seed syllable kye, followed by a scriptural extract and the wish for prosperity, good luck, health, happiness and auspiciousness. It ends with the dharanis of Yellow Manjushri, Avalokiteshvara, Vajrapani, Green Tara and Amitayus. Generally the text is corrupt. Sherpa woodblock from E. Nepal. 18.4 × 26.5 cm.

NOTE: It is possible that the artist has here confused the Glorious Offerings (shown in the columns) with the Seven Royal Badges, which are a different set of auspicious symbols comprising Elephant’s Tusks, Precious Earrings, Flaming Jewel, etc.
55. UMBRELLA BANNER OF VICTORY
FLAG

An unusual Buddhist prayer flag of the great Honorific Umbrella (*chatra*), a form of Victory Banner. Within an outer oblong frame, enclosed by an aureole-shaped sanctuary, a central design of an Honorific Umbrella rests upon a lotus of 12 petals. At the corners are the names of the Protective Animals. The 18 lines of text begin with an invocation to Sumati, one of 12 dharani Goddesses of Protection, ending with the potent syllables *hum! hum!* Next is the dharani of Sitatapatra, the Invincible Goddess of the White Umbrella (a form of Aparajita), followed by the powerful mantra

\[\begin{align*}
&\text{om-dsa-va-la-dsa-va-ya} / \text{kha-da-kha-da} / \\
&\text{ha-na-ha-na} / \text{da-ha-da-ha} / \text{dha-ra-dha-ra} / \\
&\text{wi-dha-ra-wi-dha-ra} / \text{chi-na-da-chi-na-da} / \\
&\text{whi-na-dhi-na-dhi} / \text{hum-hum-phat-phat-swaha}. \\
\end{align*}\]

This mantra contains syllables invoking the supernatural powers (*siddhi*) such as the “magic sword,” “treasure-finding eyes,” “disappearing power,” “power to travel anywhere,” etc. The rest of the text, largely corrupt, asks for good luck, prosperity, health and happiness. Sherpa woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 21.5 × 27.0 cm.
56. VAST LUCK SCEPTER CHARM

This form of charm is derived from the prayer flags. It is known in Tibetan as langpo-topgye, meaning “that which makes vast, like the elephant.” It is either pasted on the walls of monasteries, shrines and houses, or—more frequently—worn as a protective charm or amulet, folded up and sewn into a pouch. It consists of a central crossed-scepter (vissva-vajra) design incorporating a seed syllable (probably hri) of ancient Indian origin surrounded by the Amitayus long-life dharani om-amarani-tsiwante-ye-svaha and the wish: “May this charm holder attain everlasting life, as symbolized by this immutable scepter.” At the four points of the scepters is the seed syllable bhrum, with other syllables at the sides. Above is an Honorific Umbrella, with the Twin Fishes underneath. The other Auspicious Emblems are to be seen to the right, left and below (see the commentary to example 53). At the four corners are representations of the mythical bird (garuda), peacock, jeweled elephant and jeweled horse, each bearing eight-petaled lotus discs inscribed with seed syllables and dharanis (these are fully analyzed in the next example). Around the outer borders is the “Buddhist creed,” repeated over and over:

Ye-dharma-hetuprabhava
Hetun-teshan-tathagato
Hyavadata-teshan-cc-oy-nirodha
Evamvadi-mahasramanah,

meaning:

Concerning everything that has a cause
The Tathagata Buddha has fully explained,
And he has shown their negation also;
This is the doctrine of the Great Teacher!

Then there is the wish: “May the life, the body, the speech, the mind and the power of the holder of this charm be fully protected! May wealth, health and happiness increase! May this guard against illness and bad fortune!” Woodblock from Yangser monastery, Nyisal, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 23.4 × 26.8 cm.
57. GREAT VAST LUCK SCEPTER CHARM

A fine extended form of the Vast Luck charm, but with additions and clearer mantras. The crossed scepters are the symbol of the Vajrayana, the Immutable Path of the Tantras. The eight Auspicious Emblems are represented surrounding the central structure, with the Honorific Umbrella above. To the upper left is an eight-petaled lotus disc (Tib: khorlo) appearing as the body of the mythical bird and containing the following wish and seed mantras: “May the life of this charm holder be high, like the flight of the celestial Garuda!” On the petals: om-sal-sal-hobana-sal-sal-ye-swaha. Around the outer circle: om-om-sarva-kata-kata-maha-kata-sala-sala gaha-sala-ye-swaha / om-kili-kili-mili-mili kuru-kuru-hana-hana-ye-swaha. To the upper right is an eight-petaled lotus disc appearing as the body of a peacock, containing the following wish and seed mantras: “May the body of this charm holder shine like the auspicious peacock!” On the petals: om-ner-ner-hobana-ner-ner-ye-swaha. Around the outer circle: om-om-sarva-kata-kata-maha-kata-sala-sala gaha-sala-ye-swaha / om-kili-kili-mili-mili kuru-kuru-hana-hana-ye-swaha. The central invocation enclosed by the crossed scepters is the dharani of Amitayus, the Long-Life Buddha, who usually holds an elixir jar. It is: om-amarani-tsiwante-ye-swaha, and in addition is the wish for “everlasting life of the scepter symbol.” Around the outer edge are the vowels and consonants (a!i-kali) of the Tibetan alphabet, with the “Buddhist creed” formula repeated four times, and other extracted textual quotations. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 31.6 x 33.0 cm.
58. VAST LUCK ELEPHANT CHARM

An unusual form of Vast Luck charm, related to the previous scepter charm. It shows a central representation of a jewel-bearing elephant with the names of the Four Wisdoms on the legs, a central invocation of the Buddha Dakini (the femininity aspect) and an outer circle of mantras and the wish that the “health, wealth and happiness of the charm holder be increased as vast as the auspicious elephant!” The elephant is within a lotus disc of eight petals bearing invocations of the “enchancing,” goddess Kurukulla (who is generally portrayed with a bow and arrow of flowers), the goddess Tarini (a form of Green Tara, the Merciful), the Lotus, Scepter, Jewel and Action Dakinis, and the deus (gods). Outside the lotus disc are the mantras: (1) om-kuru-kulle-om, (2) om-kuru-kulle-bhrum, (3) om-kuru-kulle-tram, (4) om-kuru-kulle-hri, (5) om-kuru-kulle-ah, with the wish for protective blessings of the goddess Kurukulla, and the “Buddhist creed.” Above, at the center, is a fish with an Honorific Umbrella over it. The other Auspicious Emblems (Lotus, Elixir Vase, Lucky Diagram, Wheel of Law, Conch and Banner) surround the central structure. Each one has phrases of invocation and seed syllables on the design, though in most instances unclear. At the four corners are “wheels” (Tib: khorlo), each containing seed syllables, invocations and auspicious wishes for the protection of the charm holder. From top left, in a clockwise direction, these are of eight segments, invoking the goddess Tarini and the Jewel (ratna) Dakini; five segments, invoking the water god Varuna and the Lotus (padma) Dakini; six segments, invoking the goddess Kurukulla and the Action (karma) Dakini; and four segments, invoking another form of the goddess Kurukulla and the Scepter (vajra) Dakini. Around the outer perimeter are scriptural quotations and the expressed wish that the charm be fully effective against sickness of “body, speech and mind.” The whole is surrounded by flame designs moving to both left and right. This charm was designed to be worn as a protective amulet, either folded and sewn in a pouch or kept within a precious charm box and worn when traveling or in need. This charm is known as bangpo topgye-chen in Tibetan. Woodblock from Thangboche monastery, N.E. Nepal. 35.2 × 36.0 cm.
59. AUSPICIOUS EMBLEMS AND DHARANI

An unusual oblong design depicting the eight Auspicious Emblems interspersed with the well-known Mani dharani of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, *om-manipadme-hum*, with the syllable *hri* added once at the third repetition of six. It is believed that constant recitation of this potent mantra will help to ultimately empty the Six Realms of inhabitants, thus enabling all to escape suffering and enter the various heavens. The Six Realms are those of the gods (*sura*), titans (*asura*), man (*nara*), animals (*tiryak*), ghosts (*preta*) and hell demons (*naraka*). The artist possibly had this in mind when he carved six full repetitions on the original block. The script of the dharani is of the ancient Indian Lantsa or Ranja variety, similar to example 29. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 17.5 × 38.4 cm.
60. **THE EIGHT AUSPICIOUS EMBLEMS**

On one split woodblock are representations of the eight Auspicious Emblems of the Buddhist tradition. Woodblock from Nepal. 7.4 × 12.4 cm.

61. **AUSPICIOUS EMBLEMS**

A miniature print of the eight Auspicious Emblems on lotus petals around a circle. Used for inserting into Buddhist images at the time of their consecration. At the center seed syllables would be written in specially prepared ink, such as saffron. Woodblock from Khams, E. Tibet. 3.0 × 3.0 cm.
Examples 62 through 69 constitute an extremely unusual set of eight Bonpo Auspicious Emblem charms. This one is in the form of a wheel (Tib: khorlo). At the center is a circular form enclosing an inscription invoking the Three Worlds. From this a triangular structure emerges in the form of three lotus petals, bearing an inscription of the Great Elements. The whole is enclosed by two concentric circles bearing an invocation to the Honorific Lucky Foot and the Bonpo root dharani om-matri-muye-sale-du, and this in turn is enclosed by an eight-petaled lotus bearing the same dharani, a double concentric circle, representations of mountains at the four cardinal points, a further double concentric circle, and piles of jewels at the four main and lesser directions. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 23.3 x 23.5 cm.

NOTE: The Honorific Lucky Foot seems to relate this to the Buddha’s Footprint (Skt: Buddha-pada) which was worshipped by the early Buddhists. It is quite possible that such a concept was later borrowed by the Bonpos. A further interesting fact is that, in the important Buddhist tantric text Hevajratantra a mandala or Mystic Wheel is defined as a “footprint.”
63. BONPO AUSPICIOUS SWASTIKA

At the center of this charm banner (Tib: gyaltsen) is a circular form enclosing an inscription which invokes the Unchanging Doctrine. From this a reversed swastika structure emerges in a counterclockwise direction, enclosing four repetitions of the Bonpo seed syllables ah-om-hum. The reversed swastika is the emblem of the Bon religion. Known as yungdrung in Tibetan, it is generally believed to be a solar symbol. The swastika is enclosed by two concentric circles bearing the root dharani om-matri-muye-sale-du, and the whole design is formed as a Victorious Banner after the Buddhist tradition. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 15.5 x 20.0 cm.
64. BONPO AUSPICIOUS ELIXIR JAR

At the center of this Elixir Jar (Tib: bumpa) charm is a circular enclosure with an inscription invoking the Great Beyond. From this there emerges a five-petaled lotus of a starlike shape, which contains four repetitions of the mantra chig together with phrases of benediction (the syllable chig can either be read as a mantra of empowerment or as meaning “one,” here “to become one”). The whole is enclosed by double concentric circles which bear the root dharani om-matri-muye-sale-du and the wish that the Elixir Jar will bring good luck and long life. The outer design is that of an ornate Elixir Jar, similar to those of the Buddhist tradition. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 18.8 × 23.6 cm.
At the center of this Conch Shell (Tib: dung) charm is a circular enclosure with an inscription invoking the Three Bodies, with a wish for their acquisition. From this there emerges a triangular form of three lotus petals bearing the seed syllables ah-om-hum, which is itself bound by a circle enclosing the names and benedictions of the Three Bodies (Tib: ku-sum). The whole is enclosed by a circle bearing the root dharani om-matri-nuye-sale-du and the wish that the deity of the Conch Shell will bring good luck to the wearer of the charm. The outer design is of a ribboned Conch, very similar to those of the Buddhist tradition. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 14.5 × 23.0 cm.
66. BONPO AUSPICIOUS LOTUS

At the center of this Lotus Flower (Tib: pema) charm is a circular enclosure with an inscription invoking the Intermediate Voidness, with a wish for the acquisition of it. From this there emerges a six-petaled lotus bearing the seed syllables \textit{ah-hri-nri-su-tri-du}, probably referring to the "closing of the rebirth doors in the Six Realms." The Lotus is enclosed by a circle forming six divisions with the names of the Six Realms (see note 59). The whole is enclosed by an inner circle bearing the root dharani \textit{om-matri-muye-sale-du} and the wish that the Lotus charm will ensure favorable realms of rebirth. An outer circle encloses an eight-petaled lotus bearing the above dharani split into syllables. The design represents a full Lotus Flower, similar to that of the Buddhist tradition. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 17.4 × 23.1 cm.
At the center of this Endless Knot or Lucky Diagram (Tib: palbe) charm is a circular enclosure with an inscription invoking “this excellent heart protection,” with the wish that it prove efficacious. From this there emerges a five-petaled lotus bearing the seed syllables ah-om-hum-ram-dsa and an empowerment. This is enclosed by concentric circles bearing the root dharani om-matri-muye-sale-du and the wish that “all virtues become one through the potency of the charm.” The whole is in the design of the Lucky Diagram with the above dharani placed as syllables on the segments. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 19.2 × 20.5 cm.
68. BONPO AUSPICIOUS UMBRELLA

At the center of this Honorific Umbrella (Tib: dugs) charm is a circular enclosure with an inscription invoking the Purifying Wisdom and the wish that it work effectively for the holder of the charm. There emerges a five-petaled lotus bearing the names of the Five Poisons: (1) pride (Tib: nga-chal) of attainments, (2) lustful love (Tib: do-chog) of fascination, (3) anger (Tib: she-dang) of embitterment, (4) jealousy (Tib: trag-dog) of another and (5) mental darkness (Tib: ti-mug) of ignorance. These are the "poisons" to be "purified" by the "wisdom" invoked at the center of the design. The whole is enclosed by a circle, bearing the seed syllables ah-om-hum-ram-dsa, known as the Five Heroic Seed Syllables, and an outer circle with the root dharani om-matri-muye-sale-du and the wish that the charm work effectively. The outer design is that of an Honorific Umbrella, similar to that of the Buddhists. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 17.0 × 22.4 cm.
At the center of this Twin Fishes or Golden Fish (Tib: ser-nya) charm is a circular enclosure with an inscription invoking the Mind Sky and a wish that it bestow clarity and protection. From this there emerges a four-petaled lotus enclosed by a circle bearing benedictory phrases and the names of the directions and attributes relating to the mental planes. The whole is contained by an outer circle which has the root dharani om-matri-muye-sale-du and which is enveloped by the Twin Fishes and the symbolic representation of water. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 16.0 × 24.0 cm.
A diagrammatic representation of our universe according to Buddhist traditions. It is shown as a “psychocosmogram,” an expression of the integrated microcosm and macrocosm, the “inner” and “outer” worlds. Within a central square is the seed syllable *hum* (the potent “voidness” of the Vajrayana), which is Mount Meru (Tib: *Ri-rab*) of ancient Indian mythology, Mount Kailash in Western Tibet physically, and the “central subtle nerve” (Skt: *sushumna-nadi*) of the inner yoga body. Four staged square structures enclose the central “reality.” At the directions are the great “continents” or “worlds”:

1. Circular: the continent of the West, red in color, rich in cattle and inhabited by powerful beings who are particularly fond of eating meat. The diameter of this continent is 8000 miles. It is called *Godhanya* in Sanskrit (Tib: *ba-lang-cho*).
2. Square: the continent of the North, green in color, with many trees and inhabited by beings who have square faces “like horses” and are very fierce and noisy. The diameter of this continent is 10,000 miles. It is called *Uttara-kuru* in Sanskrit (Tib: *tra-mi-nyen*).
3. Crescent: the continent of the East, white in color, peaceful, and inhabited by beings who have crescent-shaped faces and many virtues. The diameter of this continent is 9000 miles. It is called *Videha* in Sanskrit (Tib: *hu-pag*).
4. Irregular: the continent of the South, blue in color, “shaped like the shoulder blade of a sheep.” The inhabitants have faces of the same shape as the continent, and are quite rich, but exhibit vices as well as virtues. The diameter of this continent is 7000 miles. It is called *Jambu-dvipa* in Sanskrit (Tib: *dzambu-ling*), and is this world of Earth, inhabited by human beings.

In our example the above layout has been transposed through 90 degrees in a clockwise direction, to enable the East (Crescent) to be at the base, a traditional practice when dealing with mandalas, especially of initiation. Each of the continents has two satellite continents similar in shape but half their size, seen at either side of the parent continents. The whole diagram is contained by two concentric circles. The continents rest in the Great Ocean. Mount Meru is 84,000 miles high, reaching to the heavens. At points on the square structures are the names of the sun, moon, Jewel Umbrella, Victory Banner, Wish-Granting Tree, Auspicious Jewels, goddesses and emblems. Such a mandala of the universe would be used for the ceremony of “offering the universe,” for meditation or as a charm. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 30.0 x 30.8 cm.

**Note:** In the *Goladipika* of Parameshvara, a Hindu astronomical treatise of the early fifteenth century, there are the following interesting additional details concerning Mount Meru: “Meru has two extremities. One projects beyond the center of the land and the other beyond the center of the waters. These two extremities are occupied by the gods and demons, respectively. Divine beings say, ‘We are at the top and the demons are at the bottom,’ and the demons say, ‘We are at the top and the gods are at the bottom’” (verses 23 & 28), and “Above Meru is the region of the Creator, Brahma” (verse 76).
71. GREAT MANDALA OF THE UNIVERSE

A psychocosmogram of the universe, conceived of in a similar way to the preceding example, but with the particular difference that the eastern continent is shown at the top of the diagram, and the whole is much more elaborate and decorative in style. According to certain traditions Mount Meru is separated from the four continents by seven concentric oceans of milk, curds, butter, blood, wine, fresh water and salt water, and also by seven ranges of mountains. These are represented in the diagram. Esoteric traditions relate the seven oceans to the seven constituents of the physical body as understood by Indian medical science (flesh, blood, skin, bone, marrow, semen and rasa-essence). The seven ranges of mountains are symbols of the inner psychic centers (chakra). The four Mystic Offerings of the Mountain of Jewels (Tib: rinpoche-i-riwu), the Self-Created Crops (Tib: marmo-pi-lothog), the Wish-Granting Cow (Tib: dojo-i-ba) and the Wish-Granting Tree (Tib: pagsam-kyi-shing) are presented to Mount Meru by the continents of the East, North, West and South, respectively. Woodblock from Khams, E. Tibet. 18.5 × 18.5 cm.

72. MANDALA OF THE UNIVERSE

A psychocosmogram of the universe, showing the eastern continent at the bottom of the diagram, and with a slightly different arrangement of mountains and oceans than in example 71. Mount Meru itself is perfectly symmetrical and is composed entirely of treasure and jewels. The eastern face is of silver, the northern of gold, the western of ruby, and the southern of a kind of cat’s-eye stone.

In the second inscribed square from the central structure are the names of the eight Goddesses of Offerings, Lasya, Mala, Gita, Nitya, Pushpa, Dhupa, Dipa and Gandha, who honor with mirror, rosary, musical instrument, dance, flowers, incense, lamp and perfume, respectively. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 19.1 × 19.8 cm.
73. SIMPLE MANDALA OF THE UNIVERSE

A psychocosmogram of the universe, greatly simplified from our previous examples and showing Mount Meru with a circular form emanating into a square. The whole is enclosed by an outer circle representing an iron wall, said to be approximately 300 miles in height and 3,600,000 miles in total circumference. It encloses the light of the sun, moon and stars. On the other side of the wall is absolute darkness for many millions of miles until other universes are reached. According to Buddhist cosmology this universe is but one of many, of which 1000 form a small chiliocosm, 1000 small chiliocosms form a medium chiliocosm and 1000 medium chiliocosms make one great chiliocosm, of which there are many. Our example shows the syllable na repeated around Mount Meru. These syllables signify steadiness, and it seems likely that they were added to the design for using it as a charm, bestowing "steadiness like that of Mount Meru."

Woodblock from Darjeeling, N.E. India. 13.8 x 14.3 cm.

74. CROSSED-SCEPTER WHEEL

A charm consisting of a central crossed-scepter (visvavajra) motif within an eight-petaled lotus which bears unclear inscriptions in Tibetan. The whole is enclosed by a circle of fire, moving in a clockwise direction. In the center is a space for inserting seed syllables by which the potency and use of this protective charm may be varied according to the requirement. The crossed scepters are the symbol of the Vajrayana. Buddhist tradition tells us that the cosmic waters of this universe are supported by a "fabric of voidness like crossed scepters."

Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 14.0 x 14.0 cm.
75. SCEPTER CHARM

An unusual Buddhist scepter (vajra) charm bearing an enclosed spell and mantras: om-hri-kshom... protect such a person... wushti-kuru-ye-swaha, also repeated inverted. At the two ends of the scepter are the seed syllables om-ah-hum, hri-hri-hri and kshom-kshom-kshom. From a finer analysis of the rather unclear inscription it appears that the charm could specifically indicate protection of a woman against the spirit of her still-born male child, or perhaps protection "through the Intermediate State" (bardo). Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 5.6 x 11.8 cm.

76. RIBBONED SCEPTER CHARM

An unusual Buddhist charm in the form of a central ribboned scepter inscribed with hybrid Sanskrit letters, apparently of seed syllables. From it emanates a four-petaled lotus, also bearing similar obscure seed syllables, neither Tibetan nor in any clear Indian script. The whole is enclosed by two concentric circles, the inner one of which contains the Tibetan letters of the alphabet (ali-kali) and an empowerment of light. The outer circle contains the "Buddhist creed" (see example 56), invocations and seed syllables, most of which are too unclear to read fully. Thus the exact nature of this charm cannot be determined, though it is undoubtedly of a protective type, probably based on an old "discovered treasure-text" (Tib: terma). Woodblock from Shungser monastery, Lhori, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 19.5 x 19.7 cm.
77. SIMPLE CROSSED-SCEPTER CHARM

A clear simple design of crossed scepters (*visva-vajra*) with a central enclosed space for inserting seed syllables specific for any required charm. The whole would then be folded in four or eight, tied with different colored threads, and sewn inside a pouch to be worn around the neck. Woodblock from Darjeeling, N.E. India. 11.2 × 11.2 cm.

78. CROSSED-SCEPTER HUM CHARM

An interesting design of a central crossed-scepter (*visva-vajra*) motif enclosing a lotus of fifteen petals and containing the potent seed syllable *hum*.

The whole is set within three squares placed in the middle of a large square outer frame and completely surrounded by 23 lines of Tibetan text, most of which consists of scriptural extracts. It is an “empowering” charm particularly suited for the “acquisition of wisdom.” Woodblock from Sandul monastery, outer Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 16.8 × 18.0 cm.
CROSSED-SCEPTER PILGRIMAGE CHARM

An unusual pilgrimage charm, also used as a prayer flag, consisting of a central crossed-scepter (*visva-vajra*) motif surrounded at the junctions by four double-square enclosures containing lettering in eight lines. The whole is further enclosed within an outer double-square structure with partial crossed scepters at the corners and cardinal directions. Within the four enclosures are dhāranis of a Sanskrit origin, unclear and possibly corrupt. However, each begins with the formula *om-vajra* and ends with *ye swaha*. This charm was presented after a pilgrimage (complete circumambulation) around the Holy Crystal Mountain of Dolpo Shey in N.W. Nepal. It was also to be seen printed as prayer flags in the main monastery. The Crystal Mountain of Dolpo is an important place of pilgrimage, with many merits to be "earned" by traveling around it. In structure it has many of the features of the famous Mount Kailash (or Mount Meru), such as four rivers in the cardinal-point directions, two lakes and various unusual signs. Woodblock from Sumdo monastery, Shey, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 22.2 x 22.2 cm.
80. SUN AND MOON CHARM

An unusual charm depicting the sun and moon (Tib: nyi-da) inscribed thrice each, with the seed syllables hum-kshu-om on the moon and om-kshu-hum, reversed, on the sun. In both Indian and Tibetan yoga terminology the symbols of the sun and moon represent the right and left “subtle nerves” (ida and pingala nadis), which are respectively the channels through which the consonants (kali) and the vowels (ali) are manifested and activated as mantra. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 6.2 x 6.5 cm.

81. PROTECTIVE CHARM

An unusual charm in the form of three semicircular structures, one within the other, an invocation in the central one and 16 repeated seed syllables om-ah-hum surrounding and enclosing it in two distinct layers. This is a “fencing-in” (Tib: ra-pur) charm, seemingly to counteract “worms of the brain,” possibly also for protecting livestock. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 7.8 x 10.0 cm.
82. PROTECTIVE CHARM

An unusual charm in the form of an outer oblong with affixed breast-shaped ends, the oblong enclosing a smaller replica of the whole. At the corners of the outer structure and the ends of the inner one are the seed syllables *om-hri-kshom* and *kshom-hri-om*, for a total of ten invocations. At the base is a Tibetan inscription indicating the use for the "honorific umbilical cord," possibly to be worn as a charm by a newborn baby. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 6.8 x 14.3 cm.

83. PROTECTIVE CHARM

An unusual charm consisting of a central triple oblong structure with wider emanations at either end. On the oblongs the seed syllables *kshi-hri-om* are repeated four times and *om-hri-kshi* twice. At either end is an inscription including the above seed syllables and indicating protection against children's diseases and the complications of childbirth. At the base is a brief Tibetan note which calls the whole charm "the mystic fire-water and air." Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 8.6 x 13.0 cm.

84. BIRTH CHARM

A charm in the form of three stacked extended oblongs, rounded at the ends, with upper and lower emanative projections resembling lotuses. All the enclosures contain seed syllables (*om-hri*) an an invocation requesting life (*Tib: stog*), repeated several times in different ways. At the base is a brief Tibetan inscription "son life," probably indicating that the charm is for the birth of a son. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 7.1 x 14.2 cm.
| 82 | | 83 | | 84 |
85. MALE SKY PROTECTOR

An exaggerated representation of a snarling dog with a circular enclosure on its belly containing an eight-petaled lotus and a central mystic trigram (Tib: parkhu) of three unbroken lines, the symbol of the aggregate “heaven” (khen). The whole design represents a formal recognition of the Sky Father, Khenpa, and is used to ask for his protection, particularly for a household. Around the outside of the charm is an invocation of the sky deities, who are considered to be male and ruled by Old Father Khenpa. The petals of the lotus and the spaces in between contain dharanis, largely corrupt. Woodblock from Takshindu monastery, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 14.0 × 15.8 cm.

86. FEMALE EARTH PROTECTOR

A representation, similar to the preceding, except that the trigram has three broken lines, the symbol of the aggregate “earth” (khon). Above the animal head is a black form. The whole design represents a formal recognition of the Earth Mother, Khonma, and is used to ask for her protection, in particular for a household. Around the outside of the charm is an invocation of the earth deities, considered to be female and ruled by Old Mother Khonma. The petals of the lotus and the spaces in between contain dharanis, largely corrupt. Woodblock from Takshindu monastery, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 13.6 × 16.4 cm.

NOTE: These two charms are meant to be printed once a year for use during the ceremonies of Nam-go and Sa-go, the closing of the doors of sky and earth, respectively. During the rites the charms are affixed over the door of the house, along with representations of the occupants (see the following examples, 87 to 94), and a lama then invokes all the greater and lesser sky and earth entities and offers them food, drink and token valuables. Such a ceremony correctly undertaken is said to confer protection on the household for the year ahead. The prayers end with the admonition, “Let everything happen to this family according to their wishes; do not disturb them for the coming year, and please do what they ask.”
87. TWO BUDDHIST EFFIGIES

A pair of effigies depicting a man and woman wearing the traditional clothes of householders. The man holds an arrow in his right hand and wears a flat hat. Above him is a scepter motif, the symbol of masculinity. The woman holds a spindle in her left hand and wears an ornate head ornament. Above her is a lotus motif, the symbol of femininity. Each effigy is contained within an oblong structure with pointed ends, the whole forming what is known as a "ritual stake" (Tib: shing-ri). Such effigies are used as representations of actual people, as "ransom people," in rites of protection, especially of householders. It is also believed that images of people can be mistaken by malefic entities for actual beings. Thus the effigies act as ransoms, the householders themselves being freed from any calamities. See the note to the preceding examples. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 6.3 x 15.8 cm.

88. TWO BONPO EFFIGIES

A pair of effigies depicting a man and woman wearing the traditional clothes of Bonpo householders. The man holds an arrow in his left hand and wears a high Bonpo hat. The woman has a spindle on her belt, holds a shuttle in her left hand and wears a five-piece head ornament. Each figure is wholly contained within an oblong structure with an apex. Underneath their feet are lines with blank spaces for inserting the names of the people represented. In the Bonpo rites effigies are used very frequently, usually as ransom offerings for warding off the demons of sickness. When used as focal points during magical ceremonies they are termed linga. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 10.4 x 14.0 cm.
A pair of elaborate effigies of large size depicting a man and woman wearing the clothes of wealthy householders of the Khams province. The man wears moustache and beard in the Chinese style, holds a bow in his left hand and an arrow in his right. Stuck into his belt is a long sword, a hat is on his head and above him is a scepter motif, the symbol of masculinity. He stands on a tiger skin. The woman wears an elaborate apron and jewels, and holds a spindle full of wool in her left hand and a sickle in her right. She stands on a carpet and wears a fur-lined hat, and above her head is a lotus motif, the symbol of femininity. Both effigies are enclosed by an oblong structure pointed at the base to form a "ritual stake." There are elaborate abstract designs below the effigies, representing the sky and the earth for male and female, respectively. Woodblock from Rumtek monastery, Sikkim. 13.5 x 25.0 cm.
90. FIVE RITUAL STAKES

A series of five designs which together represent the household, occupants and wealth. They are used as “ransom” offerings to coerce the spirits of earth and heaven to accept these symbols in place of the real things. The arrow symbolizes the work of the man, the spindle that of the woman. Such effigies are used in particular during the ceremonies of Nam-go and Sa-go, in which they are affixed over the door of a house; often they are painted and made to look very attractive. Woodblock from Sandul monastery, outer Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 12.8 x 19.2 cm.

91. MALE AND FEMALE EFFIGIES

A pair of effigies representing householders wearing their best clothes and carrying implements symbolic of their work and duties. Above the man is a scepter and above the woman is a lotus. Two inscriptions alongside point to the “excellence of this fully developed male crop tender and female food preparer,” inviting their acceptance by the protective spirits. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 16.0 x 17.5 cm.
92. TWO "GREATER" EFFIGIES

An unusually elaborate pair of effigies depicting a wealthy Tibetan couple wearing their best clothes and holding attributes of their activity. Below are representations of a grand house, with cattle and animals outside. The whole represents a wealthy homestead, as is confirmed by the accompanying Tibetan inscription which offers the various spirits "this excellent residence in a good district with much wealth, complete with noble occupants" in return for protection and the guarantee of a good harvest. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 24.0 x 25.2 cm.

93. CATTLE AND HOUSE EFFIGIES

An interesting pair of effigies, one showing a small herd of cattle being guarded by a man and his dog, and the other showing the shrine of a household, with auspicious banners and trees. The inscription asks the spirits to accept "these noble items" in return for protection of the same. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 9.5 x 21.5 cm.
94. SEVEN NYINGMAPA RITUAL STAKES

A complete set of seven ritual effigy “stakes” as used by lamas of the Nyingmapa sect. They comprise a wrathful male face (pho-dong), a peaceful female face (mo-dong), a representation of Mount Meru and the continents (see examples 70 and 71), a male standing figure (pho-thong), a female standing figure (mo-thong), a spindle (phang-tra) and an arrow (da-tra). At the top of each “stake” is a triangular form enclosed by lotuses, containing a drawing of the auspicious fissures to be found on a human skull after death. Such ritual items of this particular style are predominant in the Nyingmapa and Bonpo forms of Tibetan shamanism. They are used as ransom offerings, to coerce, placate and delude all classes of spirits and demons. They are also used as “targets” in various magical rites of a shamanistic nature, for bringing about “black” or “white” spells. Drawing from Namgyal Institute, Gangtok, Sikkim. 15.5 × 20.0 cm.
95. EFFIGY OF THE DECEASED

Enclosed by a frame, the central kneeling figure on a six-petaled lotus has his arms raised in supplication, a canopy overhead and various offerings at the sides. Here is represented an effigy of a person recently deceased. It is to such an effigy that the death rites are directed during the course of a lengthy ceremony. See examples 97 to 102 for a full discussion. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 11.7 × 15.6 cm.

96. EFFIGY OF THE DECEASED

Enclosed by a frame, a central half-kneeling figure, seemingly a monk, is seen on a lotus, with his hands together in prayer and an elaborate canopy overhead. On a table at the right side of the figure are three offerings. Such an effigy is used during the lengthy Buddhist death rites, and is addressed and treated as the departed person until the completion of the rites, after which it is burnt. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E Nepal. 12.9 × 19.7 cm.
97. BONPO EFFIGY OF THE DECEASED

An extremely unusual Bonpo effigy depicting a person recently deceased. The figure sits on a five-petaled lotus, with knees drawn up and hands together in supplication. From the tips of the fingers there emerge a lamp and a triple jewel, to the left and right of the figure. Above is an elaborate canopy decorated with banners. Along the top, in Tibetan script, is the Bon dharani of the Nine Special Syllables, ah-aah-kar-sale-od-ah-yang-om-du, and at the sides a mantra: ah-kar-ah-darma-dadu-tri-su-nagpo-shi-shi-mal-mal (compare example 44). At 11 points on the body of the effigy are seed syllables: om (above the skull), ah (on the forehead), tha (at the throat), shri (at the left chest), kham (right hand), su (left hand), tri (at the navel), unclear (right lower leg), ram (at the sexual organ), du (left foot) and yam (right foot). These are the potent syllables for "closing all the rebirth doors," enabling the deceased to be freed from the need to be reborn in the various realms. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 9.5 x 15.5 cm.

98. BONPO EFFIGY OF THE DECEASED

Enclosed by an outer frame, the central figure is kneeling on a nine-petaled lotus, with both hands raised and holding a lamp. Above is an elaborate canopy with a flaming jewel on top and banners at each side. A mirror hangs behind the figure, decorated with ribbons. Along the bottom, in Tibetan, is the mantra ah-da-kar-ah-rama-dadu-tri-su-nagpo-shi-shi-ma-la-la-la-swaha (compare examples 44 and 97, both of which seem to be variations of a Sanskrit dharani invoking the "original sound matrix," adi-kara, and the dharmadhatu). At five points on the body of the effigy are complex seed syllables, unfortunately unclear: brum (at the throat), ni (at the chest), tri-ri (at the navel), tram-ram-dsa (at the sexual organ), and du-yang (at the feet). Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 9.8 x 14.0 cm.

NOTE: According to L. A. Waddell in his Buddhism of Tibet (p. 496), the practice of making effigies and name cards for the death rites was originally practiced only by the followers of the Bon religion, and that these rites "incurred the displeasure of St. Padmasambhava," but were adopted by the Buddhists.
Enclosed by an outer frame, the central effigy figure is kneeling on a seven-petaled lotus, with both hands raised, holding a flower and mirror. Above is an elaborate jewel-apexed canopy, and at either side are elixir jars and banners. At six points on the body of the effigy are seed syllables for “closing the rebirth doors into the Six Realms”: ah (on the forehead), wu (at the throat), nri (at the heart), tri (at the navel), pre (at the sexual organ) and du (at the feet). Above is a Tibetan “name-card” inscription which states that the effigy represents a particular person (name to be inserted) recently deceased, who takes refuge in the Buddha, recognizes his own faults and the wrongful actions of his lifetime, and asks to be released from the “cycle of rebirths” and to be led to the way of Enlightenment.

Woodblock from Dechen Lhabran monastery, Namdo, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 10.0 × 15.5 cm.
Enclosed by an outer frame, the central half-kneeling figure faces to the left, on a five-petaled lotus, with both hands raised to hold a flower. Above is a canopy with elaborate banners at either side. An altar behind the figure is laden with elephant tusks, an offering cake, mirror, lamp, staff and conch-shell trumpet. At either side of the lotus-base are the King’s Earring and Queen’s Earring, two of the seven auspicious Royal Badges.

A separate frame encloses the name-card inscription, in Tibetan, which states that the deceased, whose name is to be inserted, has left the world for the beyond, that he makes worship to the Buddhas, confesses all wrongful deeds, and begs to be saved from a low rebirth. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 10.2 × 23.3 cm.

Enclosed by an outer frame, the central half-kneeling effigy figure faces to his right, on a five-petaled lotus, with both hands raised to hold a flower. The figure is lavishly dressed and wears ornate jewelry; there is a ribbed canopy with banniers and jewels overhead. On an altar table are a mirror, lamp, offering cake and arrow standard. Below, to the front of the figure, are a pair of elephant’s tusks, three pearls and ingots. At either side, at the level of the head, are the King’s Earring, relic gem, Queen’s Earring and auspicious jewelry. These are all attributes of royalty, and figure among the Royal Badges, Ravishing Gems and Auspicious Emblems of early Buddhism. At six points on the body of the effigy are seed syllables “for closing the rebirth doors,” here correctly given; ah (on the forehead), su (at the throat), mri (at the heart), tri (at the navel), pre (at the sexual organ) and du (at the feet). These are believed to effectively prevent rebirth in the Six Realms. The various offerings symbolize the senses and attributes of the person. Thus, as is declared in the accompanying rites:

The canopy is your palace, your protection and shrine,
The name card is the symbol of the body,
The seed syllables are your speech,
The jewelry is your mind,
The arrow standard is your life force,
The mirror is your gaze,
The silk banners are the five senses,
The gems the essence of your being,
The scented garments your good deeds.

So feel at ease in this abode!

A separate frame encloses the name-card inscription, in Tibetan, which has a place left for inserting the name of the deceased, and declares that the person takes refuge and asks for guidance through the Intermediate State (Tib: bardo), so as not to be reborn into the “cycle of existence.” Woodblock from Jumbesi, N.E. Nepal. 12.0 × 26.5 cm.

NOTE: The effigy and name card are most important in the Bonpo and Buddhist Lamaistic death rites. A figure is assembled, dressed in the clothes of the deceased person, and the printed effigy and name card inserted as the face. Then food offerings are made to the six Buddhas of the Six Realms of existence, and ransoms are prepared in the form of offering cakes (torma). The deceased is then “called into the name card” and from then onwards the effigy is addressed as the person, generally for the full 49 days of the death rites, during which the Bardo Thodol (Book of the Dead) is recited for the guidance of the spirit. During this period the effigy is presented with a portion of every meal. Finally the name card and figurative representation is burned in an offering lamp. According to the color of the flame it is determined in which realm the spirit has finally found a place. Lastly the ashes of the paper are collected together and made into miniature stupas by being mixed with clay. One is kept on the household altar and the others are taken to a high pass or pilgrimage place, where they are left under rocks. The clothes are given to the lamas.
103. BUDDHIST STUPA CHARM

An interesting charm depicting a Buddhist stupa (Tib: chorten) inscribed with the seed syllables kam, ah and hum. An inscription in Tibetan indicates that it is to be used in connection with the death rites, probably for the ceremonies which take place one year after the reading of the Bardo Thodol (see preceding note). A place is left for inserting the name of a person. The mantras are: (1) om-pitri-li-mi-li-hala-ya-ya-swaha, (2) om-pitri-yi-li-hala-ya-ya-swaha and (3) raks-kuru-bhirum. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 11.5 x 13.3 cm.

104. BONPO STUPA CHARM

An unusual Bonpo charm in the form of four stupas at the four cardinal directions. At the base of each is the seed syllable dsa, said to be “the beginning of the ungrown, unborn.” The stupas enclose a square containing a ten-petaled lotus inscribed with the syllable ma repeated, within which is a five-petaled lotus also with the syllable ma repeated, and within that a four-petaled lotus bearing the seed syllables ah-ya-ma-li and enclosing a two-sided triangular structure with the syllables ah and ma. Possibly for use in connection with the death rites. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 20.3 x 22.5 cm.
Within a double aureole-shaped enclosure is a fine representation of a Buddhist stupa, the symbol of the yoga body and the Path of Liberation. At the center is the figure of a lama, seated in an easy posture and giving blessings. Above are 13 ascending tiers, representing levels of consciousness according to the Buddhist cosmology. At the top is the nyi-da symbol of the sun, moon and flame. At the sides are four circles containing the seed syllables ah and hri, with the dharanis of Bodhisattvas alongside. The main body of the stupa is comprised of nine platforms and two lotus tiers. Around the central structure are the seed syllables and dharanis: (1) om-ah-hum, (2) om-bhrum-swaha, (3) om-amrita-yurda-de-swaha, (4) om-namasti-ya-dhuvika-ni and (5) Sarva-tathagata-hrdaya-garbha-dswala-dswala-dharma-dhatu-garbha-sambhadama, and underneath are further dharanis on the various platforms: (6) ma-ah-yu, (7) sishwa-dhaya-ma-ma-sarva-pa-bam, (8) parva-tathagata-sama-natho-sani-sawimale-wishuddhe-hum-hum-hum-hum, (9) am-bam-sam-dsam-swaha, (10) om-sarva-tathagata-ushnisha-dhatu-mudrani-swaha and (11) om-vajra-ahyukhe-swaha, followed by the “Buddhist creed.” Many of the dharanis seem to be a hybrid form of Sanskrit of the early periods. The remainder of the inscription is in Tibetan and consists of textual extracts used for rites of purification. Such a stupa is meant to be printed and pasted on the wall of a monk’s meditation room. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 21.2 × 38.6 cm.
A charm showing a figure of the wealth deity Jambhala, holding a skull bowl and a jewel-vomiting mongoose, and standing on an unidentifiable creature upon a lotus of seven petals. He wears elaborate ornaments and robes, his protruding belly bearing a circular disc with an invocation to Jambhala and his mantras: (1) \textit{om-dsa-bha-la-dsa-le-tra-ye-swaha} and (2) \textit{om-dsambha-la-dsa-le-tre-ya-swaha}. To the front of the lotus is a container filled with jewels. The sun and moon are to be seen in the sky behind the aureole of the deity. The wealth god Jambhala is an emanation of the dhyani-Buddha Ratnasambhava ("jewel-born"), and is worshipped throughout Tibet and Nepal. Wealth charms of this kind are generally pasted on the wall of a shrine room, with the accompanying ceremonials. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 14.0 × 19.1 cm.
107. CHARM AGAINST ANIMALS AND THIEVES

The central representation of a snarling dog is encircled by syllables and invocations, with four stupas at the cardinal directions, each bearing the seed syllable hri. The inscription tells us that this is a charm against “thieves, brigands and beasts”; part of the spell is for “tying up the mouths of dangerous animals.” The mantras: (1) om-da-ra-da-ma-ra-du, (2) om-tarani-tarani-mahatarni, (3) ha-du-ru-du-ru-ha-pa and (4) raksa-raksa. Woodblock from Lang monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 17.2 x 18.0 cm.

108. CHARM AGAINST WILD ANIMALS

A representation of a chained dog with invocations in six lines on the body, seed syllables at various points and an abbreviated version of the “Buddhist creed” above. It is a charm against all wild animals and includes a particular spell against the bite of dogs. The mantras: (1) om-ah-raksa-raksa, (2) hum-namo-bhagavate-su-la-ma-li-khadha-phu-pharkhya-dhani-hum-phat-ma-ma, (3) raksa-raksa-hum-maha-rosana-sarva, (4) ha-na-ta-ka-pa-ta-hum-phat-kuku-ratsa-kha-tham-kuku-ratsa-kuku-ratsa-ha-la-la-swaha. The syllables om-ah-hum are inscribed on the head, neck and chest of the dog. The invocation of the “Buddhist creed” (ye-dharma-hetu . . .) begins under the jaw of the animal and ends at the tail. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 11.3 x 16.3 cm.
109. CHARM AGAINST DOG BITE

A charm against dog bite consisting of a representation of a barking dog encircled by syllables and invocations, with a crossed-scepter (visva-vajra) motif close to the open mouth, the body enclosing two lines of a spell against dog bite. The mantras: (1) thum-thum and (2) eka-ya-ma-sarva . . . thum. The encircling invocations include the "Buddhist creed." Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 11.8 x 19.0 cm.

110. CHARM AGAINST DOG BITE

A charm against dog bite consisting of a representation of a barking dog encircled by invocations, the "Buddhist creed" and syllables, a crossed-scepter motif close to the open mouth. The mantras are the same as in the preceding example, from which this charm may once have been copied. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 10.0 x 15.8 cm.
III. ANIMAL CHARM

A charm used to protect livestock against attacks from other animals. It would be blessed by a lama and then sewn into a pouch and hung around the neck of a sheep, goat or cow. It seems to represent a wild hog, but the inscription is unclear. Woodblock from Hrap monastery, Namdo, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 4.0 × 7.2 cm.

112. ANIMAL CHARM

A protective charm for livestock, very similar to the preceding example. It seems to represent a wild hog. The inscription reads, “Protect against the black one, swaha, raksa-raksa.” Woodblock from E. Nepal. 3.9 × 6.0 cm.

113. BONPO CIRCULAR ANIMAL CHARM

A protective charm for use on livestock, consisting of an inner representation of a wild boar and the seed syllable tsa (the syllable with which Buddha is said to protect animals). A circle encloses the center with the dharani of Gautama Buddha, om-muni-muni-mahamuni-sakya-muni-ye-swaha, and an outer lotus of 12 petals is inscribed with the names of animals, birds and fish. The whole is enclosed by a representation of the element water. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 9.4 × 9.5 cm.

114. RUNNING-BOAR ANIMAL CHARM

A protective charm for use on livestock, consisting of a running boar with the seed syllables om, ah and hum at the head, throat and legs. The body contains a large circular disc with a central protective invocation, encircled by a dharani beginning om-ah-hum-ye-vajra and ending phat-phat, enclosed by a four-petaled lotus and two outer circles containing invocations, syllables and the “Buddhist creed” and ending with raksa-raksa. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 15.3 × 19.8 cm.
115. CIRCULAR EAGLE CHARM

A protective charm against eagles and birds of prey, generally used on livestock. It consists of an inner representation of an eagle and a syllable bud (meaning “dark air”). A circle encloses the center with the dharani of Gautama (as in example 113), and an outer lotus of 12 petals is inscribed with the names of animals, birds and fish. The whole is enclosed by a representation of the element fire, moving to the left. It is most interesting that this Bonpo charm should have a distinctly Buddhist dharani. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 9.4 × 9.4 cm.

116. CIRCULAR EAGLE CHARM

A Buddhist protective charm against eagles and birds of prey, generally used on livestock. It consists of an inner representation of a bird and the syllables bud and tha. A circle encloses the center with the dharani of Gautama and an unclear ending, om-muni-muni-mahamuni-sakya-muni-ye-svaharu-sa-sada-sama-dsa, and an outer lotus of 12 petals is inscribed with the names of animals, birds and fish. The whole is enclosed by a representation of the element fire, moving to the right. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 9.7 × 9.7 cm.

117. CIRCULAR ANIMAL CHARM

A protective charm, probably for use on livestock, consisting of a central unidentifiable animal surrounded by an outer circle with the dharani of Gautama Buddha and an unclear additional invocation. The whole is contained by a 12-petaled lotus inscribed with the names of animals, birds and fish, and the outermost circle representing the element water. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 12.7 × 12.9 cm.
118. CHARM AGAINST STILLBIRTH

An unusual Buddhist charm against stillbirth, women's diseases, and in particular all complications of childbirth. It consists of a jumping fish with its body inscribed with two lines of invocations and the dharanis (1) om-sarva-nagini-hum-dsa, (2) su-jini-hum-dsa and (3) sha-na-tri-mi-hum-dsa. It can either be used as a protective charm worn on the body, or eaten by the patient. Woodblock from Khams, E. Tibet. 6.8 x 6.8 cm.

119. CHARM AGAINST STILLBIRTH

A Buddhist charm against stillbirth and the complications of childbirth. It consists of a swimming fish inscribed with two lines of invocations and dharanis very similar to those in the preceding example: (1) om-sarva-nagini-hum-dsa, (2) sura-trini-hum-dsa and (3) lato-sha-na-tri-mi-hum-dsa. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 6.8 x 20.2 cm.

120. SICKNESS CHARM

A protective charm against various sicknesses of women. It consists of four fish with tails crossed over and enclosing six lines of invocations and dharanis of protection, notably om . . . kha-hi-kha-hi . . . raksa. It is to be worn around the neck, usually sewn into a small pouch. Woodblock from Namche, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 8.5 x 20.5 cm.
121. CHARM AGAINST STILLBIRTH

A Buddhist charm against stillbirth and women’s diseases, consisting of two fishes forming a circle and enclosing an invocation for the curing of sickness. The body of each fish is inscribed with the dharanis (1) om-sarva-nagi-hum-dsa, (2) nagi-hum-dsa, (3) su-tri-ni-hum-dsa and (4) sha-na-tri-ni-hum-dsa. An outer circle, enclosing the whole, is inscribed with the “Buddhist creed” and the dharani om-sutra-tishta-vajra-ye-swaha. Woodblock from Tumbo monastery, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 12.5 x 12.5 cm.

122. COMPLEX CHARM AGAINST STILLBIRTH

A Buddhist charm against stillbirth and women’s diseases, consisting of two fishes forming a circle by chasing each other’s tail, enclosing an invocation for curing the sickness. The body of each fish is inscribed with the same dharanis as in the preceding example. An outer circle enclosing the fishes is inscribed with the “Buddhist creed” and the dharanis (1) om-sutra-tishta-vajra-ye-swaha, (2) om-lam-pa-lam-hum-lam and (3) sarva-satwha-la-na-na... raksa-swaha. The whole is contained within an oblong frame with the seed syllables hum, bam, dsa and ho at the corners, raksa enclosed at the top center, na-na (the seed of “steadiness”; see example 73) at the sides repeated four times, and at the top, in two lines, the dharani om-lam-ah-yam / om-lam-ah / hum-lam / hum-lam. Along the bottom is an invocation for the curing of and protection from various diseases, together with a representation of the “three jewels” with ribbons. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 15.4 x 18.5 cm.
123. BUDDHIST VICTORIOUS SWORD PROTECTION

An unusual Buddhist charm depicting a flaming Sword of Victory with a scepter-hilt, the blade with two lines of invocations and the dharanis (1) om-padmashiva-ri-hum-phat, (2) ha-na-ha-na-vajra-na-om-thum-thum and (3) raksa-raksa-swaha. It is the protection of the “victorious mantra-sword” (khadga), said to give victory in battle and to protect against wounding. Woodblock from E. Tibet. 3.2 x 17.8 cm.

124. BONPO VICTORIOUS SWORD PROTECTION

A fine Bonpo charm depicting a flaming Sword of Victory, the blade with two lines of complex seed syllables and dharanis. Presumably used for a similar protection as the preceding example. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 2.8 x 16.5 cm.

125. PROTECTION OF 16 WEAPONS

A Buddhist protective charm against injury and sickness, consisting of a central circle with the seed syllable dsa repeated four times, encircled outside by a dharani and representations of 16 weapons, most of which are associated with the Protector Mahakala. The whole is contained by an oblong frame. At the base are two separate “edible” charms. Woodblock from E. Tibet. 6.3 x 9.0 cm.

126. LIFE-HAND PROTECTION

127. CHARM AGAINST MADNESS

An unusual Buddhist charm against madness and psychic possession. It consists of a smiling bull-headed creature, with eyes turned to its right, seven snakes as hair, and two human heads above its own, the first terror-stricken, the second peaceful and with a ribbon flowing from it. Both hands are raised to the level of the chest and hold a ritual knife (Tib: phurba) with flaming blade, which pierces a triangular form at the level of the navel. The lower part of the body is coiled like a serpent. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 12.0 × 20.5 cm.

128. CHARM AGAINST A DEMON

An unusual Buddhist charm against a demon of “transported sicknesses,” probably those carried by insects. It consists of a fat winged creature with a triple-crowned human head and a coiled pointed tail. The disc-like body contains an incantation for “binding” the sickness, and the dharani om-mu-na-dsu-ku-gada-hum, and ends with raksa-raksa after the spell. The triple crown of the winged creature contains the seed syllables hri-na (twice) and hum. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 8.2 × 9.6 cm.
129. SCORPION CHARM AGAINST DEMONS

A Buddhist charm against injuries and sicknesses caused by four kinds of demons. It consists of a representation of a one-eyed scorpion with a flaming mouth and four affixed heads representing the demons controlled by the charm. At the center of the body of the scorpion is the seed syllable hum, and at the extremities the syllables dsa, hum, bam and ho. Four lines of Tibetan script consist of a protective incantation and the dharanis (1) ah-ya-ma-du-rur-chasha-na-zhamaya-hum, (2) om-ah-hum-artsig-nirtsig-namo-bhagawate-hum-hum-phat and (3) rakṣa. Woodblock from E. Nepal. 13.8 × 18.3 cm.

130. SCORPION CHARM AGAINST DEMONS

In specific purpose, structure and content this charm is very similar to the preceding example, but with an additional incantation over the head of the scorpion. The demons to be protected against are shown as a male head (wearing a hat), a female head, a snake’s head and an animal’s head, respectively representing the types known as gyalpo (King Demon), drimo (a female dragon who injures women), lu (a naga) and sadag (earth demon). Woodblock from Gangtok, Sikkim. 13.5 × 18.8 cm.
A Buddhist scorpion charm against various kinds of demons. It consists of a great black three-eyed flaming scorpion, with additional eyes at the two pincers and sting. The mouth contains the formula tri-dsa-du / sa-na-ga-phu, the head the dharanis (1) ah-ya-ma-du-rur-chasha-na-zhamaya-hum and (2) om-ah-hum-artsig-nirtsig-namo-bhagwate-hum-hum-phat-phat. At the center and main extremities are the seed syllables hum, dsa, hum, bam and ho. The Tibetan incantation mentions the types of demons to be protected against and at the six legs, two pincers and sting is an inscription in Tibetan declaring that “the demons will roar.” Woodblock from Thangboche monastery, N.E. Nepal. 18.5 × 24.7 cm.
A scorpion charm reputedly of a type revealed to the great Nyingmapa teacher Padmasambhava and later rediscovered as a “treasury teaching” (terma). It consists of a large one-eyed scorpion with additional eyes at the two pincers and sting, and with mouth flaming. The body contains a circular disc (khorlo) surrounded by flames moving to the right, enclosing five concentric circles of protective invocations and an eight-petaled lotus bearing the split dharani om-artsig, nirjag, namo, bhaga, wate, ah, hum-hum, phat. The outermost circle contains the “Buddhist creed” (om-ye-dharma-hetu...), the next a dharani which begins om-shri-maha-kroda, and ends samaya-hum-phat. The first circle within the lotus contains the formula om-artsig-nirjag-namo-bhagawate-ab-hum-hum-phat repeated three times. The innermost circle contains the dharanis (1) om-vajra-maha-gurum-sarva-siddhi-hum and (2) om-ab-hum-vajra-guru-padma-thada-ghreda-nula-deva-kini-sarva-siddhi-phala-hum. A seed syllable is generally inserted in the central blank space, according to the exact requirement. Woodblock from Thangboche monastery, N.E. Nepal. 21.6 x 37.0 cm.

NOTE: This type of protective scorpion charm is generally known as guru-trak (a name of the teacher Padmasambhava in his wrathful aspect as Bhairava). In The Life and Teachings of Tibet’s Great Guru Padmasambhava, edited by W. Y. Evans-Wentz (Oxford), pp. 181-182, there is a relevant incident through which Padmasambhava is said to have received the scorpion powers:

After completing other missions in the valley of Nepal, and in Kosala, Padma went to the cave of Phullahari where Vajrapani appeared to him and foretold how Padma would attain a certain siddhi (power) in the great cemetery near Rajgir. Padma, upon reaching the cemetery, beheld an enormous scorpion having nine heads and eighteen horns and three eyes on each head. Padma made obeisance to the scorpion, and it requested him to come on the morrow for the siddhi. Accordingly Padma kept the appointment; and the scorpion took out from under a rock a triangular-shaped stone box containing manuscript texts of the phurba doctrine, and Padma at once understood the texts. And each of the eyes and each of the horns of the scorpion gave out one yana (teaching).
133. DEMON-BINDING CHARM

A popular Buddhist charm to “bind and inactivate” various demons of sickness, in particular the types of demon known as *gyalpo* and *drimo*, here shown chained together and containing a circular disc (*khorlo*) enclosing a four-petaled lotus, the whole inscribed with formulae of protection, incantations, the names of the demons to be bound and the dharanis (1) *raksa-na-ra-yad*, (2) *na-na-raksa* and others. At the four intersections of the lotus petals are the syllables *na-na* (“steadiness”), repeated. Woodblock from E. Nepal. 10.9 × 16.9 cm.

134. DEMON-BINDING CHARM

A Buddhist charm for binding demons of sickness, very similar to the preceding example, but with some variations of design and text. The seed syllables *tha-tha* are added at one lotus intersection. Woodblock from E. Nepal. 12.0 × 19.0 cm.
Within an oblong frame is a figurative representation of the *gyalpo* and *drimo* disease-bringing demons, shown chained together and bearing a four-petaled lotus disc inscribed with protective syllables and spells, particularly against the "black demons of all kinds." The main seed syllables are *kha-tham-na-na*, with several repetitions of the "binding" spell *raksa*. Most of the text is, however, corrupt. Woodblock, probably Sherpa, from E. Nepal. 16.0 × 21.5 cm.
A Buddhist protective charm for binding up the mamo ("fiendess") type of demon, who is believed to be the main cause of sickness and confusion among women. It depicts a mamo chained by the hands and feet, enclosing a disc containing a circular incantation, a four-petaled lotus inscribed with syllables (dsa, rani, dsa) and an inner double "wheel." The syllables and dharanis are (1) om-da-me-mo-ru-tra-go-no-da-vu-ra-tra-da-ru-da-mo and (2) dsa-ranari-du (or dsa-rani-du). Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 13.0 × 18.4 cm.

A love charm for "binding together" two people of the opposite sex. It depicts naked male and female figures joined at the heads by a scepter (vajra) motif, with the syllable hum alongside. The scepter motif is repeated at the ears, hands, feet and sexual organ of the male figure. The whole is enclosed by an oblong frame. Woodblock from Tibet. 6.2 × 17.5 cm.
An unusual Buddhist charm within an oblong frame, the outer top part of which contains a separate dharani of Avalokiteshwara (om-mani-padme-hum-hri). The charm consists of a central chained drimo type of disease-bringing demon, enclosed within a stylized frame and containing a large circular disc (khorlo) as a body, with an inner six-pointed star formed by two interlaced triangles, a circular enclosure and central seed syllable. The whole design within the disc is filled with seed syllables, some of which are unclear or corrupt. The syllables are: (1) ah-ya-ah, du-ra-tsa, sha-ra-ra sa, ma-ma-hum-hum, phat-phat-cho-cho, dogh-dogh (around the outer circle); (2) om-ah-hum, bhagawata-hum-hum-phat, ah-ka-sa-ma-ra-tsa, sha-da-ra sa-ma-na-ya-phat (around the triangles); (3) vajra-guru padma-siddhi-ha, raksa-raksa-ah, phat-ah-ah-hu (around the central circle). The seed syllable at the center, seemingly in an ancient Indian script, is unclear. Wood-block from N.E. Nepal. 16.2 × 22.2 cm.
139. DEMON-BINDING CHARM

Within a double circular enclosure a six-petaled lotus contains a chained animal-headed creature, with a circular disc as a body, the whole heavily inscribed with seed syllables, protective dharanis and the names of eight types of srimo and srimo (“cannibal demons,” who bring sickness) for which the charm is a protection. Crossed-scepter (visva-vajra) and lotus-flower motifs are to be seen outside the enclosure, to the right. These are the symbolic representations of the principles of masculinity and femininity, and would be cut out and enclosed in the center of the charm according to the sex of the charm holder. Around the outer edge are the names of demons, seed syllables and the dharanis (1) om-sarva-dsatri-hum-dsa, (2) na-tri-su-tri-ni-tri-hum-dsa, (3) sha-na-tri-ni-hum-dsa and (4) ka-tri-ni-da-na-tri-ni-kum-kum-dsa-dsa-dsa, and in the central disc a spiral inscription with other names of demons to be protected against, seed syllables and the dharanis (5) hum-bam-ho, (6) sha-ka-li-thum-ma-tsa-ma-ni-tri-dsa-hum-bam-ho and (7) da-na-na. On the head it the powerful Vajrakila dharani om-vajra-kili-kilaya, and other syllables and invocations are inscribed all over the body and limbs of the demon. Woodblock from Takshim monastery, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 18.9 x 21.2 cm.

140. BONPO DEMONESS-BINDING CHARM

A Bonpo protective charm against various types female demons and evil spirits (senmo and dremo), were believed to be the cause of particular sicknesses. consists of a central chained demoness with seed syllables affixed to various parts of her body (dsar, tri, sha, thum and hum), enclosed by two concent circles bearing dharanis, a four-petaled lotus with complex seed syllables, an outer circular dharani, and the names of demonesses to be controlled by the charm. The whole is contained by a ring of fire, moving to the left. The dharanis: (1) dsar-tra-ma-dsa, (2) so, (3) om-thu-na-nya-lo-thun, (4) ah-ma-ha-la-ram-dsa-thbho-thun, (5) ya-tra-ya-ya-hum / ya-ma-tra / ya-ma-ma-tri / ma-ya-tri / ma-ma-tri / ma-shung-ya-tri / ma-shung-ya-gyal, (6) thu-na-bhcho (repeated four times) (7) ta-na / tsa-hram / dsi-na / suaha (on the lotus-peta Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolj N.W. Nepal. 15.3 x 15.3 cm.
An unusual Buddhist charm for binding demons of sickness. It consists of a flaming triangular form within which are two triangles containing an invocation and a dharani. The innermost triangle encloses a chained male demon with a prominent penis and hair standing on end. Above the head is a ritual knife (phurbu). The body is inscribed with the seed syllables ni (at the center) and dsa, hum, bam and ho (at the four limbs), and is surrounded by cross motifs and the syllable dsa repeated many times. The inscription around the edge invokes the "messenger of the all-knowing yogi" and includes the names of various demons of sickness to be bound by the charm, ending with the dharani vajra-ada-kura-sha-ya-bsa-bsa-bsa-bsa. Woodblock from Tibet. 20.2 × 24.4 cm.
A powerful charm against the demons of all the most terrible diseases, especially smallpox. It consists of a central horrific chained male figure with potent seed syllables at the main parts of the body (dsa, hum, bam, ho, yam, ram), a circular incantation enclosing another at the chest and belly, and further syllables on the two thighs. The whole figure is completely encircled by invocations, syllables, names and spells, moving in a counterclockwise direction and duplicating the form of the figure. Each of the 21 crossed-stick motifs contains the syllables lam, ram and dsa (twice), entirely surrounding and containing the whole. Unfortunately most of the inscriptions are unreadable, though we have been able to recover the dharanis (1) om-kamaraksa-bo-ta-la, (2) ma-hum-hri-ye-vajra-sarva-tri-sri-chitta-tama-rayha-thum, (3) om...rakes...bam-bam, (4) om-ka-na-ya-yam and (5) hum-bam-ho. Woodblock from Tibet. 21.5 × 21.8 cm.
143. DEMON-BINDING CHARM

A powerful Buddhist charm for protecting against and counteracting 16 types of demons of the *srin* ("cannibal") variety, who are believed to be responsible for various terrible sicknesses such as syphilis, plague and lunacy. The charm consists of a central bound terrific figure inscribed at vital points with the seed syllables *dsa*, *hum*, *wi*, *ho*, *kam* and *phat*. There are further complex syllables across the chest, and the whole is surrounded by a triple egg-shaped form comprised of dharanis, the names of 16 demons and the seed syllable *dsa* repeated 25 times in alternation with a cross motif. At the four outer corners are crossed-stick motifs with the syllable *dsa* repeated four times in each. The dharanis comprising the first egg-shaped enclosure are (1) *sa-ti-ni-ti-ni-hum-dsa*, (2) *du-ti-ni-hum-dsa* (twice), (3) *du-na-ti-ni-hum-dsa*, (4) *ka-ti-ni-hum-dsa*, (5) *sri-dri-hum-dsa* and (6) *grum-grum-grum-dsa-dsa*. Woodblock from Tibet. 16.7 × 19.6 cm.

144. DEMON-BINDING CHARM

An unusual Buddhist charm for binding and controlling a demon of sickness. It consists of a chained horned animal-headed figure with a prominent penis, inscribed at various vital points with the seed syllables *dsa*, *hum*, *bam* and *ho*. Across the chest is the dharani *tri-rani-dsa*. The whole is encircled by six repeated crossed-stick motifs, each with the syllable *dsa* four times over. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 7.0 × 7.8 cm.
A Buddhist protective charm against potent diseasebringing demons. It consists of a chained male figure with long hair and an exaggerated and prominent penis. A disc on the body encloses a six-petaled lotus with syllables around and on the petals. Within is another disc bearing a clockwise spiral incantation consisting of dharanis, syllables and names of demons. A place is left for an additional attribute to be added. At the center are two concentric circles containing a triangular flaming form within which is a small bound human figure, hair on end. Unfortunately most of the script is very corrupt and almost illegible, apparently because this woodblock was copied from an older one by someone who could not read. The only clear syllables and dharanis are (1) dsa, hum, bam, ho (at the four limbs), (2) om-vajra-ki-li-ki-la-ya ... bam-hum-phat ... raksya-ya-raksya (around the center) and (3) ma-ma-raks ... ka-la-rupa ... yam-yam. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 23.8 × 36.4 cm.
An unusual charm for binding a demon of sickness. It consists of a triangular fire enclosure containing a chained female figure, a ritual knife (phurbu) over the head, the seed syllable nri in the middle of the chest and, below the syllable, the Tibetan word for "cut." Close to the figure four cross motifs contain the syllable dsa repeated four times. Outside the flame enclosure, to the left, is a crossed scepter (visva-vajra). To the right is a peculiar complex oblong and circular structure, possibly meant to represent a lotus or a temple sanctuary. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 19.0 × 24.6 cm.
147. HAYAGRIVA PROTECTIVE CHARM

A protective charm of the horse-headed Buddhist Protector Hayagriva (Tib: Tamdrin), shown here holding a noose and axe, with a crown of five human skulls surmounted by a horse's head. The body is formed of an oblong enclosure containing the dharani ab-sha-ra-ma-ta-ra-ti-pa-hum, underneath which is a triangular flaming knife form with seven lines of invocation: om-hri-padma-tri-ta-vajra-krota-hayagriva-hu-hu-hu-hum-phat (a dharani of Hayagriva), and a request for protection. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 10.5 × 22.7 cm.

148. PROTECTIVE KNIFE

A small charm depicting two ritual knives (phurbu) with the seed syllable ram repeated five times. Above are the syllables om, tha, ha, ra, la and kha. Probably it is a medicinal charm, possibly to be eaten. Woodblock from Hrap monastery, Namdo, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 1.9 × 7.2 cm.

149. PROTECTIVE SCEPTER

A Buddhist protective charm of a single scepter (vaj) enclosed by flames within an ovaloid frame, containing a square structure with the symbolic representation the element water. An inner square has various syllables associated with protection from the "earth demons." Woodblock from E. Nepal. 8.7 × 14.3 cm.

150. SMALL PROTECTIVE CHARM

A Buddhist protective charm of a fiery oblong with inner representation of the element water. At the center are syllables of protection from "earth demons," some of which are identical with those in the preceding example. Woodblock from Shungser monastery, Lhori, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 4.4 × 6.3 cm.

151. SYLLABIC CHARM

A small protective charm of three lines of syllables within an oblong form, with two columns of six small circles at each side. The spell is similar to that in the preceding examples. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 2.3 × 4.4 cm.
152. GREAT HAYAGRIVA KNIFE CHARM

A Buddhist charm of the Protector Hayagriva in the form of a ritual knife, shown piercing a prostrate corpse. Within the flaming downward-pointed enclosure is the upper torso of the wrathful Hayagriva, crowned with five human skulls surmounted by a horse’s head. He holds a flaming sword with flowing banners and a scepter axe with noose. Across his chest are five skulls and a demonic form (makara) is at his waist. Over his heart are the syllables tsa and hri. Four layers form the body of the ritual knife and enclose demon-binding invocations and the dharanis (1) om-ah-hum-vajra-guru-padma-siddhi-hum, (2) om-hri-vajra-kro-ta-hayagriva-hu-lu-hu-lu-hum-phat, (3) tsa-ma-ra-ya-hum-phat / khrom-khrom, (4) om-hri-padma-ti-kri-vajra-kro-ta-hri-wa-hu-lu-hu-lu-hum-phat, (5) khrom / ram-ram / pro / ram-ram / khrom, (6) om-ke-we-wa-ya-ghor-sa-raksa-raksa and (7) raksa-raksa-kur-ru-ye-swaha. At the tip of the knife is the seed syllable hri. with ram at either side. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 14.4 x 26.5 cm.
A Buddhist charm of the tutelary deity Hayagriva, wrathful in appearance, with horse’s head surmounting his human head, wearing flayed human and animal skins, holding a skeleton staff (chugpa) and making the tantric “menacing” gesture. His body is in the form of a circular disc or wheel (khorlo), at the center of which is the seed syllable hri, encircled by a dharani of Hayagriva and enclosed by a lotus of eight petals bearing syllables of a mantra. Three concentric outer circles contain syllables, names and invocations, in particular those of Hayagriva and Mahakala, and the alphabetic letters (ali-kali). The inner dharanis are (1) om-padma-kra-kri-ta-krota-svaha, (2) om-thu-ru-su-ru-li-ri-svaha, (3) om-khyu-da-ra-ra-li-si-svaha, (4) om-ma-mo-mi-ya-stambha-svaha, (5) om-padma-krota-ta-
 kri-ta-svaha (on the petals) and (6) om-tagra-wedum-
 baya-sratam-te-kuru-hum-hum-dsa-dsa-cho-cho. On the four limbs is the syllabic hri. Woodblock from Sandul monastery, outer Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 19.5 x 23.5 cm.
A Buddhist charm of the powerful tutelary deity Chandamaharosana, shown as a wrathful nine-headed figure with two terrific inner forms, four outer arms bearing sword, pike, noose, bow and arrow, and the lower body serpentine, emerging from a lake, a flaming aureole behind. The upper body encloses a circular disc or wheel containing a lotus with ten visible petals, various concentric circles containing invocations and syllables, and at the center a wrathful face with a dharani above. The four arms of the deity contain protective invocations and representations of eyes. The outermost circle contains the “Buddhist creed” and the alphabetic consonants, ending with the protective formula rakṣa. The lotus bears protective dharanis of Chandamaharosana, with the alphabetic vowels interspaced between the petals, and the seed syllable hri repeated thrice. The three inner circles and the center contain the dharanis (1) om-vajra-chandamaharosana-hum-phat (three times), (2) . . . kuru-ye-swaha (the beginning unclear), (3) ma-ma-kaya-wakatsi-tsa-taro-kasha-ku-ru-ku-ru-swaha, (4) om-vajra-chanda-mana-roga-ni-hum-phat and (5) om-vajra-kahi-rutra-tsa-lo-hum-phat, and statements of protection. Woodblock from Thangboche monastery, N.E. Nepal. 24.8 × 34.4 cm.
An unusual charm of a tantric Protector, wrathful, making threatening gestures, wearing a skull crown and flayed skins, a scepter motif behind. The body encloses a wheel of two concentric inscribed circles containing two eight-petaled lotuses with syllables inscribed and a central seed syllable in an ancient Indian script. Unfortunately all the text is unclear, nor are there any definitive criteria for absolute identification of the deity, though probably a form of Chandama­harosana is indicated. It is to be worn as a protective charm. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 18.5 × 22.8 cm.
156. DRAGON PROTECTOR

An unusual charm of a dragon Protector, two-armed, holding flaming sword and noose. Unfortunately the eight lines of Tibetan inscription are unclear, though basically they comprise protective dharanis and invocations. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 16.7 × 24.4 cm.
157. LION PROTECTOR

A Buddhist charm of a lion Protector, shown very wrathful, wearing an animal skin and holding a ritual knife and skull bowl. A circular disc enclosed by the body bears seven lines of seed syllables and an invocation of protection. The dharani, *ah-ka-sa-ma-ra-tsu-sha-da-ra-sa-ra-ra-ya-phat*, is specifically for the correction of malefic planetary influences (see examples 159 and 160). To be worn as a charm or pasted on the wall of a house. Woodblock from Yangser monastery, Nyisal, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 15.2 x 14.3 cm.

158. CHANDAMAHAROSANA CHARM

A Buddhist charm of Chandamaharosana as a tantric Protector, shown nine-headed, with two prominent arms holding bow, arrow and monster snake, with a sun-moon (*nyi-da*) motif above the right arm. The lower part of the body is serpentine, and 21 eyes surround the central disc, which contains a cross and central square, the whole enclosing seed syllables and the protective dhāranis (1) *om-ah-hum*, (2) *ya-ya-ya-ya-ya-ya-ya-ya-ya*, (3) *cha-ya-ya-chu-du-du* and (4) *raksa-raksa*, and various invocations, mostly obscure. Woodblock from Sikkim. 15.6 x 20.3 cm.
A popular Buddhist charm of a lion Protector, shown wrathful, trampling upon a prostrate human figure and holding a ritual knife and skull bowl, with trident staff to the side, flames behind, a lotus below. The body consists of a disc containing two concentric circles inscribed with the names of demons to be protected against, and an inner enclosure of 64 small squares, within each of which are syllables of the dharani ah-ka-sa-ma-ra-isa-sha-da-ra-sa-ma-ra-ya-phat, repeated four times, and the additional ending ma-ma-dun-dun-sum-bha-ya-nana. The charm is for counteracting malefic planetary influences and for controlling demons of sickness. Woodblock from Sandul monastery, outer Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 23.3 × 34.4 cm.
A Buddhist charm of a lion Protector, shown wrathful, trampling upon a prostrate human figure, holding high a ritual knife and skull bowl, with body garlanded with heads and wearing an animal skin. Flames are behind, a lotus below. The body contains a disc around the outer rim of which are inscribed the letters of the Tibetan alphabet, the “Buddhist creed” and the names of demons to be protected against. An inner enclosure comprises 196 squares, made up of syllables of the dharani ah-ko-so-ma-ra-tso-sha-da-ra-so-ma-ra-yo-phat, repeated in sequences. The charm is for countering malefic planetary influences. The syllable hum is repeated on the four limbs. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 20.7 × 27.8 cm.
An important Buddhist charm of an auspicious elephant, the ancient symbol of universal sovereignty, once associated with the Hindu deity Indra. The body contains a wheel around the circumference of which are eight flaming triple gems enclosing a scroll circle, a scepter chain, two concentric circles, two lotuses of eight petals and a central seed syllable hri. On all the enclosures are protective invocations, syllables and dharanis, all of which are unclear. Woodblock from Tibet. 26.3 × 31.6 cm.
A Bonpo charm of the great mythical bird Garuda (Tib: *khyung*), a powerful protector of religious doctrines and a purifier of poisons and diseases such as plague. The Garuda is here shown holding a snake (*naga*) with its beak, claws and hands, having a body in the form of a wheel which is made up of concentric circles containing invocations, a lotus of eight petals and a central seed syllable *khrom*, also repeated on the lotus petals. Various unusual dharanis are incorporated in this charm: (1) *hum-khro-ta-ya*, (2) *hum-ram-ram-khro-ta-ya-khri-khro-da-tista-ya-ah-dri-sa-da-me-na-kuru-dsa*, (3) *ha-ha-ram-ram-ya-tri*, (4) *ma-ma-ra-ya-khri-khro-da-ga-ru-na-hum-cho* and (5) *khri-khri-khro-da-khro-da*. The text includes the request that all snakes, poisons and sicknesses be controlled. The Garudas are generally related to the *dhyani*-Buddha families and are given the task of protecting the outer regions of mandalas. In Hindu mythology the Garuda was the vehicle of Vishnu ("Lord of the Universe") and was the enemy of snakes and protector of jewels. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 20.0 x 25.0 cm.
A Bonpo charm of the mythical bird Garuda, shown wrathful, three-eyed, with a jewel-crown, holding a snake, wings outstretched and flames behind. The body is in the form of a great wheel, the outer circumference of which consists of flames moving to the left; it encloses concentric circles, two eight-petalled lotuses, ten weapons, a flaming lotus of four petals and a central seed sound *khrom* emerging from flames. All the enclosures contain protective formulae, dharanis and syllables, many of which are unclear, though similar to those in the preceding example. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 28.5 × 33.2 cm.
An unusually powerful Buddhist charm of the mythical Garuda bird, shown with three eyes on each of the three heads, horned, wearing a sun-moon (nyi-da) crown, with six arms holding small wheels enclosing lotuses and seed syllables, and a body made up of circular discs, lotuses of eight and ten petals, rings of small scepters, syllables, invocations and dhāranis. The limbs and various parts are all inscribed with protective formulae, as are all enclosures. Some of the more interesting dhāranis: (1) om-vajra-krodha-hum/ka-ra-hum / go-ra-ga-rdsa-hum-phat / khro-wo-radsa ... swaha, (2) om-vajra-krodha-wi-dsa-ya-hum / ha-na-na-hum-phat / khro-wo-radsa ... swaha, (3) om-vajra-krodha-nila-rana-hum / da-ha-da-hum-phat / khro-wo-radsa ... swaha, (4) om-vajra-krodha-yamantaka-hum / pa-tsa-pa-tsa-hum-phat / khro-wo-radsa ... swaha, (5) om-vajra-krodha-arya-atasa-hum / bha-na-bha-na-hum-phat / khro-wo-radsa ... swaha, (6) om-vajra-krodha-maha-wala-hum / sphi-da-sphi-da-hum-phat / khro-wo-radsa ... swaha, (7) om-vajra-krodha-hayagriva-hum / hu-la-hu-lu-hum-phat / khro-wo-radsa ... swaha, (8) om-vajra-krodha-aparajita-hum / tishta-tishta-hum-phat / khro-wo-radsa ... swaha, (9) om-vajra-krodha-amitakundali-hum / tsindha-tsindha-hum-phat / khro-wo-radsa ... swaha, (10) om-vajra-krodha-trelokyavijaya-hum / bhi-na-bhi-na-hum-phat / khro-wo-radsa ... swaha, (11) ah-li-ma-ta-li / ha-la-la-la / ah-ka-ha-ni-ka-na-te-ho / ram-ram-thul-ram and (12) om-khri-li-mi-li-ha-la-swaha / om-vajra-chanda-maharosana-hum-phat / om-khro-ga-naga-ram-swaha / shi-shi-hri-hri. The small wheels held by the arms bear a central syllable ah to the left and ma to the right. The “Buddhist creed” is repeated three times around the outermost disc, all other inner enclosures containing spells for “binding snakes, splitting the heads of snakes, purifying poisons, bestowing blessings.” Woodblock from Gakar monastery, Tokyu, Tarap, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 38.4 × 39.5 cm.
An unusual Buddhist charm for bringing rain, depicting eight flying snake-holding Garudas around a wheel of eight concentric circles, two lotuses of eight petals each and a central representation of the element water. Traditionally the snakes (nagas) control rain, but can be subjugated by Garudas and made to produce what is required. The outermost circle contains the “Buddhist creed” split into individual syllables, the others are made up of invocations to all the deities and various dharanis, notably: (1) om-vajra-garuda-hum-phat / garuda-tsa-le-tsa-le-hum-phat / om-vajra-kili-kilaya-bam-hum-phat / om-vajra-krodha-hum-ka-ra-hum and (2) om-vajra-chanda-mahrosana-hum-phat / om-vajrapani-hum / om-vajra-guru-hum-phat, as well as most of the formulae of the preceding example. The first lotus contains the seed syllable khrom on each petal, the innermost lotus bearing repetitions of the syllable phu. For the rain-making rite this charm is read by the lama and offerings are made to placate all the deities. Finally it is meditated upon until the onset of rain. Woodblock from Khams, E. Tibet. 23.5 x 23.5 cm.
A popular Buddhist charm, more often used as an auspicious flag or for divination calculations. Depicting the lunar calendar cycles as used by Tibetans, it consists of a central enclosure divided into nine compartments, each with a number, arranged to add up to the same total in all directions. These numbers are called *mewa* and are understood as influencing spirits, auspicious and malefic. They are enclosed by a circle containing the time dharani *om-maha-kali-ye-swaha*, outside of which is an eight-petaled lotus bearing trigrams (*parka*), whose varied combinations of broken or unbroken lines indicate the dominance of weak or strong aggregates through degrees of expansion and contraction (and the male/female principles). These aggregates are individually called Heaven, Air, Earth, Water, Iron, Tree, Mountain and Gem, which are symbols of their affinities. In the spaces between the lotus petals are symbols of the days of the week (sun, moon, eye, hand, scepter, knife, garter and bundle), related to the planets. An outer 12-petaled lotus contains representations of the cyclic animals; snake, horse, sheep, monkey, bird, dog, hog, mouse, ox, tiger, hare and dragon. These, when combined with five elements (wood, fire, earth, iron and water), produce a 60-year cycle of time, which is repeated. In our charm the cyclic animals are contained by an eight-petaled lotus with the four dharanis *ma-ma-ram-ram-ye-swaha*, *ma-ma-kara-kara-ye-swaha*, *ma-ma-kham-kham-ye-swaha*, and *ma-ma-stota-stota-ye-swaha*, between each two of which appears the dharani *ma-ma-su-su-ye-swaha*, which thus occurs four times. Three concentric circles contain the whole, bearing protective mantras, the vowels and consonants of the alphabet, repetitions of the “Buddhist creed” and various auspicious wishes. The outermost edge of the Time Wheel forms the body of a monster, supposedly a form of giant tortoise, very wrathful and with an axe to one side. At the four corners are small squares with representations of Mount Meru. Woodblock from Tibet. 25.6 × 30.5 cm.
A popular Buddhist charm and prayer flag, depicting the calendar cycles with protective formulae around, similar to the preceding example except for artistic differences of style, the appearance of the tiger, dragon, bird and frog at the four corners, and minor variations of text. The two arms of the tortoise monster hold a flower and a leaf. Generally the representation of the calendar chart is believed to be lucky. Therefore it is often to be seen printed as flags at the entrance to villages, on mountain passes or places of pilgrimage. It is also used as a charm of protection, especially for counteracting malefic influence of planets, seasons and all factors concerning time. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 24.4 × 36.0 cm.
168. AUSPICIOUS DIVINATION CHART

A Buddhist Auspicious Chart, generally used for calculating horoscopes and divination, but also frequently printed as a prayer flag or protective charm. It shows the nine meva as numbers at the center, with the dharani om-mahakala-mota-kili-swaha around, resting upon the body of a tortoise which is encircled by five repetitions each of the seed syllables dsam and bam. Successive layers depict the eight parka trigrams, the days of the week, the names of animals, auspicious formulae and aspects of fortune. The whole is held by a monster in the form of a tortoise, with auspicious symbols (Fish, Umbrella, Elixir Jar, Endless Knot, Wheel, Conch), a parrot, frog, human figure and plant. The calculations are made upon this chart by moving markers according to the indications of an almanac. When used as a charm it is believed to protect against all malefic influences of time. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 23.3 × 30.8 cm.
169. LAMA WHEEL

An unusual charm depicting a lama seated upon a lotus, holding a thunderbolt scepter (*vajra*) and ritual knife (*phurba*), with rays emanating from an aureole behind. Two rings of fire, moving in opposite directions, are inscribed with powerful seed syllables: (1) *hum* and *pham* (alternately), on the inner wheel, and (2) *hum*, *cho* and *phat* on the outer one, together with an expression of “expelling in reverse” (Tib: *bzlog*). Such a charm is used for exorcising and may also be printed as a prayer flag. Woodblock from Tragyam monastery, Namgung, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 11.4 × 11.4 cm.

170. GREATER LAMA WHEEL

A powerful Buddhist charm depicting a crowned lama seated upon a lotus, heavily robed, holding a thunderbolt scepter (*vajra*) and ritual knife (*phurba*), with rays emanating from his body. Two rings of fire, moving in opposite directions, are inscribed with seed syllables identical with those in the preceding example, and also with an expression of “expelling.” Above is an ancient Indian syllable, with the sun and moon to the left and right. A monastery and a temple are depicted at the bottom, along with a river rushing down from the mountains. Such charms are particularly found among followers of the Nyingmapa and Kargyupa sects and are known as *Gyatsun-nyingpo* in Tibetan. They are often printed as prayer flags at places of pilgrimage or hermitages, for driving away all malefic influences. Woodblock from Dechen Lhabrang monastery, Namdo, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 15.8 × 20.8 cm.

NOTE: The syllable *cho* is spelt *bhyo*, but pronounced as indicated.
171. BUDDHIST PROTECTIVE WHEEL

A Buddhist charm of protection, to be folded and worn on the body. It contains multiple repetitions of the dharanis (1) om-manipadme-hum (Avalokiteshvara), (2) om-vajrapani-hum (Vajrapani), (3) om-wagishwari-mum (Manjushri) and (4) om-ah-hum and the Auspicious Wish tashi. The center of the “wheel” is empty, possibly for inserting a particular protective seed syllable according to the requirement. Woodblock from Hrap monastery, Namdo, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 15.3 x 15.4 cm.

172. TWO BONPO PROTECTIVE WHEELS

Two Bonpo charms of protection, to be folded and worn on the body. They both contain multiple repetitions of dharanis: (1) om-matri-muye-sale-du, (2) ah-om-hum, (3) ah-aah-kar-sale-od-ah-yang-om-du, (4) ah-da-ka-ra-ah-ra-ma-da-du-tri-su-na-ga-po-shi-shi-mala-ma-la-swaha and (5) ah-om-hum-ran-dsa. The wheels read in opposite directions. When printed they are folded together and worn on the body. Note the similarity with the mantras of example 44. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 9.1 x 19.2 cm.
A Bonpo charm in the form of a protective wheel, containing multiple repetitions of the single dharani ah-da-ka-ra-ah-ra-ma-da-du-tri-su-na-ga-po-shi-shi-ma-la-la-la-swaha in eight concentric inscriptions. The center is empty, probably for inserting specific seed syllables. The charm is worn on the body, generally folded and sewn into a small pouch. The dharani seems to be a corrupt rendering of a Shaivite mantra; possibly a more correct rendering would be: adi-kara / ah-ra-ma / dhatu-trisul-naga-bodhi-mala-mala-swaha, loosely translatable as “invocation to the original matrix sounds ah ra ma and to the Elements, the Trident, the Serpent and the Mind, through the repetition on a rosary, peace.” Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 21.8 × 22.6 cm.
A Bonpo charm in the form of a protective wheel, containing multiple repetitions of the single dharani 
*ah-ahh-kar-sale-ah-yang-om-du*, known as the Nine Special Syllables, loosely translatable as “Hail, Original Sound of White Light, united in clarity bestow the blessing of it, om. The center is empty, possibly for the inclusion of specific seed syllables, before the charm is placed on the body. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 22.0 × 22.2 cm.
A Bonpo charm in the form of a wheel enclosed by a circle of fire moving to the left. Two concentric circles contain the types of demons to be protected against and syllables. The inner eight-petaled lotus encloses invocations, protective syllables and an inner circle with a spiral inscription, a space being left for the name of the charm holder to be added. The mantras, (1) hum-hum-dsa-dsa, (2) kuru-na-na and (3) cho, suggest that female sickness-bringing demons are to be protected against through the charm. To be folded and worn on the body. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 17.5 x 17.7 cm.
176. GREAT BONPO PROTECTOR WHEEL

An unusual charm in the form of a wheel, consisting of an outer circle of fire moving to the left and enclosing concentric circles containing protective dharanis, an eight-petaled lotus and two inner sanctuaries, all filled with seed syllables. It seems to be an all-purpose charm of protection, especially with regard to the psychic centers. The repeated syllables include the following: (1) brum-brum-ram-ram-ah-ah-brum-brum-ram-ram, (2) ram-ram-dsa...ram-dsa-ra-ma-brum, (3) hum (repeated on each lotus petal), (4) brud (the name of a Bonpo holy place) and (5) raksa-raksa. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 21.0 x 23.2 cm.
An unusual Buddhist charm in the form of a wheel encircled by a ring of fire moving to the right and a scepter chain. It consists of two concentric circles containing lines of scriptural extracts, alphabetic letters and the “Buddhist creed.” Within this is a four-petaled lotus containing dharanis and “knowledge-empowerment” formulae, an eight-petaled lotus similarly inscribed, and an inner central sanctuary bearing 14 lines of powerful dharanis related to the Vajrasattva cycle and phrases of empowerment. The dharanis are:

1. **om-vajrasattva-samaya / manu-phalaya / vajrasattva-tenopatishta,**
3. **om-ab-hri-hum-om-ab-vajrasattva / guru-siri / khesarpali / lokanatha ... dsvala-dsvala,**
4. **om-padmo-shami-wimale-hum-phat,**
5. **om-bhesha-dsy-bhesha-dsy-maha-bhesha-dsy-raja-samuda-gate-swaha,**
6. **om-ab-hri-hum / vajra / sara / pramadana / sarva / karma / abaranava / wishuda-swaha,**
7. **om-namo-bhagavate-sarvo-durgapari-shodhmani-raja-va-tathagata-ya-arahate,**
8. **om ...**
9. **wuigetsa-manin / katani ... hum-hum-dsvala-dsvala,**
10. **om-muni-muni-mahamuni-ye-swaha,**
11. **om-hri-hre-lokve-vijaya-amoghapasiha ... hum-phat,**
12. **namo-chanda-vajra ... hu-lu-hu-lu-tishta-tishta-bhana-ha-na-ha-na-amrite-hum-phat,**
13. **om-vajra-amrita-kundale-ha-na-ha-na-hum-phat,**

These are mostly invocations in hybrid Sanskrit from the early Vajrayana texts, such as the *Prajnaparamita Sutra*. The charm is one of empowerment, given to help spiritual advancement. It is folded and worn on the body. Woodblock from Tragyam monastery, Namgung, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 34.8 × 35.8 cm.
178. CHANDAMAHAROSANA
EMPOWERMENT WHEEL

A Buddhist charm of the tutelary deity Chandama­
harosana, in the form of an empowerment wheel. It
consists of an outer circle of fire moving to the right,
enclosing inscriptions of the “Buddhist creed” and
protective syllables between four crude representations
of wrathful faces, presumably representing the deity. A
ten-petaled lotus is inscribed with the dharani om­
vajra-chanda-maharosana-hum-phat, split into syllables.
It contains a lotus of four petals forming a near-square
with the seed syllable hum at each corner. The central
inscription, in six lines, contains an empowerment and
protective formula. To be folded and worn on the
body. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 18.1 × 18.4 cm.

179. WHEEL OF 14 SYLLABLES

A Buddhist charm in the form of a wheel, probably of
the lion Protector. It consists of ritual scepter-handled
implements at the corners, within which are two con­
centric circles containing an inscription (unclear). An
inner sanctuary surrounded on all sides contains a total
of 210 squares within which are split syllables of the
14-syllable dharani ah-ka-sa-ma-ra-tsa-sha-da-ra-sa-ma­
ra-ya-phat. It is a charm for counteracting malefic
planetary influences, and is to be worn on the body.
Compare example 160. Woodblock from Tibet.
16.2 × 18.0 cm.
180. JAMBHALA EMPOWERMENT WHEEL

A Buddhist charm in the form of an empowerment wheel of Jambhala, the wealth deity. It consists of a central flaming “wish-granting” jewel surrounded by a dharani, enclosed by two inner concentric circles containing the alphabetic vowels and an invocation to Jambhala. This rests within a ten-petaled lotus bearing the split dharani om-dsambhala-dsa-len-tra-ye-swaha, with flaming jewels in the spaces between the petals. The whole is enclosed by three concentric circles of syllables, dharanis and empowerment formulae of Jambhala, with a circle of fire moving to the right. Four piles of flaming jewels with plant motifs mark the corners. The charm is to be worn on the body for the attraction of wealth. Compare with example 106. Woodblock from Sandul monastery, outer Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 21.5 × 23.2 cm.
At the center is an ornate elixir jar (Tib: bumpa) bearing the seed syllable bhrum and encircled by phrases of empowerment. Four petals of the outer lotus bear small elixir jars, each with the same seed syllable; the other four petals contain the dharani om-bhrum-ga-yu-bhrum and a protective wish. Moving outward, we find three concentric circles, a lotus of 16 petals and an outer circle of fire, moving to the right. Various scriptural extracts and the “Buddhist creed” make up the remainder of the text. The charm is to be worn on the body for spiritual purification. Woodblock from Thangboche monastery, N.E. Nepal. 22.2 × 22.2 cm.
182. BUDDHIST PURIFICATORY WHEEL

An unusual Buddhist charm in the form of a wheel, with the seed syllable bhrum at the center of a lotus, the four petals of which each contain the same syllable. Around the lotus is a chain of skulls, scepters and human heads. Two outer concentric circles contain three repetitions of the “Buddhist creed” and the whole is surrounded by a circle of fire, moving to the right. The dharani and invocation around the central syllable indicate the purificatory power of this charm, which is to be worn on the body. Woodblock from E. Tibet. 16.0 x 16.0 cm.

183. BONPO PURIFICATORY WHEEL

An unusual Bonpo charm in the form of a wheel, with the seed syllable brum at the center of a lotus, the four petals of which each contain the same syllable. Around the lotus are eight human heads facing to the left, in turn encircled by eight scepters. The whole is enclosed by double concentric circles containing the dharani hum-shatri-natha-dura-thum-dsa . . . raksaraksas, invocations of power, two repetitions of the “Buddhist creed” (spelled differently from that in the preceding example) and the additional extract om-sutra-tishtha-vajra-ye-swaha. The whole is encircled by a ring of fire, moving to the right. The inscription indicates that the wheel incorporates four charms of purification by means of which Liberation can be attained. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 16.5 x 16.5 cm.

NOTE: These two examples are basically the same charm, which gives support to the theory that there was considerable interchange between the Bonpo and Buddhist sects during the early periods. It is interesting that the Bonpo version even contains the “Buddhist creed,” but with a slightly different spelling. The Buddhist charm is of the Nyingmapa sect.
184. BUDDHIST PROTECTION WHEEL

A Buddhist charm of protection, comprising a central seed syllable *ouṃ* (long *om*) emerging as a triangular structure, encircled by two layers of dharanis and a circle of fire moving to the right. At the corners are crossed scepter-handled implements. The dharanis—(1) *om-padma-sha-wa-ri-pho-na*, (2) *na-ga-na-na* and (3) *sarva-wi-ri-to-da-na-ja* . . . *rakṣa*—and the inscription indicate it is a charm for keeping away demons. To be worn on the body. Woodblock from E. Tibet. 13.8 × 14.5 cm.

185. BUDDHIST LOTUS WHEEL

A Buddhist charm of protection containing a central seed syllable *nam* (or *bam*) from which emanate flowers and four syllables *sha* on the innermost lotus. It is contained by lotuses of eight, 16 and 32 petals, with outer concentric circles of flowers. At the corners are four ritual choppers, each with scepter handles. This seems to be a protection of a tantric goddess or *dakini*, probably Kurukulla. Woodblock from Sikkim. 13.2 × 13.8 cm.
An unusual Buddhist charm in the form of a great wheel encircled by a ring of fire moving to the right, inside of which are nine concentric layers enclosing three lotuses and leading to a central sanctuary bearing the seed syllable **bam**, the invocatory sound of the great female Protectors of Buddhism. This central syllable is inscribed with the name and invocation of Manidhara, the jewel-bearing Protectress, and smaller syllables of **hum** surround it. The innermost lotus is of eight petals, of which four also contain the syllable **bam** and four represent jewels. At every point there are invocations of the great Protectress and her various forms. A 26-petaled lotus has the seed syllable **hri** repeated on each petal, and the outermost lotus of 44 petals consists of representations of various auspicious emblems and weapons belonging to the deities of the mandala. These are: conch, scepter, lotus, hook staff, skeleton staff, bow, sword, banner, umbrella, trident, noose, jewel and wheel. Three concentric enclosures contain dharanis of many tantric female deities and an outer circle has repeated scepters and seed syllables. At the four corners, outside the wheel, are mountains bearing the syllable **sum**, meaning “the celestial place of the gods” (the heavens of Indra). Many dharanis are included in this charm, the most important of which are: (1) **om-tare-tam** (Tara), (2) **om-shri-yam-devi-sham** (goddess of death), (3) **om-saraswati-bam** (probably Saraswati), (4) **om-mamaki-mam** (Mamaki), (5) **ushnishakuru-hum-hum-phat** (Ushnishavijaya), (6) **om-sumbhakaram-hum** (Sumbhaka), (7) **om-manidhari-hum** (Manidhara), (8) **om-maha-pratisare-bam** (Mahapratisara), (9) **om-maha-trija-hum** (Devi), (10) **om-aparajitam-maharawitra** (Aparajita), (11) **om-punya-dana-tana-hum** (Punya), (12) **om-vajra-sandhye-pam-le-hum** (Sandhya), (13) **om-maha-kali-hum** (Kali), (14) **om-vajra-dhatu-namo** (Vajradhatvishvari) and (15) **om-anrita-kundaliswaha** (Kundalı). Most of the invocations are of the goddesses of healing and spiritual teaching, particularly of Indian origin. The charm is one of empowerment and is worn on the body. Woodblock from Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 38.3 x 40.0 cm.
A usual Buddhist charm in the form of the Great Voidness (sunyata) empowerment wheel of the Vajrayana. It consists of a central seed syllable hum, in an ancient Indian script, encircled by a dharani invoking the great teachers of the tantric Path. Five outward emanations represent the purifying Wisdoms, which are to be understood as the component parts of the syllable hum; each bears a dharani. An eight-petaled lotus containing syllables of empowerment encloses the central sanctuary and separates it from the outer series of concentric circles. Two groups of 12 and 25 smaller circles contain dharanis of the adi-Buddha cycle. The whole is encircled by scriptural extracts invoking the attainment of wisdom, the alphabetic letters (ali-kali) and the “Buddhist creed.” Among the important dharanis enclosed by the charm, which is “sealed” by five outer concentric circles, are: (1) om-dsi-na-dsi-ka-mum (dhyani-Buddha / Wisdom), (2) hum-vajra-dhari-ka-lam (dhyani-Buddha / Wisdom), (3) swa-ratna-dhari-ka-mam (dhyani-Buddha / Wisdom), (4) am-aroli-ka-byam (dhyani-Buddha / Wisdom), (5) ha-prajna-dhari-ka-hum (dhyani-Buddha / Wisdom), (6) om-ah-hum-vajra-guru-padma-thod-treng (Padmasambhava), (7) hri / ha-hum-padme-bha-to-ma-svaha-hri / ghiri-raga-ya-ho, (8) thalism-ba-yo-svaha / ho-ghandhe-sita-ya-ho, (9) wagishwari-nam-shri-svaha / bhum-dhisha-pam-sukini, (10) dsham-kuru-pani-hri / svaha-ah-nri-hyarega-ya-mi-satvam, (11) om-kashi-hirasa-ya-svaha / hum-la-sye-samaya-satvam, (12) me-tri-dharani-svaha / hum-wushwa-ah-we-sha-ya-satvam,(13) hum-swa-radsa-ya-svaha / hri-malaye-samaya-satvam and (14) hram-ah-gharbha-ya-svaha-dsa / dhu-we-prawe-sha-ya-satvam. The charm expresses the purificatory power of the five dhyani-Buddhas, producing the Five Wisdoms: the Seed-Potentiality (dharmanadhatu) Wisdom, the Mirror-Like Wisdom, the Equanimity Wisdom, the Discriminating Wisdom and the All-Accomplishing Wisdom. These are able to transform the Five Poisons (psychological obstructions) of delusion, anger, egotism, jealousy and greed. The charm is given for spiritual awakening and is worn on the body or meditated upon as a mandala. Woodblock from Thangboche monastery, N.E. Nepal. 41.3 x 42.0 cm.

NOTE: Dharanis (1) to (5) appear to relate directly to the account of the emanation of the dhyani-Buddhas from Gautama, as told in the Guhyasamaja Tantra:

The Lord sat in meditation and became vibrant with the sacred sounds of finajik (1), the principal mantra of the Moha family, condensing into the form of Vairochana. The Lord sat in the knowledge meditation and became vibrant with the sacred sounds of Vajradhrik (2), the mantra of the Dvesa family, condensing into the form of Aksobhya. He again sat in meditation and became resonant with the sounds of Ratndhrik (3), the mantra of the Cintamani family, condensing into the form of Ratnasambhava. Once more he sat in deep meditation and became resonant with the sounds of Arolika (4), the mantra of the Vajrara family, condensing into the form of Amoghasiddhi. Finally he sat in meditation and became resonant with the sounds of Prejnadhirik (5), the mantra of the Amoghasiddhi family, condensing as the form of Padmasambhava.

Dharanis (7) to (14) include mantras of the eight offerings (flowers, incense, light, etc.). Dharani (6) is of Padmasambhava.
188. BONPO WEALTH WHEEL

A Bonpo charm for attracting wealth, consisting of a central seed syllable ma within a lotus bearing the same syllable on each of its four petals. This is in turn contained by a circle and an eight-petaled lotus, bearing representations of the Royal Gems: Elephant’s Tusks, King’s and Queen’s Earrings, Gems of three types, Swastika and Ingots. Around each is a form of the Jambhala (wealth deity) dharani, om-dsambhala-dsah-len-tri-le-svaha, slightly different from the Buddhist version. The charm is to be worn on the body. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 15.4 x 15.4 cm.

189. BONPO WEALTH WHEEL OF AUSPICIOUS EMBLEMS

This consists of the syllables *ah* and *ma* at either side of a central invocation, within a four-petaled lotus, a circle, an eight-petaled lotus and concentric circles containing dharanis, benedictory phrases and a space for the name of the charm holder to be added. The whole is encircled by 44 Bonpo reversed Swastikas, a representation of the element Water and an outer circle of fire, moving to the left. At all points on the charm are syllables, empowerments and dharanis—the most important of which are (1) *dza-dza-ram / ma-ma-ram / tri-ya-na-na / raksa-raksa*, (2) *thu-na-cho / thu-na-cho* and (3) *so-om-ab-thu-na-nye-lo-yo-yo-thu-na* —and the wish that “all obstructions become resolved through the One Power of the charm.” To be worn on the body. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 20.2 x 20.2 cm.
GREATER BONPO EMPOWERMENT WHEEL

An unusual Bonpo protective charm in the form of a great empowerment wheel encircled by rings of reversed Swastikas and fire moving to the left, inside of which are nine concentric layers enclosing three lotuses and leading to a central sanctuary bearing the seed syllables ah and ma, surrounded by dharanis in a spiral. The innermost lotus is of four petals, with similar dharanis completely encircling each petal. It is contained by a circle of syllables, a lotus of eight petals, a circle of dharanis, a lotus of eight petals also with dharanis, and two outer circles of syllables, dharanis and scriptural extracts. In parts the script is unclear, because of damage to the woodblock, but we have managed to recover the important dharanis: (1) om-matri-muye-sale-du (many repetitions), (2) om-ah-yam-ram-mam-kham-pram-du (eight repetitions), (3) om-ah-brum-na-tse-bru-ma-ab-yu-nyadsa-na-shi-dsa-brum-du (eight repetitions), (4) om-ah-hri-rani-su-pri-du-ah-da kara-ga-sha-ab-ni-samra-swaha (eight repetitions), (5) ah-om-hu-ram-dsa, (6) ah-om-hum, (7) ah-ah-ah-pham ha-sa-la-la-la-ha-hum-lam-lam and (8) sha-na-hi-da kurs-yi-swaha (eight repetitions). The various extracts from Bonpo texts suggest that the charm is one of spiritual empowerment, for increasing wisdom and purifying the mind. To be worn on the body. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 43.0 x 44.6 cm.
192. BONPO PROTECTIVE WHEEL

This consists of an elaborate central syllable *ma* encircled by a dharani, within a lotus formed by double lines, which has dharanis moving in a circle on each of the four petals. The whole is surrounded by three lines of text in a spiral, containing syllables, invocations and dharanis, and by three levels of double circles. The important dharanis appear to be related to a Bonpo goddess: (1) *si-om-hum-amu-laga-sala ... sa-ram-dsa-sala-sala*, (2) *sada-sada-sala-sala-sale-sada-de-ye-swaha*, (3) *so / om-li-shana-ksha-ra-ra-maya-daya-da* and (4) *lasa-lasa-lesa-lesa*. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 19.0 x 19.0 cm.

193. BONPO PROTECTIVE WHEEL

This consists of an elaborate central syllable *ah*, with the vowel mark added and extended at the top, thus forming *eh*. This is encircled by a dharani moving to the left, within a lotus formed by double lines, which has dharanis moving in a circle on each of the four petals. The whole is surrounded by three lines of text in a spiral, containing syllables, invocations and dharanis, and by three levels of double circles. The dharanis seem to be related to those in the preceding previous example, and it is possible that both charms are used together as a single "protection": (1) *ah-om-hum / ah-ada-kara-khru-ri-mu-od-bar-ram-dsa-sala-sala*, (2) *so / om-ru-du-ri-ma-na-pri-bhawa-de-ye-swaha*, (3) *sada-sada-sala-sale-sale-ye-swaha* and (4) *ye-ha-ra-gu-mi-na-de*. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 19.2 x 19.2 cm.
A Bonpo charm in the form of a wheel with an outer ring of fire moving to the left. The charm is for expelling demons (both male and female) of all kinds of sickness as well as those which disturb meditation. It consists of a central syllable *eh* (*ah* with the *e* vowel sign) within a six-pointed star formed by two intricately interlaced triangles. The dharani *ah-hi-ma-we-ra* encircles it and at various points around the center are repetitions of the syllables *eh* and *brum*. The star is contained by two concentric circles with potent phrases "banishing" demons around it. Outside is an eight-petaled lotus similarly inscribed, a circle, another eight-petaled lotus and the outer ring of fire. At all enclosures there are phrases of power, giving names of demons to be rid of. Eight times the seed sound *cho* with the "expelling" syllable is repeated around the outer lotus. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 23.9 × 25.1 cm.
195. LIFE PROTECTION WHEEL

This consists of a central seed syllable hri with a phrase of empowerment, within a circle, an eight-petaled lotus, an outer circle and a wheel of fire moving to the right. The petals contain syllables of the dharani na-ga-trig-mu-la-la-bam, and the spaces between enclose syllables and life-protection wishes, moving to the left. The charm is presumably to be used when life is in danger. It is to be folded and worn on the body. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 8.5 × 8.5 cm.

196. AVALOKITESHWARA PROTECTION WHEEL

A Buddhist charm in the form of a protection wheel of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshwara. It consists of a central seed syllable hri within a triangle and the empowerment dharani om-ah-hum around the outside of it. Then it is surrounded by double concentric circles forming the center of a lotus bearing the Avalokiteshwara dharani om-mani-padme-hum split into syllables on the six petals. The whole is further contained by three levels of double concentric circles, enclosing the vowels, consonants and the “Buddhist creed.” The charm may be used during the death rites, as a focus for guiding the spirit of a deceased person away from reincarnation in the Six Realms (represented by the six syllables of the Avalokiteshwara dharani). It may also be worn as a protective charm. Woodblock from Hrap monastery, Namdo, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 16.2 × 16.2 cm.
197. BUDDHIST PROTECTION WHEEL

This consists of a central seed syllable hri encircled by syllables and a phrase of protection, contained by a double circle forming the center of an eight-petaled lotus with syllables and dharanis on the petals. Two outer circles enclose the dharani raka-samaya-dsa (repeated eight times) and a chain of eight scepters. The whole is encircled by a ring of fire, moving to the right. The charm is to be worn on the body as a potent protection against sickness-bringing demons. Woodblock from Hrap monastery, Namdo, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 14.4 × 14.4 cm.

198. HAYAGRIVA PROTECTION WHEEL

A Buddhist charm in the form of a protection wheel of the tutelary deity Hayagriva. It consists of a central column bearing the seed syllables om, hri and phat, with a phrase of protection moving in a spiral around it, contained by a double circle forming the center of an eight-petaled lotus with the Hayagriva dharani on the petals: padma-na-take-va-vajra-krota-hayagriva-hu-lu-hu-hu-hum. Two outer circles enclose syllables and dharanis related to the Hayagriva cycle, (1) om-vajra-du-na-bhyo-ti-gama-na-hum-hum-dsa and (2) samaya-dsa / samaya-bzlog / samaya-bhoy / samaya-thubs / samaya-pyer / samaya-ped / samaya . . . maraya-dsa-dsa, and the whole is encircled by a chain of scepters and a ring of fire, moving to the left. The charm is to be worn on the body, possibly in conjunction with the preceding example. Woodblock from Hrap monastery, Namdo, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 14.4 × 14.6 cm.
An unusual Buddhist charm in the form of the great empowerment wheel as a mandala of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshwara. It comprises an elaborate scrolled flame background with ritual choppers at the four corners, the whole containing a mandala of four double concentric circular levels and an inner sanctuary. At the center is the seed syllable *hri* enclosed by a lotus bearing repetitions of the syllable *hun* on each of its primary six petals. Four other syllables are at the cardinal directions and a scepter chain encircles the outer levels. This is known as the *Thugs-je Chen-po* mandala of the All-Merciful Avalokiteshwara. All the syllables are inscribed in an ancient Indian script of about the sixth century. The power of this charm is particularly expressed in the elaborate flame motifs. It is printed for exposure on the inner roofs of stupas, or as an altar base, and it is also folded to be worn as a protective charm. Woodblock from Thangboche monastery, N.E. Nepal. 39.0 × 39.0 cm.
200. PROTECTION CHARM WHEEL

This consists of a central column bearing the seed syllables om, ah and hum, contained by a lotus of six petals, the whole surrounded by three outer concentric circles. At all enclosures there are protective phrases, syllables and a single dharani, om-vajra-maha-pratadesa-hum-hum-phat-phat-mina-baha-ri-na, split up on the lotus petals. The “Buddhist creed” is inscribed around the outer circle. The charm appears to be a form of empowerment against demons. It is to be folded and worn on the body. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 9.2 x 9.4 cm.

201. EMPOWERMENT CHARM WHEEL

A Buddhist charm in the form of an empowerment wheel, suitable for “Body, Speech and Mind.” It consists of a central column bearing the seed syllables om, ah and hum, with a protective phrase in a spiral around, contained by a circle, a lotus of eight petals, three concentric outer circles, scepter motifs at the four corners and a ring of fire, moving to the right. Various dharanis appear on and by the lotus petals, (1) yam-yam-gana-mala-yam (eight times) and (2) zi-ma-zi-ma-sa-la-zi-ma (eight times), the vowels, consonants and “Buddhist creed” being inscribed around the outer circle. Woodblock drawing from Namgyal Institute, Gangtok, Sikkim. 11.6 x 11.6 cm.

202. GREAT EMPOWERMENT CHARM WHEEL

This consists of a central column bearing the seed syllables om, ah and hum, with a protective phrase in a spiral around, contained by a circle, a lotus of eight petals, three concentric outer circles, scepter motifs at the four corners and a ring of fire, moving to the right. Dharanis appear on and by the lotus petals, eight times each—(1) yada-yada-yada-gana-mala-yada and (2) zi-ma-zi-ma-sa-la-zi-ma—the vowels, consonants and “Buddhist creed” being inscribed around the outer circle. The charm, similar to the preceding example, is for empowerment of Body, Speech and Mind, the three mystic components of a person. It is to be folded and worn as a protection. Woodblock from E. Tibet. 17.0 x 17.0 cm.
An unusually powerful Buddhist charm in the form of an empowerment wheel, traditionally believed to have been revealed by the Treasure Finder (Tib: terton) Chojur Lingpa. It consists of a central thunderbolt scepter (vajra) bearing the seed syllables om-ah-hum in the middle, surrounded by two concentric circles enclosing dharanis, a lotus of four petals inscribed with dharanis, with symbols of a ritual knife, sword, scepter and book in the spaces between, an outer circle, an eight-petaled lotus inscribed with dharanis, with symbols of seven scepters and a ritual knife in between the petals, four concentric outer circles enclosing three lines of dharanis, and a scepter chain, the whole encircled by a ring of fire, moving to the right. The charm condenses the teachings of Guru Padmasambhava, the patron lama of the Nyingmapa sect. The eight-petaled lotus has the names of his eightfold manifestations and the appropriate dharanis. The first outer circle invokes the Vajra, Karma, Padma and Ratna Dakinis, one by one, and the outermost circle contains the alphabetic vowels, consonants, the “Buddhist creed” and a scriptural empowerment for the attainment of wisdom. The dharanis of importance are: (1) om-amara-nti-suante-ye-suwa (Amitayus), (2) om-man-ipti-hti (Avalokiteshwara), (3) om-ah-hum-vajra-guru-padma-siddhi-hum (Padmasambhava), (4) raksa-raksa-guru-deva-dakini-sarva-kau-tsi-adhishta-swaha (empowerment), (5) om-ah / hum / vajra-guru-padma-raks-ah-nya-ti-dsa-dsa / sarva-siddhi-phala-hum ... (invocation) ... raksa-raksa / guru-deva- dakini-sarva-kau-tsi-adhishta-adhishta, (6) om-ah / hum / vajra-guru-padma-prajna-jnana-sarva-siddhi-hum ... (invocation) ... raksa-raksa / guru-deva-dakini- sarva-kau-tsi-adhishta-adhishta-swaha, (7) om-ah / hum / vajra-guru-padma-sambhava-sarva-siddhi-hum ... (invocation) ... raksa-raksa / guru-deva-dakini- sarva-kau-tsi-adhishta-adhishta-swaha, (8) om-ah / hum / vajra-guru-padma-kili-kilaya-sarva-wighranan-bam-hum- phat ... (invocation) ... raksa-raksa / guru-deva-dakini- sarva-kau-tsi-adhishta-adhishta-swaha and (9) om-vajrapani-hum / vajrapani-ri ... ya-sarva-apaya-bhana-dhahi-pramoksha-ya-sarva-sapa-gati-byasa-sarva- satana-tatha-gata-vajra-samaya / trasa-om-bhura-maha- pranaya-bhura-jina-riki-vimala-utsushma-kroha-raja- hum-phat / nama-shatana-vajra-kroha-hu-lu-lu-lu- lita-tishta-tishta-bhanha-bhanha-ha-na-ha-na-amrite- hum-phat / om-vajra-amrita-kundale-ha-na-ha-na-hum-phat. The charm is printed in red, a traditional color for “treasury” (Tib: terma) teachings, though not always followed. It is to be folded and worn both as a protection and as an empowerment. Woodblock from Yangser monastery, Nyisal, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 32.0 x 32.0 cm.

NOTE: Dharanis (1) to (4) appear encircling the central scepter. Numbers (5) to (8) are on the four lotus petals, and number (9) on the middle outer circle. Many of them undoubtedly have an Indian origin (e.g., om-amrita-kundale, still used by the Natha Sadhus in India).
EMPOWERMENT WHEEL OF THE LORD OF DEATH

A Buddhist charm in the form of an empowerment wheel related to Yama, the Lord of Death (Tib: Shinje). It consists of a central seed syllable hum twice encircled by dharanis of Yama, within a lotus of four petals containing dharanis, with symbols of a sword, lotus, ritual knife and skeleton staff in the spaces between the petals, the whole surrounded by double concentric circles enclosing the alphabetic vowels, consonants and the “Buddhist creed,” a scepter chain around and an outer circle of fire, moving to the right. The important dharanis are (1) om-maha-dsu-shi-yamanathaka-hum-phat, (2) om-hri / shati-wikri-tana-na-hum-phat, (3) om-yama-nathaka-hum-phat, (4) om-ab-kroteka-yamantaka-kala-rupa-hri, (5) shati-saye-ma-makrotehwari-samaya-hum-phat, (6) om-yama-raja-sa-dome-ya, (7) ya-me-do-du-na-yo-da-ya, (8) yo-da-yo-ni-ryakshe-ya-yakshe-ya and (9) tsatsha-niramaya-hum-hum-phat-phat-swaha. These dharanis are all of the cycle of Yama, Yamantaka and other aspects of the Lord of Death. Presumably the charm is utilized to placate this deity in times of danger. To be worn on the body. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 21.5 × 21.5 cm.
This Buddhist charm consists of a central seed syllable *hum* completely encircled by two dharanis of Yama, ending with an “expelling” syllable. It is enclosed by a double circle, a dharani of the male/female aspects of Yama, an outer circle, a lotus of four petals containing dharanis, with symbols of a flaming sword, flaming wheel above a ritual knife, ritual chopper and banded skeleton staff in the spaces between the petals, the whole surrounded by two concentric circles within which are repeated “expelling” incantations, a scepter chain around and an outer circle of fire, moving to the right. The important dharanis—(1) *om-ma-chi-shri-yama-nathaka-hum-phat*, (2) *om-hri / shati-wikeri-tana-na-hum-hum-phat*, (3) *om-ah-krota-ka-yama-nathaka-kala-rupa-hri*, (4) *ah-pa-yama-ma-krodehswari-samaya-hum-phat*, (5) *om-yama-raja-su-ma-ma*, (6) *ya-me-do-du-na-yo-da-ya*, (7) *ya-da-yo-ma-yakshe-ya*, (8) *ya-tsatsa-niramaya-hum-phat*—are all of the cycle of Yama, similar to those in the preceding example, though occasionally with different spelling. On this charm, around the outer circle and on the lotus petals, are repeated “expelling” syllables (*bzlog*) together with the names of many types of demons. The charm is to be worn on the body and may be recited at times of danger. Woodblock from Chospa monastery, Karang, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 37.3 × 37.3 cm.
206. SCORPION EMPOWERMENT
PROTECTION WHEEL

A Buddhist charm in the form of a protection wheel of the scorpion empowerment, known as guru-trak (see example 132). It consists of a central seed syllable *hum* twice encircled by dharanis and a phrase of protection against male and female demons. An inner lotus of four petals is inscribed with invocations of the Padma, Karma, Vajra and Ratna Dakinis, and the outer lotus, also of four petals, contains dharanis of Hayagriva, Karma Yaksha, Vajrapani and Yama. In the spaces between the outer petals are four representations of scorpions. Outer concentric circles are inscribed with the “Buddhist creed,” a protective empowerment and the vowels and consonants of the alphabet. The whole is contained by a scepter chain and a circle of fire, moving to the right. The important dharanis are (1) *om-ah / hum-artisq-nirtisg-namo-bhagawate-hum-ah / hum-hum-phat / ham-ha-ri-ni-sa-hum-phat / ma-makawa-tsi-raksa-kuru-bhrum* (inner circle), (2) ... (invocation) ... *ma-ra-ya-hum-phat / ma-ma-kawa-tsi-raksa-kuru-hum / ah-ya-ma-du-rur-chasha-na-zhamaya-hum-phat / om-vajra-yaksha-hum / om-vajra-raksa-hum-phat* (next circle), (3) *ni-padma-dakini-hum-phat / ma-makawa-tsi-raksa-kuru-bhrum / sa-karma-dakini-hum-phat / ma-ma-kawa-tsi-raksa-kuru-bhrum / ha-vajra-dakini-hum-phat / ma-ma-kawa-tsi-raksa-kuru-bhrum / ri-ratna-dakini-hum-phat / ma-ma-kawa-tsi-raksa-kuru-bhrum and (4) *om-padma-natha-krota-hum-phat (Hayagriva) / ma-ma-kawa-tsi-raksa-kuru-bhrum / om-karma-yaksha-hum-phat (Karma Yaksha) / ma-ma-kawa-tsi-raksa-kuru-swaha / om-vajra-pani-hum-phat (Vajrapani) / ma-makawa-tsi-raksa-kuru-bhrum / om-yama-natha-ka-hum-phat (Yama) / ma-ma-kawa-tsi-raksa-kuru-bhrum*. These dharanis are all of the wrathful Protectors associated with Padmasambhava. The charm is given as an empowerment of the wrathful Guru Padmasambhava, and as a protection against the influence of all disturbing psychic influences (demons). Woodblock from Yangser monastery, Nyisal, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 23.8 x 24.4 cm.
A powerful Buddhist charm, traditionally considered to be one of the "treasury revelations" (terma), in the form of the Great Voidness empowerment wheel of the Vajrayana. It consists of a central seed syllable hum, in Tibetan script, encircled by a dharani invoking the great teachers of the tantric Path and the Fruits of the Practice. From the central part, which is enclosed by five concentric circles, emanate five forms representing the purificatory power of the dhyani-Buddhas and their consorts, whose seed syllables are given according to the Guhyasamaja Tantra. An outer eight-petaled lotus contains syllables and dharanis of empowerment, outside of which are concentric circles enclosing two groups of 12 and 25 smaller circles, each of which is inscribed with dharanis of the adi-Buddha cycle. The whole is encircled by scriptural extracts invoking the attainment of wisdom, the alphabetic letters and the "Buddhist creed," an outer scepter chain, five close concentric circles and a ring of fire, moving to the right. The charm is very similar to example 187, with the addition of various aspects as well as slight variations in the dharanis, the most important of which are (1) om-ah / hum-vajra-guru-padma-thod-treng-tsala-vajra-samaya-dsa / siddhi-phala-hum-ah (around the central syllable), (2) om-dzi-na-dzi-ka / mum-datsvibari-satvam / hum-vajra-dhari-ka / lam-teshvarati-satvam / sa-ratna-dhari-ka / mum-moharati satvam / ah-aroli-ka / pyan-ragarati-satvam / ha-prajna-dhari-ka / tam-vajarati-satvam (on the five emanations) and (3) hri / ha-hum-padma-bha-ta-ma-swaha / hri / ghiirti-pha ... la-ya-ho / wagishwari-mum / shri-swaha / bami-kini-sukini / shilram-pa-ya-swaha / ho-bha ... tata-ya-he / dishvim-kurupani-hri / swaha / ah-nrim-hyeresa-yami-satvam / kshi-hira-tsa-ya-swaha / hum-la-sye-samaya-satvam / metri-dharani-swaha / hum-pushwa-ah-we-sha-yo-satvam / hum-swe-radsa-ya-swaha / tram-malye-samaya-satvam / hrim-ah-gudha-ye-swaha / dsa / dhupe-prawe-sha-ya-satvam (on the eight petals of the lotus). The charm is considered especially potent and is frequently printed in red. It is for transforming all poisons, psychological and physical, into Wisdoms and Elixirs. It invokes the purificatory power of the adi-Buddha Vajrasattva and the five dhyani-Buddhas with their femininity principles, as expressions of the Great Voidness, here represented by the syllable hum. The charm is activated by an invocation at the time of giving, and is worn on the body. Woodblock from Tragyam monastery, Namgung, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 31.5 x 33.0 cm.
An unusual Buddhist charm of the “treasury” (terma) tradition, in the form of a Great Voidness wheel for expelling malefic influences. In Tibetan it is known as the Ka-bzlog-Ter Nyingpo and is attributed to Gautama Buddha. It consists of a central seed syllable hum, in Tibetan script, encircled by dharanis of the wrathful Protectors, an outer invocation to Yama, 18 segments representing degrees of Voidness and containing three empowerment dharanis, resting within a lotus of eight petals inscribed with syllables. This central sanctuary is contained by two concentric circles of empowerments, a further lotus of eight petals with demon-expelling dharanis, double circles of dharanis and invocations moving in a counterclockwise direction, and an outer lotus of 21 petals with “expelling” phrases and empowerments of the potent Protectors Vajrapani, Hayagriva, Manjushri, Yamantaka, Yama, Uma Devi, Rahu, Ketu, Remati, Rudra, Vajrakila, the Seven Kings and other tantric entities. In the spaces between the lotus petals are seed syllables, some of which appear to be in an ancient Indian script. The whole is enclosed by double concentric circles containing further invocations and empowerments, a scepter chain and a circle of fire, moving to the right. The name of the wheel is inscribed along the left side. Such a charm is of great interest as it seems to incorporate many different traditions. It is peculiar to the Nyingmapa sect and is considered effective both as a protection and as an empowerment. Unfortunately many of the dharanis are corrupt or abbreviated. Those that appear to be the most important are (1) hum-hum-hum-vajra-mahakrodha-padma-krodha... re-vajra-kili-kilaya-mahayaksha-kala-rupa-karma-ram... dsa-wa-ram (invocation) ... raks (around the center), (2) om-yama-natha-eka-bhira-yama-raja-raksa-hum-phat and (3) om-vajraka-ya-ling-bzlog/vajra-hi-bam-kara-pa-ya-bzlog/vajraki-ka-nana-bzlog (split into 18 syllables). The syllables between the lotus petals seem to be entirely Indian in origin (bho-lo, bho-ri, gha-hu, dsa-li, bha-ni, etc.), possibly Bengali. The charm is invoked during rites of exorcism and worn around the neck afterwards. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 33.9 × 34.2 cm.
EMPOWERMENT WHEEL OF THE VAJRAYANA

This unusual Buddhist charm consists of a central thunderbolt scepter (vajra), the symbol of the Vajrayana, with a seed syllable (unclear, but possibly nri), enclosed by a circle and surrounded by eight crossed-scepter motifs each bearing the syllables rakṣa at the center. These are in turn surrounded by eight wheel motifs, four layers of encircling dharanis, vowels, consonants, the ‘‘Buddhist creed,’’ eight clouds interspersed with the repeated syllable eh, eight fires with the syllable ram, eight mountains bearing the syllable kham, a scepter chain with the repeated syllable su and an outer ring of fire, moving to the right. The charm contains various dharanis particularly related to the Prajñāparamita Sutra: (1) om-muni-muni-maha-muni, (2) a-paramita-ahyu-puni-dsaya-na-sarva-ro-bha-tsi / om­sarva-sada-kari-pari-shudhe . . . mahayana-pari-wari­sweha / om-amaran-tsiwante-ye-swaha (Amitayus), (3) om-namo-bhagawate / ah-parimita-ah-ju­y-ju­ja-ju-subini, (4) om-tse-bhrum-yu-bhrum-ga-ju-te-bhrum-ah-yu-jnana­yu-tse-bhrum and (5) om-ah-hum-hri / hari / vajra-guru­padma-siddhi-punye-jnana-ah-ju-siddhi-dsa. Many of these appear to be of the ‘‘long-life’’ empowerment. The charm is worn on the body or used as a meditation diagram on an altar. Woodblock from Tungbu monastery, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 35.8 × 37.2 cm.
210. BONPO ALL-PURPOSE PROTECTION WHEEL

A Bonpo charm used for all types of protection and considered especially potent. It consists of a central space in which seed syllables are to be inserted according to the requirement, surrounded by a dharani with a swastika motif, double concentric circles enclosing a dharani and empowerment phrase, a lotus of eight petals, surrounded by reversed swastikas, tridents, circles and protective formulae. The whole is resting within four scepter implements, foliage, a lotus, wheel, auspicious knot and, at the top, a heavy reversed swastika, the symbol of the Bonpo religion. It is unfortunate that many of the dharanis are unclear, but we have endeavored to retrieve some of them: (1) ah-om-hum / ram-dsa-he-brum-bu / ah-da-kara-gharudhi-ho-dha-gi-ra-da-na-siddhi-ah-brum-ah (around the center), (2) ah-da-kara-ghu-nu-dha-gi ... mu-ye ... so-ah-brum-tha ... ram-mo-ra-da-na-brum / vajra-khrota-ga-ra-da-yo-dsa ... and (3) hum-ma-ma-ah-he-ho-hum-swaha / ah-ma-so ... brum-brum. Some aspects of the charm seem closely related to the Lamas' Hearts type (see examples 222–224), though the syllables are very different. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 2.8 x 2.8 cm.

211. BONPO PROTECTION WHEEL

A Bonpo protective charm in the form of a spiral dharani and phrase of protection, enclosed by a circle and containing the seed syllables ha, ah, hri, hu, da and eh at the center. Possibly it is for inserting into a larger charm. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 6.1 x 6.1 cm.

212. BONPO GARUDA PROTECTION WHEELS

A pair of Bonpo protection wheels of the mythical garuda bird. They consist of a central seed syllable khrom encircled by a dharani beginning ah-da-kara-hri and invoking the protective power of the garuda (see examples 162–165). It is most likely that such syllable wheels would be inserted into the center of larger charms, such as example 210. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 2.8 x 2.8 cm.

213. BONPO PROTECTION WHEEL

A Bonpo protective charm in the form of 16 columns of syllables around a common center. The dharanis are (1) om-ha (every alternate column), (2) ram-ah-ma-kro-ha-hum and (3) dsa-hri-la-ma, with variations. Seemingly it is related to the garuda Protector, to be used in collaboration with a larger charm. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 6.2 x 6.2 cm.

214. TWO BONPO DHARANI WHEELS

A pair of Bonpo dharanis moving in a circle and completely enclosed. They are for inserting into the center of a larger charm, such as example 210. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 2.2 x 2.2 cm.

215. TWO BONPO SYLLABLE WHEELS

A pair of Bonpo charms in the form of 16 columns of syllables around a common center. They are the reverse of each other, the dharanis being (1) ta-ha-ta-ha and ta repeated, and (2) ha-ta-ta-ha and ha repeated. Undoubtedly they are used together, probably with a larger charm. Woodblock from Samling monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 3.3 x 7.1 cm.
216. BUDDHIST SYLLABLE WHEEL
This consists of a central seed syllable *bam* within a lotus bearing repetitions of the syllable on the eight petals, surrounded by a scepter chain and an outer circle of fire, moving to the right. This seed syllable is associated with the force of femininity as a transformative power. It is considered to be a potent protection. Woodblock from Ang Dorje monastery, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 8.7 × 9.0 cm.

217. BUDDHIST SYLLABLE WHEEL
This consists of a central seed syllable *dsam* within a lotus bearing repetitions of the syllable on the eight petals, surrounded by a scepter chain and an outer circle of fire, moving to the left. This seed syllable is associated with the force of masculinity as suited for counteracting malefic influences. Woodblock from Ang Dorje monastery, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 8.4 × 8.9 cm.

218. SMALL BUDDHIST SYLLABLE WHEEL
This consists of a central syllable *bam* within a lotus bearing repetitions of the syllable on the eight petals. It is surrounded by double concentric circles. Most likely such a small syllable wheel was to be inserted in the center of a larger charm for a specific activation. Woodblock from Ang Dorje monastery, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 3.4 × 3.4 cm.

219. SMALL BUDDHIST SYLLABLE WHEEL
This consists of a central syllable *dsam* within a lotus bearing repetitions of the syllable on the eight petals. It is surrounded by double concentric circles. Used in a similar way to the preceding example. Woodblock from Ang Dorje monastery, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 3.2 × 3.3 cm.

220. TWO SYLLABLE WHEELS
A pair of Buddhist charms in the form of wheels containing syllables in an ancient Indian script. To be used in the central portion of a larger charm, such as example 222 or 223. Woodblock from Sikkim. 3.0 × 3.0 cm.

221. ANCIENT SYLLABLE WHEEL
A Buddhist charm in the form of a wheel with an ancient Indian seed syllable at the center, surrounded by a spiral dharani and empowerment, enclosed by a circle of fire, moving to the left. It is of the type for binding demons, contains various wrathful dharmas and ends with an expelling phrase. The central syllable indicates that the charm is derived from the *Lama Gong-du* type, the details of which follow. Woodblock from N.E. Nepal. 14.5 × 14.5 cm.
222. GREAT BUDDHIST WHEEL OF THE LAMAS’ HEARTS

Probably the most important of all Buddhist protective charms is this popular type known as the Unity of Lamas’ Hearts (Tib: Lama Gong-du), which is said to incorporate all the important phrases and syllables of protection. The charm is activated by the addition of specific syllables in the space left vacant at the center, together with the rites for each type of usage. The central syllables are taken from the “treasury” (terma) text on the subject (see examples 225 and 226), and are interesting in that they are quite obviously derived from an ancient Indian script. The charm consists of a central seed-syllable space encircled by a dharani invoking the Vajrayana lineage of teachers. This is also encircled and contained by a lotus bearing the seed syllable hri on each of its eight petals, a circle and a lotus bearing the seed syllable hum on each of its ten petals, with the syllable phat repeated in the spaces between. The whole is further enclosed by four concentric circles containing three groups of dharanis, vowels, consonants, the “Buddhist creed,” the Buddhist “refuge-taking” formula, names of the dhyani-Buddhas and seed syllables. It is sealed by an outer circle, a scepter, flaming scepter sword, lotus flower and triple jewel, with a background of flames moving in both directions. The dharanis of the Lamas’ Hearts type of charm seem to be remarkably consistent, though slight deviations do occur. In each of our examples we have given transliterations of the particular cases. Here the dharanis read: (1) om-ah / hum-hri / vajraguru-deva-dakini-sarva-siddhi-phala-hum / phat / ma-ma-ah-yur-jnana-pu-pye-putshim-kuru-om (around the center; it includes a “life empowerment”), (2) ma-ma-ah-yur-jnana-pu-pye-putshim-kuru-om / ma-ma-ka-ya-va-gi-tsata-sya-raksa-raksa-om (first circle after the ten-petaled lotus; the dharani is prefixed by all the vowels and consonants), (3) nama-samanta-buddhanam / nama-samanta-dharmanam / nama-samanta-sanghanam (the Buddhist “refuge”) / om-sita-bate / om-vimala-shankara / om-pratyam-gira / vajra-ushnisha-tsakra-baratti / sarva-yana-manta-mula-karma-bhananam / da-pate-kela-nam-va / ma-ma-krite-ye-na-keni-tsata-nam / krito-da-sarva-bhana-tu / tsinda-tsinda-bhinda-bhinda-ti-ti-mara-mara-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-hum-phat-phat-phat (middle outer circle), (4) giri-giri-om / tadytha / om-muni-muna-maha-maha-maha sakya-muna-ye-suaha / (followed by the “Buddhist creed”) . . . vairochana-om / vajrasattva-hum / ratnasambhava-tram / padmabhata-ah / amoghasidhi-ah (the outermost circle). For further details on the use of the charm see the explanation of examples 225 and 226, the root texts giving the seed syllables and their various uses. The charm is folded and worn on the body as a potent protection. Woodblock from Doro monastery, Tarap, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 19.1 × 19.7 cm.
This version of the Unity of Lamas’ Hearts protective charm contains slightly different dharanis from the preceding example, but the use is the same, as also the basic structure. The charm consists of a central seed-syllable space encircled by a short dharani and phrase of empowerment. This is in turn encircled and contained by a lotus bearing the seed syllable hri on each of its eight petals, a circle, an outer lotus bearing the seed syllable hum on each of its ten petals, four concentric circles containing three groups of dharanis, vowels, consonants, the “Buddhist creed,” the Buddhist “refuge-taking” formula, names of the dhyani-Buddhas and seed syllables. At the four corners are representations of a scepter, flaming scepter sword, lotus flower and triple jewel, with a background of flames moving in both directions. The dharanis are (1) om-ah / hum-hum / vajra-guru-deva-dakini-sarva-siddhi-phala-hum-ah (around the center), (2) ma-ma-kaya-vo-
An actual hand-drawn version of the Unity of Lamas’ Hearts protective charm, similar to the preceding examples but with the addition of a central seed syllable brum. Moreover, the surface of the “wheel” was smeared with saffron water. At the right side is an inscription in Tibetan outlining the specific accompanying rite for a particular instance. The seed syllable to be used is determined through consultation with the basic “treasury” text of the Lama Gong-wa Dus, which gives 108 different seed syllables, many of which are in an ancient Indian script, possibly related to Brahmi. Each syllable has a particular color, sound and property, to be used in correlation with various materials (such as saffron, musk water, blood of various kinds, vegetable juices, earths) when inscribing the center of the Lamas’ Hearts charm. For further details see our next examples with commentary. This particular hand-drawn charm is almost identical with the preceding previous woodcut example, with the additional dharani om-vajra-garbhe-swaha, but with fewer repetitions of the syllable hum. Our example, with the central syllable brum and the saffron water smeared on, is for a general purificatory exorcism. Drawing courtesy Lama Kunzang Rinzing. 19.2 × 19.6 cm.
An important Tibetan Treasury Manual, consisting of nine leaves inscribed on both sides, containing representations in archaic script of the 108 total seed syllables, each within a small circle, colored according to their traditional affinities and with fully detailed commentaries alongside outlining their individual uses. It is a complete copy of the Lama-Gong-wa-Dus (or bLa-ma-i-Gong-diis-pe'i), the most important Nyingmapa treasury treatise relating to charms and amulets. The script of the seed syllables is very ancient, basically Indian in origin, of the Devanagari type yet with great affinities to the early Brahmi and Lantsa/Ranja alphabets. They cannot be precisely transliterated without an exhaustive study of early Indian scripts. Their use in the charm manual is as empowerment yantras, reflecting planes of awareness beyond the senses. The lines of Tibetan Umed ("headless") script alongside each syllable tell how to use it in conjunction with the Lamas' Hearts charm (see preceding examples) by inserting the syllable at the center according to specific requirements of materials and rites. This method of making charms is common to most magical traditions, notably the Cabalic (Hebrew) and ancient Egyptian in the West and the Vedic (Indian) in the East.

In fact, many of the charm formulae in the Atharva Veda as well as the later Puranas and Tantras of India are very similar to those of this charm manual, which is believed to have come from the great Mindrol Nyingmapa monastery of southern Tibet and probably dates from about the seventeenth century. For general interest a number of translations are given:

1. For smallpox: With the sap of the soma plant write the seed syllable om and sprinkle upon it the crushed and powdered bones of a man who has been a victim of smallpox. Fold up the charm and tie it while reciting the protective formulae.
2. For protection against weapons: Take the blood of a wounded man and write with it the double seed syllable da in the center of the Lamas' Hearts charm. Fold it up and tie it with red silk.
3. For evil smells: Take a small piece of white silk and with an ink prepared from six fine perfumes write the seed syllable sam, placing it in the central space of the Lamas' Hearts charm. Then fold it carefully, bind with colored threads and cover with fine cloth.
4. For poison: With the blood of a peacock write the seed syllable gra, using the face hairs of a large rabbit or hare. Fold it up in the charm print with the wing feathers of an eagle, tie it and enclose carefully in the stomach of a monkey.
225 & 226. GREAT TREASURY CHARM
MANUAL OF ALL SEED SYLLABLES (continued)

(5) For quarrels: Take the blood of a mountain goat and with it write the seed syllable tam in the center of the charm print. Tie it and wrap in a piece of horsehide.

(6) For nightmares: Take tears or urine of a mystic person and with it write the seed syllable zi in the central part of the Lamas' Hearts print. Fold it up with an eyelash of the wearer and wrap with a piece of his clothing.

(7) For dog bite: With the blood of a leopard write the seed syllable hri in the center of the charm. Carefully fold it while reciting protective formulae and enclose in a small piece of leopard's skin.

(8) For fevers: Take some camphor and musk and dilute with cold water, using this as an ink for writing the seed syllable lho in the centre of the protective charm. Tie it carefully after folding.

(9) For colds: With black pepper, long pepper and ginger make an ink by boiling in water and with this write the seed syllable pra in the center of the charm print. Tie it carefully.

(10) For seminal weakness: With a blood-red ruby write the syllable dha in the central space of the Lamas' Hearts charm print. Fold it carefully and tie with blue and red thread spun by a virgin.

(11) For theft: Take the blood of a thief or of a black dog and with it write the seed syllable lhi in the center of the print. Fold carefully while uttering the wrathful mantras, wrap inside the skin of a mouse and tie the complete charm to a post inside the house.

(12) For vomiting: Take dung from a black horse and mix it with black sulphur and musk water. Using this as an ink, write the seed syllable zha in the center of the charm print. Fold it carefully and enclose in a piece of snakeskin.

(13) For slander: Take earth from the hearth fire of a popular halting place for travelers and mix it with the menstrual blood of a courtesan. Using this as an ink, write the seed syllable zhim in the central part of the charm print. Fold and tie it carefully.

(14) For bad omens: With the blood of an owl write the seed syllable amra in the center of the print and fold it carefully while enclosing the hair of a monkey. Wrap it with a small piece of fox skin.

(15) For placating nagas: Take a piece of birch bark and write upon it the seed syllable hne with an ink prepared from musk water, incense and a sweet herb. Place it in the center of the charm, fold it and tie carefully.

(16) For tigers: Make a miniature knife of wood or paper and write upon it the seed syllable zah using an ink prepared from musk water and the three types of myrobalans. Fold and tie it with great care.

Unfortunately most of the explanatory text is highly abbreviated as well as using obscure terminology, a method used by all magical schools for protecting the contents of precious books. Also many of the seed syllables cannot be equated to any known script, though possibly there are connections with the pre-Buddhist Shang-shung alphabets of the Bon followers. Few examples of that remain, however, and no full study has ever been made. Undoubtedly most of the syllables are of an archaic Indian origin.

NOTE: The translations of the individual formulae are through the references of L. A. Waddell, as outlined in The Gazetteer of Sikhim, with additional clarifications. The illustrations are from photographs of a manuscript in the collection of the author. Each folio, 35.5 x 7 cm.
An unusual Buddhist protective charm of the Karma Lingpa “treasury” tradition, in the form of an initiatory mandala. All the deities are represented by circular abstractions emanating from a series of central lotuses. Chains, garlands, flowers and intricate scrollwork adorn the inner sanctuary, which has four entrances crowned with scepters, a pair of deer and the Wheel of Law with Honorific Umbrella overhead. The central square structure is surrounded by banners, umbrellas, ribbons and ritual staffs, within an outer circular lotus of 62 petals, representations of the Eight Great Cremation Grounds showing stupas, a scepter chain and a wheel of fire, moving to the right. At the bottom is a Tibetan inscription identifying this whole structure as the Karma Lingpa Treasury Wheel.

Karma Lingpa was one of the great tertons (treasure finders) predicted by Padmasambhava. Traditionally believed to have come from the north, he is also credited with the revelation of the Bardo Thodol, the “Tibetan Book of the Dead.” The Treasury Wheel of Karma Lingpa seems to be connected with the rites for attaining favorable rebirth, and would most likely be used more as an initiatory mandala and focus for lamaistic rites than as a protective charm for the living. The Eight Great Cremation Grounds are in particular associated with the Protector Mahakala, and were meditation places of many of the famous Siddhas (a category of saints) such as Padmasambhava, Tilopa and Kukuripa. Woodblock from Yangser monastery, Nyisal, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 24.5 × 25.7 cm.
A Buddhist mandala representing the Auspicious Universe, with all its wealth and potency, for use either as a protective charm or as a lucky diagram to be inserted in the roof sections of stupas and monasteries. It consists of a central ancient Indian seed syllable surrounded by concentric levels of other seed syllables in Tibetan script, each enclosed by small circles. The syllables include all the vowel sounds, as well as many repetitions of hum, hri, ha, brum, dsa, bam, mum, he and bhyo (pronounced cho). An outer circular inscription consists of the "Buddhist creed" and various dharanis of the Vajrayana. From the central circular construction emanate four smaller circles containing dharanis of Hayagriva, Amritakundali, Kerima and other wrathful Protectors, with representations of the Auspicious Emblems (Conch, Elixir Jar, Umbrella, Banner, Lotus, Scepter, etc.) at the corners. The Seven Gems of a Great King (Skt: chakravartin) are portrayed typically as a Wheel, Flaming Jewel, All-Conquering Warrior, Wish-Granting Tree, Noble Wife, Minister, Horse and the additional White Elephant. The whole is contained by a square structure in the form of a temple sanctuary with four gates, at which are the repeated seed syllables bam, hum, ho and dsa. Outer chains insulate the whole, indicating the mandala nature of this design. Woodblock from Lang monastery, Phijer, Dolpo, N.W. Nepal. 39.8 x 40.2 cm.
229. GREAT TREASURY MANDALA OF AUSPICIOUS EMBLEMS AND SYLLABLES

An unusually powerful Buddhist mandala, traditionally one of the “treasury” revelations, representing the Auspicious Universe. It consists of a central enclosure containing the dharanis and invocations of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra (Tib: Kuntu Zangpo) in the male/female tantric aspect. From this there emanate four other enclosures at the directions. These contain dharanis and invocations of the dhyani-Buddhas, Herukas and Protectors, with the seed syllables om, hum, tram and hri interspersed between. This central section is enclosed by a circle but extends outward to create various concentric planes, each divided into individual enclosures of dharanis, invocations and syllables. The vowels are inscribed in small circles close to the main enclosure, with the consonants similarly enclosed and around the outer edges. Most of the invocations are of the wrathful Protectors of the different “families” (Skt: kula). The whole is surrounded by an outer circular inscription containing the “Buddhist creed,” invocations of Vajrasattva, phrases of empowerment and scriptural extracts with dharanis. The whole is contained by a square structure in the form of a temple sanctuary with four gates, chains and outer trigams. At the gates are three enclosures of dharanis, with ritual chopper knives in pairs. Within the sanctuary are the eight Auspicious Emblems and the Gems, as in the preceding example. At the four outer corners are circular enclosures containing dharanis of the wrathful Protectors and representations of a Flaming Jewel, Lotus, Scepter and Crossed Scepters. This design is generally utilized as a protective charm, to be folded and worn after empowerment by a lama. Like most “treasury” charms, it is printed in red. It is of the Karygupa sect, a personal gift from the Gyalwa Karmapa. Woodblock from Rumtek monastery, Sikkim. 52.6 x 54.2 cm.
A Buddhist charm in the form of the great dhyani-Buddha (Jina) mandala. At the center is depicted the crowned Buddha Vairochana, seated on a lotus throne, wearing robes and elaborate ornaments and showing the Wheel of Law (Skt: dharmachakra) gesture. Four other dhyani-Buddhas, Amitabha, Aksobhya, Amoghasiddhi and Ratnasambhava, emanate in the four directions, each with his appropriate gesture and ornaments. Each seated figure is surrounded by ancient Indian syllables, mostly undecipherable, and repeated concentric circles. Four lotuses also emanate outwards, bearing inscriptions as flowers. The whole is enclosed by four concentric circles, containing three lines of scriptural extracts and dharanis, most of which are unfortunately very corrupt. Thirty-two small circles, each containing ancient Indian syllables, surround the structure and emanate outwards as multiple circles enclosing two lines of Tibetan texts comprising scriptural extracts and dharanis. At the four corners are shown the Flaming jewel, Lotus, Scepter and Crossed Scepters, symbols of tantric Buddhism, each of which is surrounded by multiple concentric circles.

The dhyani-Buddhas or Jinas are the basis for all meditative practices of the Vajrayana. They represent different “families” or psychological approaches and are equated with the Aggregates (matter, sensation, perception, formations and consciousness) and Elementary Phenomena (density, cohesion, temperature, expansion and spatiality). Each have particular colors, seed syllables, elements, directions, symbols and characteristics, which are utilized as the meditative basis for “purifying” the obscuring “poisons” of the psyche into “wisdoms” of Enlightenment. Thus all Buddhist deities are understood as being expressions of the five dhyani-Buddhas, who themselves are said to have evolved through events, mystically presented, of the teaching of the Buddha Sakyamuni. The process of emanation of these dhyani-Buddhas from the meditation of the historical Buddha is told in the Guhyasamaja Tantra, an early and highly important Vajrayana treatise. This representation of the dhyani-Buddha mandala is used primarily as a protective charm, to be worn on the body after empowerment by a lama. It also may be used in the roof of stupas or temples, or as a meditation diagram. Woodblock from Thangboche monastery, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 41.0 × 42.0 cm.
231. GREAT PROTECTIVE MANDALA OF THE SAVIORESS TARA

An unusual Buddhist charm in the form of the great protective mandala of the Savioress Tara. At the center is the seated figure of Green Tara, wearing elaborate robes and ornaments, holding a large lotus flower and showing the "boon-bestowing" gesture. A full-moon halo is to be seen behind her head and from her body varied rays emanate. She is contained by multiple concentric circles forming the center of a lotus bearing the seed syllables mam, pam, mum and lam on the four petals, each similarly encircled. These syllables represent the female counterparts of the dhyani-Buddhas—Mamaki, Pandaravasini, Vajradhatvishvari and Locana—as Wisdom Goddesses of the Tara realms. From the central lotus emanates a series of circles containing an encircling invocation and dharanis of Tara, Arya Tara, Varahi, Avalokiteshvara, Padmayogini and others. Next is a lotus bearing invocations of Padmayogini as the goddess Tara, with her dharani (tare-tuttare-ture), protective syllables (hum-hum-bam-ho) and demon-binding spells on each of the eight petals. An outer lotus of 13 petals contains repeated invocations of Padmayogini as the goddess Tara, her dharani and varied protective formulae. Three further concentric circles enclose two lines of syllables, protective formulae and invocations, leading to a series of 25 small circles each with seed syllables and names as invocations. Three more concentric circles enclose four lines and a single line of scriptural extracts and protective formulae. The whole is encircled by a scepter chain and an ornate outer "wheel" representing fire. All the many mantras and dharanis on this large charm are of the "family" of Tara, who is the All-Merciful Compassionate Goddess or Savioress of Buddhism. The design is to be used as a protective charm against all kinds of sickness, confusion, bad luck, etc. It is empowered in the usual way and worn on the body. Woodblock from Thangboche monastery, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 46.5 x 49.5 cm.
An unusually powerful Buddhist protective charm of the "treasury" tradition, in the form of the great mandala of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra in the male/female aspect. It depicts the first Bodhisattva seated on a lotus, in the form of the adi-Buddha Samantabhadra embracing his consort Samantabhadri (Tib: Kuntu Zangmo), a halo behind his head and numerous rays of light emanating from their bodies. At their center is the seed syllable om (origin of all things), with four other seed syllables, ah, hum, tram and hri, in the four directions and forming an inner mandala. The cosmic father/mother form expresses the unity of Wisdom and Means on the tantric Path and conveys the tantra of the dharani mother form expresses the unity of Wisdom and female aspect.

The central figures are contained by concentric circles symbolizing the dhanyi-Buddhas and are encircled by the dhani:

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which appears to be of Sanskrit origin and contains seed syllables of Samantabhadra. This is in turn enclosed by an eight-petaled lotus inscribed with a series of invocations beginning om-maha-guru and naming the King of the Nagas (mythic snakes) and other entities of the tantric pantheon, each ending with the seed syllable hum. Further concentric circles enclose a single line of text which invokes the forces of protection with a series of seed syllables. In turn this is contained within a ten-petaled lotus inscribed with the dharanis:

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A series of 25 outer small circles contain seed syllables and names of invocation. The whole is enclosed by an outer lotus of 42 petals inscribed with abbreviated dharanis, leading to further concentric circles with the dharanis:

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and the outermost ring containing the alphabetic vowels, consonants, the "Buddhist creed," a series of invocatory names, each ending with the powerful syllable buho (pronounced cho), phrases of empowerment and the dhari om-vajra-arja-te-dsa-te-dsa/om-vajra-am-guhi-hum/om-vajra-loka-bam/om-vajra-bhumi-pa-la-ya-bu-ru-ho. An elaborate outer scroll with a ring of fire and protective mandala. Such a charm is of the "treasury" tradition and would most often be printed in red ink prepared from a vermilion compound. It is a mandala especially used by the Nyingmapa sect and would be used as a charm to be worn on the body after empowerment by a lama. It contains formulae of almost all the tantric protective entities. On occasions it may be used in the roof of stupas and temples, sometimes painted. Woodblock from Thangboche monastery, Solo Kumbu, N.E. Nepal. 46.5 x 47.5 cm.