Eight Great Bodhisattvas
Bát Đại Bồ Tát

"All who comprise the great assemblage of Bodhisattvas are equally powerful and equally beneficial to countless beings, so that all things seem to be at their command. Sometimes beautiful lotuses and lotus trees are caused by them to grow from the middle of the ocean, or a teardrop is transformed into an ocean. Everything in nature is at the Bodhisattva’s call."

~ 16th Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, teaching on Compassion. ~

Eight Bodhisattvas:
Akashagarbha: Womb of Space Sutra [Viet=Hu Không Tạng Bồ Tát]
Avalokiteshvara: Heart Sutra, Lotus of the Good Law Sutra (Viet=Quán Thế Âm Bồ tát)
Kshitigarbha: Earth Store Sutra (Viet=Địa Tạng Vương Bồ tát)
Maitreya: mentioned in the Pali Sutras as the next buddha, Mahayana Sutras (Viet=Di Lặc Bồ Tát)
Manjushri: Vimalakirti-nirdesha Sutra, Flower Garland Sutra, Prajñaparamita Sutras(Viet=Vạn Thù Sự Lợi BT)
Nivarana-vishkambhin (Viet=Trí Cái Chuồng Bồ Tát)
Samantabhadra: Lotus of the Good Law Sutra, Flower Garland Sutra (Viet=Phổ Hiền Vương Bồ tát)
Vajrapani: Early Sutras (Viet=Kim Cang Đại Thế Chí Bồ tát)

Qualities of the Eight Bodhisattvas

Although the eight bodhisattvas or ‘close sons of the Buddha’ all possess the same qualities and powers, each one displays perfection in a particular area or activity.

Manjushri embodies wisdom;
Avalokiteshvara embodies compassion;
Vajrapani represents power;
Kshitigarbha increases the richness and fertility of the land;
Sarvanivaranavishkambhin purifies wrong-doing and obstructions;
Maitreya embodies love;
Samantabhadra displays special expertise in making offerings and prayers of aspiration; and Akashagarbha has the perfect ability to purify transgressions.

Khenpo Chöga says:

Among the immeasurable qualities of the Buddha, eight of his foremost qualities manifest as the eight bodhisattvas:

1) the personification of the Buddha’s wisdom (Wyl. ye shes kyi rang gzugs) is Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī;
2) the personification of the Buddha’s compassion (Wyl. snying rje’i rang gzugs) appears as Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara;
3) the personification of the Buddha’s power or capacity (Wyl. nus pa’i rang gzugs) is Bodhisattva Vajrapāni;
4) the personification of the Buddha’s activity (Wyl. phrin las) is Bodhisattva Maitreya;
5) the personification of the Buddha’s merit (Wyl. bsod nams rang gzugs) arises as Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha;
6) the personification of the Buddha’s qualities (Wyl. yon tan gyi rang gzugs) appears as Bodhisattva Sarvanīvaraṇavishkambhi;
7) the personification of the Buddha’s blessings (Wyl. byin rabs kyi rang gzugs) arises as Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha; and
8) the personification of the Buddha’s aspirations (Wyl. smon lam gyi rang gzugs) is manifest as Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.[3]

Bodhisattva (Tibetan: jang chub sem pa. English: heroic aspirant to enlightenment): idealized beings in the appearance of youthful heavenly gods, generally male and richly attired in silks and jewels. They represent the principal students of the Buddha according to the Mahayana Sutras of Northern Buddhism. There are many bodhisattva mentioned in the various Mahayana Sutras. The Eight Great Bodhisattva are a later grouping of what are the most important. In the Mahayana Sutra Tradition there are several lists of eight and sixteen great bodhisattva. Following that, in the Himalayan and Tibetan tradition, the names are generally listed as found below. In the Pali Sutras only two bodhisattva are mentioned, the historical Buddha with reference to his previous lives (Jatakamala), and the Buddha of the coming eon, Maitreya, currently residing in the Tushita heaven. The meaning and function of the eight bodhisattva as depicted in Himalayan art is to represent the Mahayana Sutras and teachings along with the congregation of enlightened students of the Buddha.

In 10th-13th century India there were several praises (stotra) composed by scholars and devotees glorifying the deeds of their favourite bodhisattva from Sutra literature. Tibetan tradition follows these various praises with four bodhisattva in particular being regarded as the most important; Manjushri, Avalokiteshvara, Vajrapani and Maitreya.

Depictions of the eight bodhisattva are non-iconic and follow the artistic traditions of the time, art school, or choices of the artist. Non-iconic means they do not have fixed body colours, postures or hand attributes. Later traditions began to mix Tantric iconography with the non-iconic imagery of the Mahayana Sutra Bodhisattva. For example Manjushri would be depicted as orange in colour and holding a sword in a variety of relaxed postures. Avalokiteshvara would be white in colour and holding a white lotus flower.

The first three bodhisattva also came to hold important positions in the early Tantras of the Kriya Classification and as a group are called the Three Lords of the Families, or Three Bodhisattva Lords (Tibetan: rig sum gom po). In this role the three take on fixed iconographic appearances as described in the specific Tantra literature.

Notes

† In Drops of Nectar: Khenpo Kumpal’s Commentary on Shantideva’s Entering the Conduct of the Bodhisattvas, www.kumpal.org, vol. 1 p.282

The Eight Great Bodhisattvas

The term bodhisattva literally means “essence of Bodhi” [budh- = awakening or, enlightenment;] hence, one on the way to Awakening. Bodhisattvas are considered to be of various degrees of attainment or rank relating to their level (Skt. bhumi) on the 10-step path [some traditions give 13] towards buddhahood. A Bodhisattva is a person who has commit oneself to the path of wanting to help all sentient beings, and are striving to attain Buddhahood. The main features of the Bodhisattvas are their boundless compassion for all the sentient beings and their readiness to undergo any suffering for the benefit of others. They do not attain The highest level of these are known as the Great Bodhisattvas, and these compassionate activity-beings are 8 in number. They can be thought of as “occupying” the intermediate directions of space, if we consider the transcendent buddhas who head the five Buddha Families as situated at the cardinal points of a mandala. The Bodhisattvas play a unique role in Mahayana faith and art nivana until all the sentient beings are freed from the cycle of bondage of birth and death. It may be interesting to note that in Mahayana Buddhism Buddha is not the only agent engaged in the work of saving the world. In this great task he is assisted by his followers (Putras, Sutas, Asuras, etc.) who are called Bodhisattvas in Mahayana Sutras. These Bodhisattvas are closer to the common man as their constant guide than Buddha himself. The present study is based on relevant literary, art and archaeological sources.
He is the bodhisattva who emanated from the eye of Buddha Amitabha when he was moved to tears by the plight of sentient beings. In this form -- an embodiment of compassion -- he vowed not to return to buddhahood until he had liberated every single individual in all realms of existence. He is said to have manifested in our era as Padmasambhava, and it is in reference to the legend of the manifestation of that Precious Teacher, Guru Rinpoche, in the heart of a giant lotus that we say the famous 6-syllable mantra of Chenrezi: Om mani padme hum.

Avalokiteshvara, Sahasrabhuja Ekadasamukha (Tibetan: chen re zig, chag tong shal chu chig. English: the All Seeing Lord with One Thousand Hands and Eleven Faces): from the tradition of Bhikshuni Shri along with the lineage teachers of the Gelug Tradition following the line of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, the home of the Panchen Lamas.

Avalokiteshvara is peaceful in appearance, with eleven heads, one thousand hands and in a standing posture. He is encircled above by the previous teachers in the lineage beginning with Avalokiteshvara at the upper left and Bhikshuni Shri at the upper right. Descending on the left side beneath Lokeshvara are the early teachers of the lineage. Descending on the right side beneath Bhikshuni Shri are the later teachers of the lineage and specifically those of the Gelug Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.
At the top center is Amitayus Buddha with red Amitabha on the left and blue Medicine Buddha on the right. Below that is Shakyamuni Buddha in the center with Jowo Atisha wearing an orange hat on the left and Je Tsongkapa wearing a yellow hat on the right. At the middle left of the composition is yellow Ratnasambhava Buddha, blue Akshobhya Buddha and a standing Manjushri holding an utpala flower supporting a sword and book. At the right side of the composition is white Vairochana Buddha, green Amoghasiddhi Buddha and a standing blue Vajrapani holding an utpala flower supporting a gold vajra scepter. At the bottom center is red wrathful Hayagriva with White Tara seated on the left and Green Tara seated on the right. Below that is Six-armed Mahakala with White Jambhala riding a dragon on the left and white Sitatapata holding a parasol on the right.

**Lineage:** Avalokiteshvara, Bhikshuni Shri, Dawa Shonnu, Pandita Juunabhoda, Balpopa Nyewa, Jangsem Dawa Gyaltsen, Nyi Phugpa Choky Dragpa, Pupa Dorje Gyalpo, Shangton Dragig, Chidul Tugje Jangchub, Khchen Dechenpa, Chuzangpa Wangchug Bar, Sherab Bom, Gyalse Togme, Buddhashri, etc.

**Sadhana Description:**
"...the Arya Eleven-faced One, white, standing with feet together. He has eleven faces, the root face white, right green, left red; above these, the central green, right white and left red; above these, the central red, right green and left white; above these, a wrathful, black face with bared fangs, three eyes and tawny, upward-streaming locks; and above this, a peaceful, red face, with an usnisa, having the appearance of a celibate (monk) and endowed with a neck. The first pair of hands are at the heart, with palms folded. The second right holds a rosary, the third eliminates the hunger and thirst of pretas, and the fourth holds a wheel. The second left holds a lotus, the third a water-pot, and the fourth a bow and arrow. The other 992 hands are boon-granting. In the palm of every hand there is a peaceful eye. A deerskins covers his left breast and the lower part of his body is covered with fine stuffs. He is beautiful with disordered (?) tawny locks, crowned with Amitabha, and adorned with all kinds of jewel ornaments."


**Avalokiteshvara - Chaturbhuj (4 hands)**

"As the nature of all buddhas, Avalokiteshvara, in colour like stainless conch and crystal, very resplendent, smiling, peaceful and radiant. With four hands the first are folded at the heart, the lower hold a crystal mala and jewelled lotus, two beautiful feet seated in vajra posture, adorned with many attractive silks and jewels, beautified with dark blue hair in tufts [some] loose. On the crown of the head, the wisdom of all buddhas, is the Lord, source of all refuge gathered as one, in essence the Guru in the aspect of Amitabha, in the manner of the Lord of the Family, seated happily." (Ngorchen Konchog Lhundrup 1497-1557).
Above a moon disc, multi-coloured lotus and lion supported throne and backrest Avalokiteshvara sits in the Palace garden in his pure land of Potala from which the home of the Dalai lamas is named. Standing to the left on a pink lotus and moon disc is the bodhisattva Manjushri, orange in colour, holding in the right hand the stem of a lotus to the heart, blossoming at the ear and supporting the wisdom sword. Standing to the right is Vajrapani, dark blue in colour, holding in the left hand the stem of a lotus to the heart, blossoming at the ear and supporting a gold upright vajra.

In the front courtyard to the left of the lotus pond is the god Indra (Shakra), white, holding a conch shell. Behind that is a green horse-headed Kimnara holding a red gem, and a naga deity with the lower body in the shape of a dark green snake. In the foreground is a god of the asura realm holding a jewel excreting mongoose. To the right of the lotus pond is the god Brahma, orange in colour, with four heads, holding the wheel of cosmic law. Behind, a pink garuda bird, with green wings, holds a red wishing jewel. Behind that is a yaksha daemon holding a banner. In the foreground is a gandharva (celestial musician), white in colour.

The palace is ornate and decorative with an outer wall and four doors (3 visible). At each door stands an emanation of Avalokiteshvara. Surrounded by water the pureland is located on an island in the southern ocean. Seated in the upper level of the palace are the three Long-life deities. In the middle is Amitayus, red, with the hands folded in the lap supporting a long-life vase. To the left is the goddess Ushnishavijaya, white with three faces and eight hands. To the right is White Tara with one face and two hands in supreme generosity and holding a white lotus. The entire Potala pureland is filled with lotus blossoms and surrounded with rainbow light forming a sphere. In the clouds above gods pay homage to Avalokiteshvara while saints fly freely in the air. At the central gate, travelling on a rainbow path, a monk and a nobleman seek admission to the pureland.

At the bottom left is Guru Padmasambhava (8th century) holding a vajra in the right hand and a skullcup and vase in the left, wearing elaborate robes and a lotus hat. On the right is yellow Jambhala holding a bijapuraka fruit in the right hand and a mongoose in the left.

Avalokiteshvara is the patron bodhisattva of Tibet and is practiced by all traditions. There are numerous Sarma lineages and different forms of practice which span all four tantric classifications as well as uncounted Kama and Terma (treasure) traditions from the Nyingmapa School.

Source: Jeff Watt 7-98
Chaturbhuj Avalokiteshvara Mandala (Tibetan: chen re zi chag shi pa'i kyil khor. English: the Mandala of the Four-armed All Seeing Lord): the bodhisattva of compassion surrounded by the buddhas of the six realms of existence and the four female door guardians.

Centrally located, peaceful in appearance, white in colour, with one face and four hands, the first pair are clasped at the heart holding a wishing jewel. The right hand upraised holds a white prayer bead mala and the left a lotus flower. Adorned with a crown of gold and jewels, necklaces, bracelets and anklets, he wears a green scarf across the shoulders and a red lower garment. The legs are folded together in vajra posture atop a moon disc and purple lotus flower surrounded by a blue-red nimbus and green areola.

"To the Lord unstained by faults, white in colour, the head adorned with the perfect buddha, gazing on beings with eyes of compassion; to Avalokiteshvara I bow." (The great Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo, 557-649).

Surrounding the central figure, on the six petals of the lotus are the 6 Buddhas of the 6 realms of cyclic existence - Shakyamuni, Indra, Thag Zangri, Shakya Simha, Namka Dzo and Dharma Raja. In the general appearance of a buddha, they each hold their own objects, wear red and yellow robes and stand tall with the legs together. Outside of that is a ring of gold vajras on a blue background. The inner courtyard of the palace mandala is divided into 4 colours, white in the east, yellow for the south, red - west and north - green. The square enclosure represents the 4 walls and the 'T' shaped structures on each side the 4 doors. Above are 4 coloured steps, a Dharma wheel, two deer and a small canopy. Seated at the door entrances are the 4 female Door Guardians, Vajrakushi, Vajrapshi, Vajrasphota and Vajraghanta. A ring of pristine awareness fire in five colours surrounds the mandala.

At the top left is the Buddha Amitabha, red, with the hands placed in the lap in the mudra of meditation. At the right side is Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava holding a vajra and skullcup, richly attired and wearing the lotus hat. At the bottom left a seated male figure performs various gestures with the hands, regally attired with a white head covering, green and red robes, atop a cushion seat. At the right side a lama figure wears the white upper robe of a yogi, a red meditation belt and a lower robe. In front a small table supports a central teacup on a gold platform. At the side a table of offerings is prepared with heaped wishing jewels in a large golden bowl. On the ground below that lay various coloured bolts of cloth. A solitary monk stands at the side holding an unfurled white scarf.

*Avalokiteshvara is foremost a bodhisattva arising from the sutra tradition and secondly a tutelary deity of the Vajrayana tradition. He is represented in all 4 tantra classifications in a variety of forms, singular, complex mandalas, with a consort and wrathful in appearance.*

*Source=Jeff Watt 9-99*
Ksitagarbha (Earth Store)

To Chinese, whose name for him we transcribe as Di Zang or Ti Tsang Wang, he may be called the "god" of mercy. He is depicted with a benevolent expression, either sitting or standing. His attributes are a Chintamani (Wish-fulfilling Jewel, often described as a pearl) and a staff with a khakhara (rattle) at its top. The sound of its six jangling rings was intended as a warning to any tiny animals so that they could get out of the way and avoid being trod upon. It is also sometimes called the alarm-staff.

Manjushri

Manjushri (Tib. Jampal yang) represents the faculty of discrimination (prajna) borne of knowledge and learning, and all 4 denominations do his practice(s.) As an embodiment of knowledge, his ritual is recited at the beginning of the day by monks and other students. Though in the Mipham description (at top) he holds an utpala flower, he is most usually depicted as raising a sword in his right hand (often wound with the utpala) and holding scriptures in his left; either seated on a throne or on an elephant. The Sanskrit name Manjushri means "sweetly glorious" and an aspect associated with him and a great historical teacher is known as Manjughosha (the sweet-voiced.) An epithet is Vakishvara (Lord of Speech.) He is the patron bodhisattva of the Kadampa (ie. Gelugpa) denomination.
Manjushri – Arapachana

Arapachana Manjushri, white or orange (Tibetan: a ra pa cha na jam pal yang. English: Arapacana the Splendid Melodious Voiced One). Vietnamese: Đại Trí Vân Thủ Su Lợi. The bodhisattva that represents the wisdom of all the buddhas of the ten directions and three times. Sanskrit: Manjushri 🔴 Tibetan: Jam pal yang 🔴

Beautiful and youthful, he has one face and two hands. The right holds aloft the blue flaming sword of wisdom severing ignorance. The left placed at the heart holds the stem of an utpala flower supporting on the blossom the Prapajaramita book. Adorned with a crown of gold studded with jewels, earrings, necklaces and bracelets, he wears garments of silk, a green scarf and a red skirt. Seated with the legs folded in vajra posture atop a flat moon disc and flower blossom arisen from a lotus pond, he is surrounded by a blue-orange nimbus and red areola, completely engulfed in green foliage and flowers.

At the top center is a Sakya lama wearing the robes of a monk and a pandita hat with the lappets folded across the crown. The right hand held at the heart in blessing holds the stem of a lotus flower blossoming at the right ear. The left hand holds a book in the lap. At the left another lama appears in the same attire performing with both hands at the heart the Dharma Teaching mudra (gesture) while holding the stems of two lotus blossoms flowering at both ears. At the right a lama wearing monastic robes and a pandita hat performs the earth witness mudra with the right hand and the mudra of blessing held to the heart with the left.

At the bottom center is the bodhisattva of compassion Avalokiteshvara. With one face and four hands he holds a wishing jewel at the heart, in the second right a mala and in the left a lotus. At the left is the wrathful bodhisattva of power Vajrapani, dark blue, with one face and two hands holding a vajra upraised in the right and a lasso in the left, standing in a threatening manner surrounded by flames. At the right is the protector Panjarnata Mahakala, dark blue, with one face and two hands holding a curved knife and skullcup held to the heart with a stick lying horizontal.

Avalokiteshvara, Vajrapani and Manjushri represent the Three Families of Kriya Tantra and embody all of the compassion, power and wisdom of the buddhas. Manjushri has numerous forms both peaceful and wrathful in all the classifications of tantra from both the Nyingma and Sarma Schools. This form is the principal deity of the Siddhaikavira Tantra of the Kriya classification of Sarma. Highly regarded in the Sakya School all of the early lineage holders were regarded as emanations of the bodhisattva. And likewise all the Gongma Lamas of the Khon family, up to and including the present day, are regarded as emanations of Manjushri.

Lineage: Holy Manjushri, Mahasiddha Jetari, Ashokanta Shri, Vajrasana the Senior - Lalitavajra, the Younger - Amoghavajra, Bari Lotsawa, Tsechen Kunga Nyingpo, Sonam Tsemo, Dragpa Gyaltse, Jamgon Sakya Pandita, Palchen Gvalo, etc.

Source=Jeff Watt 4-98
Manjushri - White

Sanskrit: Manjushri  
Tibetan: Jam pal yang

"...from...an ocean of nectar, white and cool, with many elephants, geese and water fowl sporting and playing, calling out with sweet sounds, in the middle of that...[arises] a lotus with a stem, branches, leaves, fruit and a marvelous sweet fragrance. Above [arises] a moon disc seat with cool rays of light shining forth to the ten directions. Again [the light] collects ... and from this collection ... is Manjushri; white like the autumn moon, a boy of eight years with a youthful form, having five knots [of hair]. The right hand is in the mudra of supreme generosity. The left holds a blue lotus to the heart, blossoming at the left shoulder and marked with the Prajnaparamita book. Seated firmly with the feet in vajra posture, with the major marks and blazing with light, adorned with various jewel ornaments and wearing white silks." (Rinchen Gyaltsen, 15th century).

Beautiful, youthful and calm in expression, white of colour, he has one face and two hands. The hair is piled on the crown of the head with some falling loose across the shoulders. The right hand is extended forward atop the knee performing the mudra (gesture) of generosity with the palm facing outward. At the heart, delicately held between the fingers of the left hand, a green lotus stem rises above the left shoulder supporting a pink blossom topped with the Prajnaparamita sutra. A gold and jewel crown, hair ribbons, earrings, necklaces, bracelets and anklets beautifully adorn the body. Draped across the shoulders a blue scarf twists around the arms and unfurls at both sides. The lower body is covered with a short orange skirt and beneath that a long skirt of rainbow colours. With the legs folded in vajra posture, right over left, above a moon disc and multi-colored lotus blossom seat rising from a blue lotus pond he sits surrounded by a circle of radiant red light.

In the lotus pond below two elephants, white and grey, sport in the water amongst pink blossoms and waterfowl. Along the green earthen bank piles of heaped jewels display an array of color while the deep azure blue sky above is decorated with billowing clouds in shades of white, green and blue. The Siddhaikavira (Solitary Hero) Tantra was first translated into Tibetan in the 11th century at the time of Lord Atisha and is classified as a Kriya Tantra. It describes numerous forms of Manjushri along with a host of other deities both peaceful and wrathful: Sarasvati, Jambhala, Vasudhara, Achala, etc.

Lineage: Lord Manjushri, Acharya Jetari, Maha Pandita Mati, Kashmiri Pandita Shakyashri, Bodhishri, Devashri, Sanggye Zhonnu, Sonam Sherab, Khenchen Sherab Gonpo, Sharchen Yeshe Gyaltsen (Ludingpa), Ngorchen Kunga Zangpo (1382-1456), etc.

Source: Jeff Watt 1-2000
Mandala of
Manjushri - Dharmadhatu Vagishvara

Tibet
1500 - 1599
Sakya and Ngor (Sakya) Lineages
Collection of Rubin Museum of Art

Dharmadhatu Vagishvara Manjushri with 219 Deities (Tibetan: jam pal cho ying sung gi wang chug lha nyi gya dang chu gui kyil kor): a complex form of the deity Manjushri, first of the seven principal mandalas from the Manjushri Namasangiti Tantra

Manjushri is the deity in the middle of the complex circular mandala (center and circumference). He has four faces and eight hands, seated in the cross legged vajra posture. His colour can be either white or orange. The first circle of surrounding deities are the Buddhas of the four directions with attendants and consorts, each in the same appearance as the central figure. Other deities totalling 219 surround the central figures extending outward in descending rank.

Along the top register are fifteen forms of Manjushri. The last three on the right are the Six-faced Yamari, blue-black in colour with six hands, followed by Krishna Yamari, black in colour with two hands and Krishna Yamari with three faces and six hands. All three are fearsome in appearance and stand in a menacing posture. The Six-faced Yamari represents one of the seven principal mandalas of the Namasangiti.

At the upper left is the mandala of Orange Arapachana Manjushri, orange in colour, surrounded by four retinue deities in various colours. This mandala also belongs to the namasangiti Tantra. At the upper right is the mandala of White Arapachana Manjushri, white in colour, surrounded by four retinue deities all white in colour. This form of Arapachana arises from the Siddhaikavira Tantra.

At the bottom left is White Achala, Blue Achala and White Tara. Blue Achala is the special protector of the Siddhaikavira Tantra.

At the bottom right is Green Tara, Yellow Jambhala and Black Jambhala.

Along the very bottom of the painting is a lengthy inscription dedicating the painting in honour of the Five Superior Teachers of Sakya (Jetsun Gongma Nga) by Rabjampa Tsurltrim Ozer and other students of the teacher Sherab Zangpo.

The Manjushri Namasangiti Tantra was first translated into Tibetan in the 8th century and re-translated during the Sarma period in the 11th century and classified as both a Yoga and Anuttarayoga Tantra. It depicts numerous forms of Manjushri both peaceful, wrathful and full mandalas with many deities such as the Dharmadhatu Vagishvara. Monks and lamas from all traditions memorize the Tantra in early childhood.


Source—Jeff Watt 8-2005
Samantabhadra's (Jangsem Kuntuzangpo) name means "all-good" or "universally worthy" after his appearance in the Gandavyuha in which he makes a set of vows accompanied by a vastly generous series of offerings. He holds a lotus with a golden wheel or the sun. In China, as Fu-gen, he is shown seated on an elephant. 'Samantabhadra' also means 'universal virtue'. This bodhisattva is renowned for his ten vows which include the respecting of all Buddhas and to transfer merit to all beings. He is often shown riding a six-tusked elephant, the six tusks representing the six perfections or paramitas: giving, patience, morality, vigor, meditation and wisdom.
Maitreya is the future Buddha who presently resides in the Tusita heaven where - traditionally - Buddha's reside before their final rebirth. He was the earliest Bodhisattva to gain devotees who aimed to be reborn in the Tusita heaven alongside him. 'Maitreya' means 'the loving one'. He is associated with good luck, friendliness and prosperity. The so-called 'Laughing Buddha' is a Chinese representation of Maitreya. Maitreya often depicted seated on a chair (bhadasana, seat of rank) holding a lotus with a stupa emerging from it. Sometimes he holds a dharmachakra or a vase containing nectar which, here, symbolizes the Buddhadharma purely preserved.

**Akashagarbha**

Akashagarbha (Namkai Nyingpo) or "Matrix of Space" is golden and may hold a jewel, though in many texts he is described as holding a lotus with a sword that radiates light. The Sadhanamala says that he is green as the dawn sky. Akasagarbha, whose essence is ether, is usually shown standing with his hands in vitarka and varada mudras. His symbol is the sun supported by a lotus at his right shoulder; at his left is depicted a lotus flower supporting a book. In Japan and China he is represented practically in the same way.

**Vajrapani**

Vajrapani (meaning holder of the vajra) signifies the power of all the Buddhas. The vajra, is a five pronged scepter which represents the combination of wisdom and compassion. In Buddhist art, Vajrapani is depicted as a blue wrathful deity, with either two arms or four arms and a tiger skin about his waist.
Vajrapani (Chin: Jin Gang Shou; Jap: Kongo Shou) means "Lightning Hand," an epithet pointing to his identity with India's thunderbolt-wielding king of gods, Indra, also called Shakra (Pali: Sakka.) This identity is borne out by his other Buddhist epithets, i.e. Vasava, Devinda, Maghava, Sahasranetra (Pali: Sahasanetra,) though in his role as a Dharma-protector, the ancient title Purindara meaning "town-wrecker" became Purinda or "town-keeper".

**Vajrapani – Bhutadamara**

![Vajrapani Bhutadamara](image)

Vajrapani Bhutadamara (Tibetan: chung bu dul she chag na dor je. English: the Vajra Holder, Subduer of Daemons). Sanskrit: Vajrapanidorje Tibetan: chag na dor je. Dark blue in colour with one face and four hands, the first pair perform the 'Daemon Subduing' mudra (hand gesture) at the heart. The second pair of hands hold a vajra upraised in the right and a lasso in the left. Very wrathful in appearance with large bulging eyes and hair flowing upwards like flame he wears jewel and snake ornaments and a lower garment of tiger skin. On the back of the white daemon Aparajita with four hands and an elephant head, he stands atop a sun disc and multi-coloured lotus surrounded by the flames of pristine awareness.

At the top center is the buddha Shakyamuni, to the left the buddha of the past and to the right the bodhisattva Maitreya, the buddha of the future. To the left is the bodhisattva Manjushri and below is the Lama Tsongkapa the founder of the Gelugpa School. To the right is the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara with four hands. Below that is Sakya Pandita of the Sakya School.

At the bottom center inside a rainbow sphere is Guru Rinpoche, Padmasambhava, founder of the Nyingma School, seated on a lotus flower. On the left is Karmapa Yeshe Dorje (1676-1702) of the Kamtsang Kagyu wearing a black hat and on the right Drigung Jigten Gonpo (17th century) of the Drigung Kagyu. At the left corner is the wealth deity Jambhala, yellow in colour, with one face and two hands holding a bijapuraka fruit and a mongoose.

In the right bottom corner is the deceased male individual for whom the painting was commissioned. The small figure, wearing white for purity is shown seated on a lotus indicating the wish of his relatives that he be reborn in a Buddhist pureland such as the Copper-coloured Mountain of Padmasambhava, or Sukhavati of Buddha Amitabha. The central figure, Vajrapani, was either the Tutelary Deity of the deceased or chosen as the subject on the advice of a lama for the purpose of removing obstacles in the path of a better rebirth. The gold paint used for the robes and ornaments is meant as an offering on behalf of the deceased.

Vajrapani Bhutadamara is found in the Kriya, Carya and Anuttarayogya tantras and the iconographic form represented here indicates that it belongs to the two lower tantras. All the names of the deities and lamas have been finely written with gold lettering.

*Source=Jeff Watt 5-98*
Guide-to-Liberation-Obstacle-clearer (Tib. Dripa Namsal, (Chin: Chugai Zhang) is usually invoked to clear the way. Nivarana means hindrances and refers to the 5 kleshas: desire, hatred, sloth, arrogance /suspicion, and doubt /confusion. He attends Buddha Amoghasiddhi, the head of the Karma family considered to rule the northern direction.
He is royal blue with a moon on his lotus. In the sutras, he is with Avalokiteshvara, praising him after their fortuitous meeting in Varanasi.
Sarvanivarana-Vishkambhin as mentioned in the Saddharma pundarika, was sent at his request by the Buddha to Benares to see the wondrous form of Avalokitesvara. As his attributes he may hold a Chintamani and an ambrosia cup. He wears a tiger skin around his waist and a garland of heads.